

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association

AfterSchool Recreation Initiatives

Final Report
2009



Alberta
Recreation & Parks
Association

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Government of Alberta ■

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TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE AFTERSCHOOL AGENDA

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Because young people spend only 20% of their time in school, how and where they spend the remaining 80% has profound implications for their well-being and their future. Quality afterschool programs provide engaging learning activities in a safe and supportive environment. These programs can meet students’ needs for personal attention from adults, inclusion in positive peer groups, and enjoyable experiential activities that build self-esteem.”

Blenda J. Wilson
in *Afterschool Programs and Educational Success*

Amid compelling research confirming the urgency of focusing on the health and wellness of our children and youth, an expanding body of evidence tells us that one of the most promising responses is a comprehensive afterschool strategy.

What students do in the afterschool hours – that critical block of time between the final bell and when many adults come home from work – has profound impact on their physical, social, emotional and academic development. Yet the dynamics of family life mean that many children and youth are without adult supervision for hours at a time. While many participate in afterschool activities and programs, the fact remains that children and youth whose parents work fulltime spend an average of 20 to 25 hours on their own each week.¹

1.1 The Urgency

Besides raising safety concerns, unsupervised youngsters are engaging in a wide range of unhealthy and even high-risk behaviours after school, during what is becoming known as the “critical hours.” Researchers regularly report measurable increases in juvenile crime, antisocial behaviour, inactivity, screen time and poor eating habits. Those behaviours, in turn, are contributing to epidemic levels of obesity and other significant chronic and mental health illnesses and conditions.

This combination of factors is causing a groundswell of concern, both in Alberta and around the world. A growing chorus is calling for quality afterschool programs as a way to use those hours for constructive, healthy activities.

In Canada, those advocates include Dr. Kellie Leitch, our nation’s first-ever federally appointed/contracted advisor on healthy children and youth. Given that quality programming during the critical hours can markedly decrease instances of juvenile crime and other anti-social activities while increasing skills, self-esteem, connectedness and overall health, she calls for public sector investment in a comprehensive afterschool program for children and youth, with particular attention to children and adolescents from low to middle income families.

Dr. Leitch argues for a federal action plan that sets clear standards for afterschool programming, adequately funds program providers, fosters collaboration and leverages existing infrastructure by facilitating access to schools and community recreation facilities after school. She advocates recreation as a crucial aspect of the afterschool mix, noting that those involved in organized and unorganized

¹ Beth M. Miller, *Afterschool Programs and Educational Success: Critical Hours Executive Summary*, p.8.

Beyond tending to immediate needs, time well spent in these formative years can shape patterns that become lifestyle choices, thus holding important implications adulthood.

“The ‘right’ goals, the ‘right’ young people, the ‘right’ stuff, the ‘right’ period of time and the ‘right’ management choices: All are intertwined.... When program components work, they build on one another to form a strong foundation. But a problem in one area can have a domino effect, hurting the program as a whole and weakening the benefits to children and youth.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“Overall, three program elements have emerged as particularly significant:

- (1) program involvement that has sufficient intensity and duration to bring about desired results, and
- (2) the availability of caring, committed and qualified adults who can develop in-depth, meaningful relationships with participants and
- (3) the necessity of adequate sustaining resources.”

Dr. P. Witt &
Dr. J. Crompton

physical activities are less likely to be overweight and less likely to commit crimes or drop out of school. Afterschool recreation also offers an important tool for meeting Canada’s first-ever national physical activity targets for children and youth, set in 2008 by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation. The AfterSchool Agenda has become one of the areas of focus in a four point action plan being proposed by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers at their annual conference in 2009.

1.2 Study Parameters

Well aware of that context, Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation (ATPR) and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF) is also taking renewed interest in the critical afterschool hours. ATPR and ASRPWF commissioned this study to examine the state of afterschool recreation programming and to identify opportunities for engaging recreation practitioners and allied stakeholders in developing a provincial strategy for action. Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA), with support from ASRPWF, contracted CDC Consultants to complete the research.

Study components:

- review of relevant research;
- interviews with recreation practitioners and others providing afterschool programs at local and provincial levels;
- an online survey sent to 120 municipal recreation departments;
- a macro analysis of community/school joint use agreements in Alberta;
- review of promising cases and extrapolation of best practices;
- a discussion forum to review the research and consult on next steps for the sector, and specifically for ARPA. (See Appendix D)

1.3 Best Practices

In research, case studies and interviews, the following key elements surfaced repeatedly as best practices in afterschool programming and infrastructure.

Frontline programming and delivery

1. Caring, committed adults
2. Qualified, well-paid, stable staff
3. Purposeful, organized and varied activities
4. Age-appropriate activities for youth as well as children
5. Community engagement
6. Affordable and accessible programs

Supportive infrastructure

1. Enabling public policy and sustained funding
2. Enhance what works rather than duplicating
3. Strong partnerships and networks

“Community Education is a remarkable approach to teaching and learning that serves all children and youth. It is an inclusive approach that involves school staff, parents, family, caregivers, seniors, elders, volunteers, health nurses, police, business people, social workers, administrators, and anyone who has a vested interest in seeing students succeed.

When this level of cooperation is achieved, not only do the students flourish – the community does as well.

A spirit of joyful collaboration takes hold and something remarkable happens when community education is embraced, a learning community is created, and a Community School emerges.”

Saskatchewan
Community Schools
Association

“Park and Recreation departments need to recognize societal expectations and the forces driving the need for after-school programs if they are to become a significant player in the after-school program movement.”

Re-Examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-school Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

1.4 Emergent Trends

There is no doubt that focused attention must be paid to the critical afterschool hours, when many parents are still at work and idle time so easily turns negative. This research confirms the need to strengthen the current program delivery system and de-emphasize the silo or single sector approach.

One of the emergent themes involves networks and collaborative strategies, which are proving effective in enhancing both provider capacity and advocacy. A related trend is the move toward community schools, in which schools become hubs for community services, including afterschool programs. This approach can help afterschool programs meet the need for accessible and affordable space, a crucial concern since cost and transportation issues often keep kids away. The philosophy behind community schools also encourages the rich interplay of partners that enriches the afterschool experience.

Alberta does not yet have a provincial strategy encouraging community use of schools, although the Provincial Commission on Learning identified this need and a recent AUMA resolution urges the province to adopt a community school concept and supportive program. Across Alberta, about 75% of Alberta municipalities have some form of joint use agreement in place that enables community use of school facilities, but those agreements usually exclude the critical hours and in some cases set rates that are beyond provider budgets. Schools are increasingly providing afterschool activities for their own students, such as intramurals, sports, homework clubs and mentorship programs. Some schools also partner with youth serving agencies such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters, who run onsite mentorship and/or literacy-based programs during the critical hours.

Across Alberta, dedicated agencies in the education, social services and non-profit sectors are busy providing afterschool programs. Yet they are unable to meet the need, leaving unserved children and youth in many communities. The absence of a provincial strategy for building and equipping the network of community-based agencies required for a comprehensive afterschool agenda sets the stage for numerous ad hoc, overlapping and underfunded efforts. A systematic review and response is imperative.

1.5 Recreation’s Role

The importance of recreation as a component of afterschool programs of all types became evident in the literature and throughout the interview process. Even in programs where recreation is not the main focus, organized and unorganized

“Ninety-four per cent of Albertans believe that recreation participation is an important way to ensure that children and youth live healthy lifestyles.”

Use and Benefits of Local Government Recreation and Parks Services: an Alberta Perspective

“To engage early adolescents who are seeking identity and independence, effective programs must find ways to compete with the streets and the mall. They must help youth overcome the effects of poverty, racism, isolation, and negative media influences, as well as support those whose parents are working ever-longer hours to make ends meet.”

Beth Miller, Ph.D.
Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

“Afterschool programs are uniquely poised to help young people see themselves as learners in an informal, hands-on learning environment... The good news is we know what works and why.”

Beth Miller, Ph.D.
Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

physical activities can play an important and complementary role by attracting participants, fostering active lifestyles and encouraging teamwork.

Yet opportunities to fully integrate recreation into the programming mix are being missed, in part because recreation is absent at many decision making tables regarding the critical hours. In part, this reflects a shift in players as recreation pulled back from an historic role as a direct service provider in many communities and others stepped in to provide afterschool programs.

Given escalating concern about epidemic child obesity and inactive living, given recreation’s power to enhance healthy and holistic development, it is crucial to address recreation needs and potential as part of a larger review of afterschool needs.

Municipalities are providing some afterschool recreation, most commonly in municipal facilities. Some also extend their reach by collaborating with non-profit organizations. Yet gaps persist. An area of particular concern is outreach to youth. Municipalities offering their own programs focus almost exclusively on facility-based activities. Reliance on a limited number of facilities poses transportation issues, making the programs less accessible. What’s more, youth tell us they don’t find public facilities, as traditionally run, particularly welcoming.

The many municipal recreation and parks departments whose mandates and funding have evolved to indirect program delivery face even greater challenges in ensuring their children and youth are well-served. With reduced staffing and budgets, they lack the capacity to respond to unmet needs. This challenge is particularly acute in communities with no community-based agencies that can offer sustained, quality afterschool programs.

The recreation sector clearly has an important role to play in ensuring an expanded role for quality physical activity in afterschool programming.

1.6 Recommendations

This research identified several specific areas in which ARPA and the recreation and parks sector can work with the provincial government and other stakeholders to support a strengthening of “critical hours” program delivery in Alberta.

1.6.1 Get the word out that the “critical hours” must be top priority

Develop and launch a strategy to build awareness among recreational professionals, other afterschool providers and political leaders about the urgent need for quality afterschool recreation in every community. The resulting campaign might include forums, seminars and dialogues inviting multiple stakeholders to discuss how recreation and parks departments can engage the AfterSchool Agenda in their own communities. The conversations that ensue will focus attention on the need for more resources – dollars, people, training, spaces and places – to support and link all quality afterschool providers in every community.

1.6.2 Advocate for an MLA Committee to draft a coordinated AfterSchool Agenda

Urge the provincial government to strike an MLA Committee involving ministries mandated to oversee children, recreation, education, health and social needs to study this crucial issue and draft a coordinated Afterschool Agenda. Background that committee's work with a survey of Alberta municipalities and stakeholder agencies that confirms and maps the programs already addressing "critical hours." Examine existing relationships, challenges and outcomes with the intent of strengthening rather than duplicating the excellent agencies already doing good work with children and youth in the out-of-school hours.

"Academic programs are most successful when they meld recreational and academic activities."

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

1.6.3 Showcase the benefits of integrating recreation into afterschool programming through pilot projects

Work with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and other government ministries to launch a pilot program that entices municipal recreation and parks departments to take deliberate steps toward integrating recreation into community afterschool programming. Choose pilots that focus not only on direct recreation delivery, but also on equipping community agencies to integrate quality recreation-based activities into afterschool programs. Encourage the pilots to explore innovative outreach programming that engages more young people in healthier lifestyles within and beyond recreation facilities. Explore linkages with the ACE (Active, Creative, Engaged) Communities initiative to encourage a community development approach. Use learnings from pilot communities to create a province-wide business case and framework for shared recreation and education responsibilities that can be applied to all afterschool programming in Alberta.

"Afterschool care has been so successful that the county's School Board and Parks and Recreation Department share the salary costs for a teacher to help run the program at each school."

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
National League of Cities

1.6.4 Coalesce an AfterSchool "Critical Hours" Network/Consortium

Experience in other jurisdictions demonstrates the value of out-of-school networks that are community-based yet strongly supported by provincial and other funders. Alberta urgently needs to develop such a model. Ensuring the network is holistic and realistic will take cross-sectoral leadership from government and from provincial organizations with ties to frontline service. The ARPA Children and Youth Committee is well equipped to initiate dialogue with involved sectors, agencies and ministries to determine the consortium's most appropriate structure and function.

"Activities targeting youth who perform poorly academically or behaviourally can lead to the largest effects. Staff members who want to attract this challenging population need to frame recruitment strategies positively and pursue them aggressively."

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

1.6.5 Lobby to include recreation in provincial children and youth development funding

Work with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Alberta Children and Youth Services to build understanding that recreation has power to enhance child and youth development and should be funded as such. Enshrining the concept of

“healthy child development through recreation” would enable afterschool programs to receive support from the most appropriate funding source, whether FCSS (Family and Community Support Services), recreation or both. Providers such as Boys and Girls Clubs and smaller municipalities would no longer need to disguise their recreation offerings to obtain FCSS and other child development funding. Communities would then be in a better position to maximize resources through a program strategy that meets both development and wellness requirements.

1.6.6 Promote excellence in afterschool programming

With Alberta Children and Youth Services, explore the possibility of recognizing HIGH FIVE® quality assurance principles as part of the *School-Aged Care Accreditation Program* demonstration sites scheduled for fall 2009, to ensure that afterschool providers receive recreation-specific professional development. This research confirms that recreation activities are often part of afterschool programs regardless of the delivery agency. As a certified delivery agent for HIGH FIVE® in Alberta, ARPA is in an ideal position to provide training to other sectors to ensure the quality of the recreation enjoyed by our children and youth.

“Systems to monitor activity quality are among the most worthwhile but underused management strategies in after-school programming.”

Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

1.6.7 Make community use of schools a guiding principle

Advocate with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Education and allied stakeholders to adopt community use of schools as a guiding principle, and to establish a cross-sectoral enabling body. This significant step would address one of the greatest challenges for afterschool program providers: finding affordable, accessible and appropriate space. A financial incentive to keep schools open after hours appears to be helpful, but is not sufficient in the Alberta context. While cost is clearly a concern for some communities, the larger issue appears to be the availability of sufficient space, particularly immediately after school. The children and youth of this province will surely benefit from a made in Alberta “Community School Initiative” that puts priority on engaging and influencing all children and youth in purposeful activities, including quality recreation, during the critical afterschool hours.

“It is recommended that reciprocal joint-use agreements be developed that cover the joint use of schools and municipal facilities so that schools can use municipal facilities and sport and recreation departments can use school facilities after school hours.”

*Reaching for the Top:
A Report by the Advisor on
Healthy Children and Youth*

1.6.8 Ensure the sustainability of an accessible quality afterschool system that incorporates recreation

All of the above recommendations depend on public investment that is adequate, dependable and appropriate to Alberta’s needs. This research strongly confirms the importance of ensuring full access to quality afterschool programming during the critical afterschool hours. Although providers from the recreation and parks, education, social services and non-profit sectors are busy providing quality programs, unmet needs persists. Of particular note for this study, recreation and parks departments are not able to meet afterschool demand, especially for youth

All of the above recommendations depend on public investment that is adequate, dependable and appropriate to Alberta’s needs

“Whether school is out for the day or for the summer, there is a lot of time available to young Canadians that can potentially be spent to enhance their health and well-being. Given that only 60% of adolescent waking hours are committed to school, homework, eating, chores or paid employment, while 40% are discretionary, this is an area that needs public support and attention. The role and responsibility of community structures, apart from families and schools, is vital in helping ensure that we support the healthy development of all our young people.”

Boys and Girls Clubs of
Canada
Submission to the Federal
Finance Committee

focused programs that are truly welcoming and accessible. ARPA and other stakeholders must advocate for ongoing core funding to support a strong afterschool network of community-based providers whose members are equipped to tap recreation’s potential for healthy child development.

1.7 Summary

Given growing recognition of the need for quality recreation-focused afterschool programs, the time is now to re-engage the recreation and parks sector in working with others to ensure that all Alberta and youth have access to quality experiences in the significant block of time after school.

It is in everyone’s interest for ARPA to advance the recommended solutions with its members, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, with allied stakeholders and with the Province of Alberta so that the role of recreation and municipal service providers is properly positioned in the emerging area of critical hours programming.

The presence of the recreation and parks sector at the table will help to ensure that recreation and parks achieves its potential as a powerful force for holistic development in a time when the health of coming generations is at risk.

2. INTRODUCTION: ADDRESSING THE CRITICAL HOURS

“Because young people spend only 20% of their time in school, how and where they spend the remaining 80% has profound implications for their well-being and their future. Quality afterschool programs provide engaging learning activities in a safe and supportive environment. These programs can meet students’ needs for personal attention from adults, inclusion in positive peer groups, and enjoyable experiential activities that build self-esteem.”

Blenda J. Wilson
in Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

“Lincoln is looking at education differently and sees that you cannot turn kids loose in the schools and expect teachers to do it all. It takes the entire community in a climate of declining resources.”

Bonnie Coffee
Director, Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission
The Afterschool Hours: A New Focus for America’s Cities
National League of Cities

The afterschool hours are critical to the formation of our children and youth. There is strong consensus among international sources that what children and youth do in the three hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. has profound impact on their physical, social, emotional and academic development.

Changes in society and the dynamics of family life mean that many youngsters are without adult supervision during these critical hours. Most parents and guardians work outside the home and, while many children participate in afterschool activities and programs, a significant number are left on their own, unsupervised. Children whose parents work fulltime spend an average of 20 to 25 hours on their own each week.²

What are these “latchkey kids” doing after school, in what we now know are critical hours? What can Albertans do to make sure that significant block of time contributes to the formation of healthy Albertans?

2.1 Evidence Heightens Urgency

The evidence is clear that unsupervised children are engaging in a wide range of unhealthy and even high-risk behaviours after school, during what is becoming known as the “critical hours.” Among the key findings:

- **Noticeable increase in juvenile crime.** Recent City of Calgary research found that a significant proportion of crime involving young people occurs between 3 and 6 p.m. Chargeable incidents involving youth are more frequent on weekdays than on weekends and during or after school rather than any other time.³ Echoing these findings, research in the United States shows that youth left unsupervised during this time period are more sexually active, likely to be at-risk for drug and alcohol use and generally more likely to be engaged in anti-social behaviour.⁴
- **Safety concerns.** Parents who are away from home fear what may happen if they let young children leave the house without adult supervision, whether to play or to walk to programs. Recent studies from the Children and Nature Network in the United States document a decrease in the number of children

² Beth M. Miller, *Afterschool Programs and Educational Success: Critical Hours Executive Summary*, p.8.

³ Leslie MacRae et al. *A Profile of Youth Offenders in Calgary: An Interim Report*, March 2008, 20-21.

⁴ *A Profile on Youth Offenders in Calgary: A Study of Youth Offending Patterns, Serious Habitual Offenders and System Response*. Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, Highlights of Interim Report, March 2008.

who ride their bikes, walk or play outside. The message appears to be “stay indoors and only go outside when supervised.”⁵

- **Increasing levels of inactivity:** For many, being home alone translates into a significant amount of time spent in front of a computer or TV screen. Dr. Mark Tremblay, Chief Scientific Officer for Active Healthy Kids Canada, predicts that the trend to habitual inactivity will have an enormous impact on children’s development. Potential long-term health effects include diabetes and cardiovascular disease.⁶ The increase in hours spent alone also correlates with increased levels of anti-social behaviour.⁴ above)
- **Poor nutrition:** Inactivity is often accompanied by poor eating habits. Children consume a significant portion of their daily calories during the unsupervised afterschool hours.⁷ Amid increasing levels of obesity in Canada and the United States, this combination of factors raises significant health concern.
- **Reduced life expectancy:** Obesity is having a huge life expectancy impact that was unforeseen as little as a decade ago. That’s one of the primary findings in *Reaching for the Top*, a seminal document by Dr. Kellie Leitch, Federal Government Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth.⁸

“If nothing changes for the better, today’s younger generations will live shorter lives than their parents.”

*Reaching for the Top:
A Report by the Advisor on
Healthy Children and Youth
(quoting the New England
Journal of Medicine)*

The very fact that Canada now has an advisor on healthy children and youth reflects the attention these issues are garnering at the federal as well as provincial/territorial levels. Appointed in 2007, Dr. Leitch is charged with providing strategic direction and recommendations for combating inactivity, obesity, anti-social behaviour and other factors compromising the health of our youngest generation.

In *Reaching for the Top*, Dr. Leitch points to evidence that children and youth who participate in physical activities (organized and unorganized) are less likely to be overweight and less likely to commit crimes or drop out of school. She argues that the federal government has a role to play in encouraging healthy activities during the afterschool time period, especially among children and adolescents from low to middle income families.

Dr. Leitch recommends that the Government of Canada play a leadership role in afterschool initiatives by taking the following steps:

- lead the development of an action plan to ensure access to healthy, active, physically oriented afterschool activities;

⁵ Children and Nature 2008: A Report On the Movement to Reconnect Children to the Natural World, p.13.

⁶ *It’s Time to Unplug Our Kids: Canada’s Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.* Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2008.

⁷ The Calgary Children’s Initiative: Critical Hours Beyond School Initiative – Environmental Scan, 2006

⁸ *Reaching for the Top: A Report by the Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth* by Dr. Kellie Leitch – 2007.

“Afterschool programs are uniquely poised to help young people see themselves as learners in an informal, hands-on learning environment. They can bring parents, schools and the community together. They can create the foundation for a positive peer culture that values learning skills and contributes to society. To engage early adolescents who are seeking identity and independence, effective programs must find ways to compete with the streets and the mall. They must help youth overcome the effects of poverty, racism, isolation, and negative media influences, as well as support those whose parents are working ever-longer hours to make ends meet. Out-of-school time programs operate in the context of increasing pressure to help students achieve test-based academic outcomes. The good news is we know what works and why.”

Beth Miller, Ph.D.
Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

- set national targets for child and youth physical activity levels and healthy weights;
- establish national standards in afterschool programming;
- fund organizations that are providing these programs;
- help to promote and market quality afterschool programming;
- foster collaboration among provincial ministries of health and education, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and other organizations that provide afterschool programming, and
- leverage existing infrastructure by facilitating access to schools and community recreation facilities after school.⁹

At least one of those recommendations has already born fruit. In May 2008, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation set Canada’s first ever national physical activity targets for children and youth age 5 to 19. The targets set for 2015, little more than five years from now, are as follows:

- increase the proportion of children and youth who participate in 90 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity over and above the activities of daily living by seven percentage points, and
- increase the average number of steps taken by all children and youth from 11,500 to 14,000, equivalent to an increase of 30 minutes of physical activity a day.¹⁰

A four point action plan that includes focus on after school time is being proposed by federal, provincial and territorial ministers at their annual conference in PEI in August 2009.

Amid the compelling research confirming the urgency of focusing on the health and wellness of our children and youth, a growing body of evidence tells us that one of the most promising strategies is a **comprehensive afterschool program**. As indicated above, providing quality programming opportunities between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. can markedly decrease instances of juvenile crime and other anti-social activities. The City of Calgary TeenZone is a prime example of programs targeted for youth during these critical hours, as is the Canadian Boys and Girls Clubs program.

Given the positive impact of such programs, the Leitch Report calls for public sector investment in a comprehensive afterschool program for children and youth.

The positive outcomes of participation in afterschool programs are interrelated. There is a wide-spread agreement that ongoing participation in such programs can

⁹ Leitch, “Reaching for the Top,” p.106

¹⁰Conference of Federal –Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Victoria, British Columbia – May 21-22, 2008. (News Release)

have positive effects in terms of academic performance, social and emotional development, prevention of criminal/risky behaviours and overall health and wellness. These outcomes are matched by larger-scale benefits. When youth are engaged in positive behaviour whole communities are not only safer, they are also financially better off. An overwhelming majority (91%) of American Police Chiefs agreed that failure to invest in afterschool and educational child care programs now, will result in greater costs in the future (in terms of crime, welfare, etc.). The chiefs indicated their preference for addressing juvenile crime through prevention strategies; over half favoured afterschool and summer youth programs as the primary strategies.

A wide body of research supports the conclusion that afterschool programs can play a significant role in influencing the decisions and behaviours of children and youth in the “critical hours”. Programming can do more than assist with immediate needs; since individuals begin forming habits as youth, the patterns set and lifestyle choices made at this time can have important implications for their adult lives. Furthermore, afterschool programs are increasingly seen as an arena where older youth can develop important skills and prepare for the workforce. Afterschool programs can be particularly helpful in developing “soft skills” such as communication, teamwork and problem solving, which employers look for and which will help kids in their everyday lives.

Children and youth are not the only ones who stand to benefit from afterschool programs. Parents, communities and even employers can also experience a positive impact. It is important for parents to know that their children are safe and engaged in positive activities and behaviours when they cannot be around. When parents are confident in this, they are able to focus on work and become more productive.

2.2 Research Objectives and Methodology

Noting federal and provincial/territorial commitment to increasing physical activity levels and concerned for the state of our children’s overall health, ATPR and the ASRPWF are taking renewed interest in ensuring that quality programs and services are available during the critical afterschool hours. ATPR commissioned this study to examine the current state of afterschool recreation programming and to identify opportunities for engaging recreation practitioners and allied stakeholders in developing a provincial strategy for action.

ARPA, with support from ASRPWF, contracted CDC Consultants to complete the research, with the following objectives:

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of the recreation and parks sector’s participation in the AfterSchool Agenda.
- Identify challenges and opportunities for engagement by both the recreation and parks sector and other aligned children and youth sectors.

- Identify case studies of promising practices from within Alberta and other jurisdictions.
- Undertake a representative analysis of joint use agreements and report on relevant case studies.
- Identify next steps for both the recreation and parks sector and ARPA.

Four months of research included the following steps:

- A review of relevant research, including
 - a. "critical hours" issues for children and youth;
 - b. successful programs and services designed to address those issues, and
 - c. strategies to enhance the use of community schools from 3 to 6 p.m.
- Interviews with recreation practitioners and others in sectors providing afterschool programs at both the local and provincial levels.
- An online survey sent to 120 municipal recreation departments and completed by 48, achieving a 40% response rate.
- A macro analysis of community/school joint use agreements in Alberta.
- A discussion forum to review the research and consult on next steps for the sector, and specifically for ARPA. (See Appendix D for proceeding notes)

2.3 Report Outline

The research findings are presented in three sections.

Section One: An historical overview of the role the recreation and parks sector has played in developing quality children and youth programming followed by a review of the current situation based on the survey of Alberta afterschool programs and services survey as well as international and Canadian case studies.

Section Two: Research related to community use of schools, including an analysis of 20 joint use agreements between Alberta school districts and municipalities and case studies from several jurisdictions that have moved to a community school model.

Section Three: Analysis of lessons learned from the previous sections, including best practices and recommendations for action.

Section One: Afterschool Needs and Responses

“Park and recreation departments used to be one of the major providers of afterschool services. However, shrinking budgets and the subsequent need to offer programs on a fee for service basis led to the demise of many of these efforts.”

Re-Examining the Role of Parks in After-school Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

3. ALBERTA RECREATION AND PARKS: EVOLVING ROLES

What roles might recreation – and indeed, the recreation and parks sector – play in a comprehensive afterschool program for Alberta? In answering that question, it is instructive to note the sector’s historical and social context. But first, let’s define what we mean by recreation.

3.1 Recreation Defined

This research defines recreation using the National Recreation Statement. That is, “all those things that a person or group choose to do in order to make their leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more personally satisfying.”¹¹ What’s more, recreation is “a social service in the same way that health and education are considered social services.” As such, it fills these purposes:

- to assist individual and community development;
- to improve quality of life, and
- to enhance social functioning.

The intended outcomes of a quality children and youth recreation program mirror those of child and youth serving agencies such as licensed afterschool care programs and Boys and Girls Clubs. While these organizations focus on social outcomes, recreation activities are often integral to their programming. What’s more, the agencies serving children and youth tend to be grounded in similar development and prevention models. Whether through recreation or other forms of learning and play, they engage children and youth in healthy and positive activities as a means to social and developmental growth.

That understanding of recreation’s purpose and place set the parameters for this study. Thus the research encompasses municipal recreation departments, who contribute to afterschool services as direct and indirect program providers, as well as other sectors and agencies whose afterschool programs include recreation.

3.2 Historical Context: Recreation and Parks in Alberta

Recreation’s vital role in child and youth development stretches back to the very beginning of recreation and parks. Historically, the sector evolved from a desire to guarantee children a safe and supportive environment in which to play. As a result, recreation and parks focused primarily on children and youth.

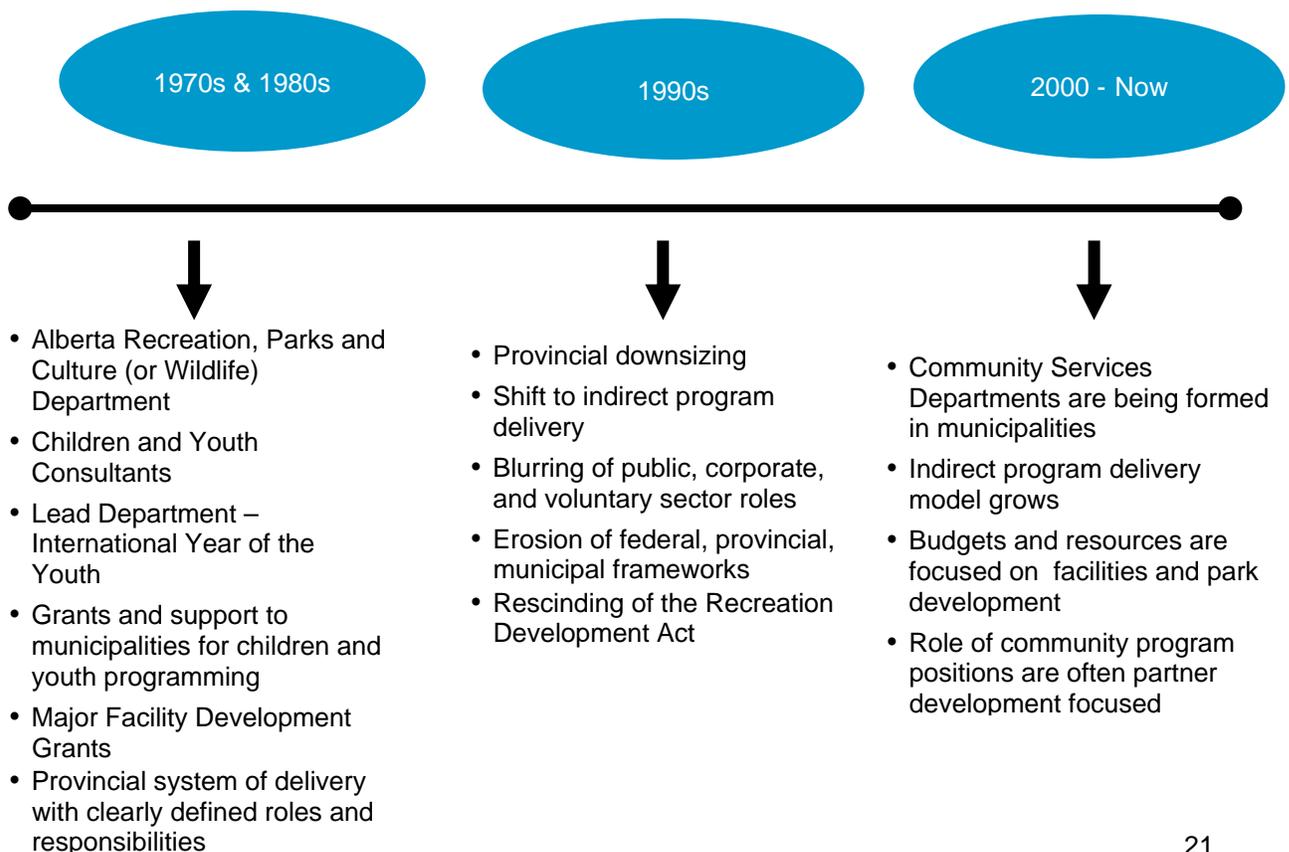
¹¹ The federal/provincial and territorial ministers responsible for sport, recreation and physical activity signed the National Recreation Statement in 1974. While the recreation definition is over 35 year old, it is still viewed as the definitive statement for recreation across Canada.

The Alberta recreation scene came into its own in the late 1960s and 1970s. Many Alberta municipalities expanded their recreation and parks departments in those decades, supported by provincial government grant programs, namely Major Cultural Recreation Facility grants and by Project Co-operation. The schematic below traces the sector’s evolution in the decades since.

By the early 1980s, Alberta communities of all sizes had new recreation and cultural facilities. Alberta Recreation, Parks and Culture (or Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife as it became known) employed a section of professional staff devoted to children and youth programs and services. The department supported municipalities by providing grants such as the Regional Play Leadership Grant *and* by offering direct professional consultation to communities. In 1985, the International Year of Youth, Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife took the lead in enabling communities across the province to mount relevant events and programs. During this period, children and youth services in Alberta communities had the support they required to be strong and vibrant.

In 1993, however, the Alberta Government eliminated both municipal transfer payments and recreation/parks capital grants as well as reconfigured the role of regional staff to become generic facilitators during a period of fiscal restraint. Municipalities had to

Figure 1: Alberta’s Recreation and Parks Sector - Historical Perspective



“Recently recreation and park agencies have again begun to appreciate the necessity of being involved in the amelioration of social problems in their communities. Park and recreation departments need to recognize societal expectations and the forces driving the need for afterschool programs if they are to become a significant player in the afterschool program movement.”

Re-Examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-school Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

“Ninety-four per (94%) cent of Albertans believe that recreation participation is an important way to ensure that children and youth live healthy lifestyles.”

Use and benefits of Local Government Recreation and Parks Services: an Alberta Perspective

downsize and explore alternate program delivery methods. ARPA’s *Foundations for Action* summarizes the result:

“Boundaries between public institutions and the private and non-profit sectors started to blur... communities started to focus their services within the four walls of their facilities rather than taking a more balanced approach that included community partnerships. They started to embrace the move from program provider towards facilitator, enabler and educator.”¹²

As Figure 1 reminds us, this shift from service provider to community facilitator had a dramatic impact on the mandates and priorities of municipal recreation departments across the province.

3.3 Status Quo: Recreation and AfterSchool in Alberta

An online survey of municipal recreation departments conducted as part of this research provides a valuable snapshot of local government involvement in the AfterSchool Agenda. Sent to 120 municipal recreation departments, the survey attracted 46 responses for a 40% response rate. While not statistically valid, the responses represent a broad and representative spectrum of small to large communities from across the province.

The following findings bear considering as Alberta charts a way ahead in serving children and youth in the “critical hours”.

Quality afterschool programming, while critical, is beyond budget. It is significant to note (see Chart 1 below) that 87% of the 46 respondents consider it critical to provide quality recreation programs in their communities. When asked if afterschool recreation programs should be part of the recreation department’s mandate, however, the affirmative response slipped to 71%. The other 29% said afterschool recreation is not part of their mandate or that it should be done in partnership with other community agencies. Some respondents observed that they have neither the financial nor human and resource capacity to offer afterschool recreation programs, although they consider such programming vitally important.

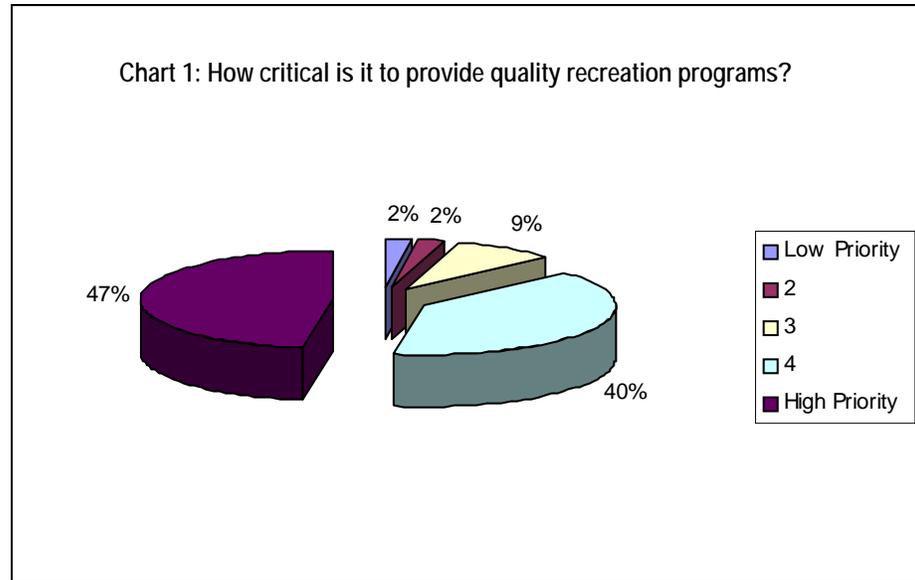
Fifty-eight percent (58%) of recreation departments noted that they run afterschool programs. Further research revealed that the majority of these programs are offered in municipal recreation facilities as part of the regular facility program schedule. Few recreation facility operations provide structured or registered afterschool programs. There are exceptions: in Banff, the Recreation Department operates a licensed afterschool care program for the community; in Sundre, a Youth Program Coordinator hired by the town organizes and supervises afterschool programs in the community centre and in local school facilities. The research confirms, however, that most Alberta recreation departments are not

¹² ARPA Foundations for Action – Enhancing the Quality of Life in Alberta; 2006

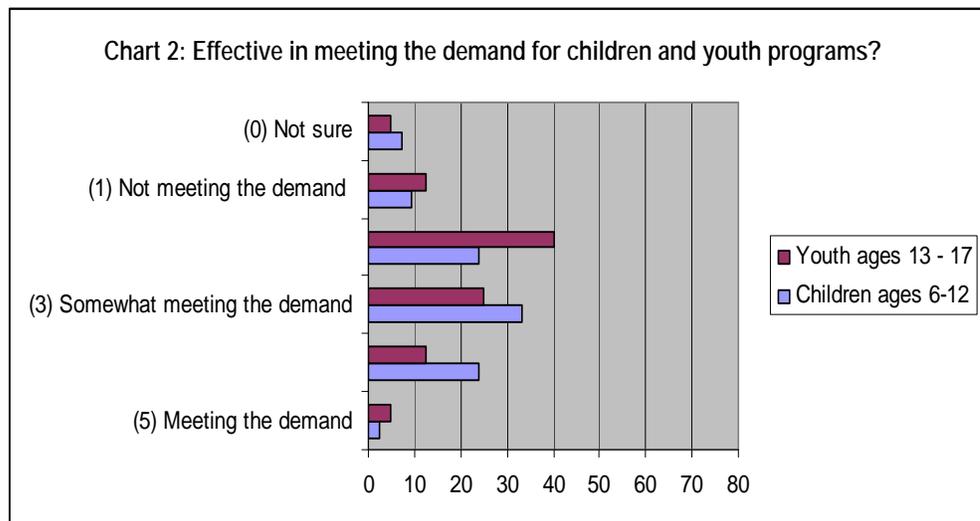
“Children who attend high quality afterschool programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in afterschool programs.”

AfterSchool Alliance

directly involved in providing afterschool programs. Students may come to their facilities for a specific activity after school, but likely do not stay for the entire critical time.



Unable to meet program demand. As identified in the following chart, more than half (53%) of the respondents said they are not meeting the demand for programs for 13 to 17 year olds and one third (33%) said they are not meeting the demand for programs for children 6 to 12. Clearly, municipality recreation programs are not able to keep up with need, particularly for older students.



Barriers to offering afterschool programs. Asked to cite the most common barriers or challenges to providing programs between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., recreation

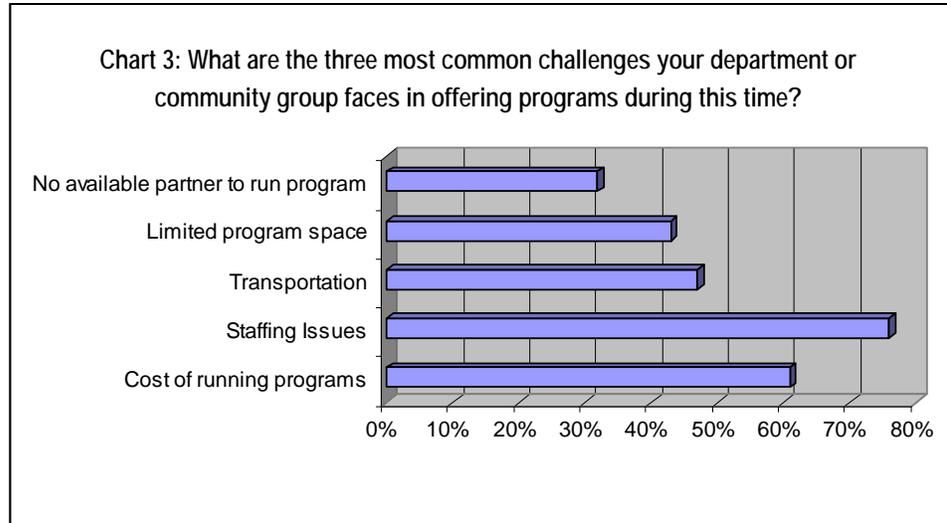
Most common barriers:

- Lack of qualified staff
- Program cost
- Limited program space
- Transportation
- Program fees
- Accessibility

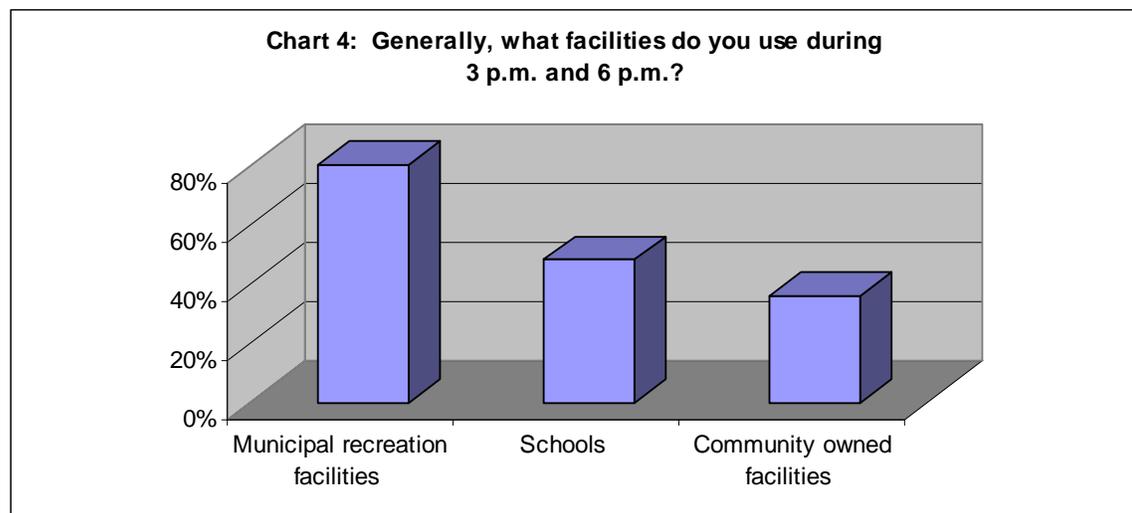
Promising Practice:

- Some jurisdictions and Boys and Girls Clubs are providing transportation from school to the afterschool program.
- In some cases, an arrangement is made with the school bus company to adjust their routes to allow a drop off at the program.

practitioners most frequently identified lack of qualified staff, program cost and limited program space. In interviews, they also named transportation, program fees and accessibility as barriers to participation.



The survey confirmed that the majority (80%) of recreation departments running afterschool programs use municipal recreation facilities. This finding was echoed in interviews. Concentrating afterschool programs in a limited number of sites creates a challenge for both providers and users, as one of the most common barriers to participation is transportation to and from programs.



3.4 Impact on Afterschool Recreation Programming

The survey responses, supported by the interviews, offer several key findings:

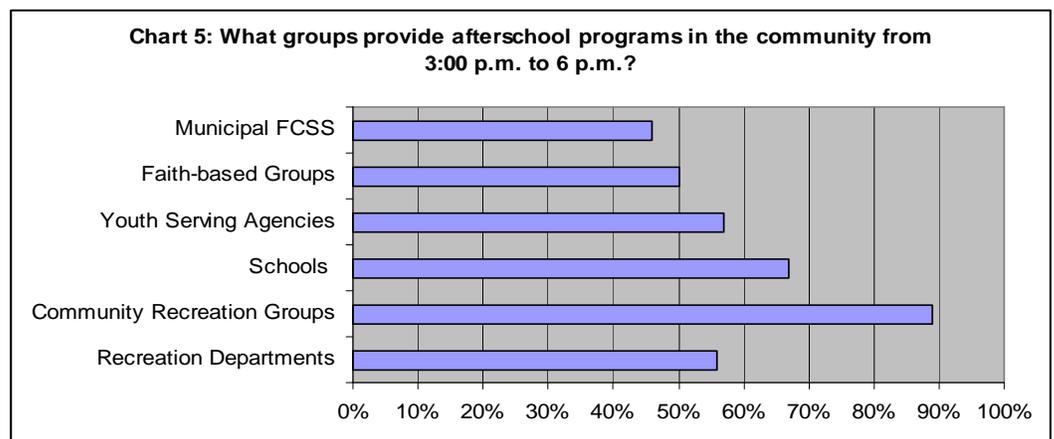
- **Facilities trump programming.** Most communities commit the lion’s share of their recreation dollars and staff to facility operations, leaving minimal capacity and resources for outreach and programming to meet community-based recreation needs and priorities.
- **Transportation and fees limit participation.** Accessibility and transportation continue to be common barriers to participation. An increasing number of parents work and are not available to transport their children to facility-based programs during the critical afterschool hours. Enrolment fees also keep families away, particularly in a post-boom economy. An Edmonton recreation centre recently cancelled an afterschool program due to low registration, for example, and discovered through program evaluations that parents were not registering their children due to transportation issues and registration costs.
- **Municipalities have reduced capacity for outreach.** Across Alberta, most recreation departments have adopted an indirect program delivery model that supports community partners such as community associations and sports and recreation clubs in providing programs. Larger municipalities such as Edmonton and Calgary still run community-based programs, but the majority of municipalities have eliminated positions responsible for reaching out into the community with recreation programming. Where they still exist, programmers tend to be generalists who focus on facility-based programs and operations. Consequently, recreation departments no longer have the staff or budget to offer afterschool programming, even where that is identified as a community priority.

“Parents feel confident that their children will be safe and they do not have to worry about transportation when the program is located in a school facility.”

Brenda Burroughs
Vancouver School Board

3.5 Who Provides Afterschool Programs?

While researching recreation’s role in the Alberta AfterSchool Agenda, it became evident that recreation departments and practitioners are not the only providers of programs and services for children and youth during the “critical hours.”



Asked to identify who in their communities offer programs and services for children and youth between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m., respondents cited the following groups.

- **Community recreation groups.** Survey respondents overwhelming (89%) identified community recreation groups as primary afterschool program providers. Sport and physical activity programs such as gymnastics and ball hockey are often run at this time. Local voluntary sport organizations run the programs, with recreation departments generally providing facility space, equipment or general organizational support.
- **Schools.** The next most common provider of programs in the critical hours are schools, which offer a broad range of extra-curricular and intramural programs between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. During this time, school sports teams practice and play games, general interest clubs meet and mentorship and other specialized school activities occur.
- **Youth serving agencies.** Organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Scouts, Guides, YMCA's and 4-H Clubs offer afterschool programs in their own facilities, or in collaboration with schools. For example, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Edmonton runs mentorship programs in approximately 24 Edmonton area schools.
- **Recreation departments.** Fifty-six per cent of the responding municipalities said their recreation departments offer programs between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. These programs typically occur at municipally operated recreation facilities.
- **Municipal FCSS funding.** In a number of municipalities, afterschool initiatives receive funding from Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), whose mandate is to strengthen the family and community by providing quality programs and services that focus on prevention and identified social outcomes. Municipally allocated FCSS dollars support neighbourhood centres, afterschool care programs, Boys and Girls Clubs and other agencies that offer a wide range of children and youth programs during the critical hours.
- **Faith-based groups.** Faith-based organizations have a strong history of providing children and youth programs for their congregations. In a number of communities, churches offer programs for all youth, regardless of their religious affiliation.
- **Licensed afterschool care providers.** Although not identified by survey respondents, licensed afterschool care providers also look after many school-age children when they are not in school. Alberta Children and Youth Services recently announced a new School-Age Care Program with the goal of creating 14,000 new child care spaces over the next three years. The program also makes licensed care more accessible by expanding care subsidies. Effective September 2008, eligible low and middle income families using licensed school aged child care centres have access to provincial subsidies.

“Stakeholders differ on which after-school objectives to emphasize.... Given the potential for tension between competing agendas, there is a need for partnerships between service providers and other stakeholders that can give full voice to the differing views of what an after-school program should be.”

Re-Examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-School Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

In sum, while municipal recreation departments may have limited involvement in afterschool programming, other sectors are offering programs and services. The focus of these programs may not be recreation, yet many offer activities that are recreation-based, such as sports, arts and music, outdoor play spaces, and free and unstructured play activities.

Given that recreation and parks departments report unmet demand for recreation programs, and given that professionals in the sector have expertise to offer regarding optimal uses of recreation for holistic development, it would be advantageous for recreation and parks to partner with other providers to expand the breadth and quality of afterschool recreation programs by all sectors. As Youth Recreation Specialist Dr. Peter Witt observes, such partnerships would give “full voice” to the range of benefits afterschool programming can provide.

4. MOVING THE AGENDA FORWARD: CASE STUDIES

Recognizing the urgency of paying closer heed to the critical afterschool hours, this research included an environmental scan to identify excellent initiatives elsewhere. The following case studies exemplify the steps being taken to extend the reach and enhance the quality of afterschool offerings. These short summaries hint at what can be accomplished through united action as well as challenges along the way.

A variety of U.S. profiles demonstrate the variety of stakeholders at work at national, state and local levels. Examples from Sweden and Australia provide a perspective on what is occurring in other parts of the world.

In reviewing these case studies, note the various blends of public, private and not-for-profit stakeholders involved as funders, frontline delivery agents, researchers and resource hubs. Note also the common themes emerging regarding programming, staffing, administrative structure and sustaining networks.

Further detail regarding a selection of the U.S. programs is provided in Appendix A - Summary of Promising Practices – Afterschool Programs in the United States.

4.1 Building an Afterschool System: the U.S. Experience

The U.S. federal government has made a substantial commitment to supporting educational achievement and accountability at the state and local levels. Coupled with other public and private funding, that investment has borne fruit in a rich menu of quality afterschool programs linked and supported by an expanding array of local, state and federal networks. Those networks are proving effective advocates and evangelists for continued expansion of afterschool opportunities in a nation that still is far from meeting the need.

4.1.1 Federal Funding: Enabling Afterschool Action

Federal support for afterschool programming has come primarily through initiatives such as 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC). The CCLC structure and purpose shifted in 2001, when the United States Congress enacted the *No Child Left Behind Act*, an approach to elementary and secondary schooling grounded in the belief that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes. The Act transferred CCLC funding and administration from the U.S. Department of Education to state education agencies. Equally important, the Act narrowed the focus of 21st CCLC from a community learning center model focused on giving all members of the community access to school resources, to an afterschool program model that provides services to students attending high-poverty, low performing schools.

As the only U.S. federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting afterschool programs, CCLC provides funding to each state from a \$1-billion

“Overall, three program elements have emerged as particularly significant:

- (1) program involvement that has sufficient intensity and duration to bring about desired results, and
- (2) the availability of caring, committed and qualified adults who can develop in-depth, meaningful relationships with participants and
- (3) the necessity of adequate sustaining resources.”

Dr. P. Witt &
Dr. J. Crompton

“Beyond spurring additional investments, a cost-benefit analysis conducted by the Rose Institute at Claremont McKenna College found that every dollar invested in afterschool actually saves between three and thirteen dollars in costs ranging from grade retention to future incarceration. Based on the Rose Institute’s estimate, the current investment in 21st CCLC saves more than \$3 billion in taxpayer dollars.”

21st CCLC Fact Sheet
Afterschool Alliance

“When cities partner with their respective state networks, they benefit from joint planning efforts, the sharing of resources and best practices, and the formation of new partnerships that are necessary to strengthen local efforts and create comprehensive statewide afterschool policies.”

Cities and Statewide Afterschool Networks Partnering to Support Afterschool
National League of Cities

budget, benefitting close to 1.5 million low-income children and youth in nearly 10,000 schools and community-based centres nationwide.¹³

Afterschool programs funded by CCLC offer the following services:

- academic enrichment programs that help students meet state and local achievement standards;
- a broad menu of programs and services ranging from arts, music and recreation to counselling and drug and violence prevention;
- literacy and related educational development services for families and children.

The CCLC initiative has spurred state and local afterschool investments and helped leverage funding from a variety of sources to build sustainable afterschool infrastructure. In California, for example, voters passed Proposition 49 in 2002, calling for full funding of afterschool programs across the state. In 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced an afterschool budget of \$550 million to supplement federal CCLC funding.

To make school-based programs viable, governments are requiring matching funds from the private sector. Numerous foundations and national corporations have stepped up to fill this need. The JCPenny Afterschool Fund is a notable example of this support. The Fund partners with the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and the United Way of America to expand the reach of afterschool programs that foster academic, physical and social development while working to raise awareness of the benefits of afterschool programming.¹⁴

Over the last 10 years, the United States has enjoyed a welcome expansion of afterschool networks and collaborative systems. Commentary from a recent *Forum for Youth Investment Policy* notes that the U.S. afterschool movement has “shifted from loose associations of fledgling programs to a network of providers, standards of practice, professional development supports, accountability measures and intermediary organizations that are responsible for building and sustaining this kind of infrastructure.”¹⁵ In short, a decade of focused attention to afterschool programming has significantly expanded community capacity to engage children and youth in positive activities during this critical time.

¹³ 21st Century Community Learning Centers – fact sheet from the Afterschool Alliance www.afterschoolalliance.org

¹⁴ The JCPenny Afterschool Fund is a charitable organization committed to providing children with access to afterschool programs that foster their academic, physical and social development, thus ensuring that every child has access to the “world of opportunities that awaits them after school.”

¹⁵ Speaking in One Voice: Toward Common Measures for OST Programs and Systems November 2008: The Forum for Youth Investment, pg.1

Municipal leaders are deeply concerned about the availability of high-quality after-school programs in their communities. In a 2003 survey many said if they had resources to do more, they would focus on creating more afterschool and child care opportunities, as well as recreation, enrichment, and mentoring programs.

*The Afterschool Hours:
A New Focus for America's
Cities*
National League of Cities

“Municipal leaders have a unique opportunity to establish a community-wide vision about the need for and the importance of afterschool and its connection to the overall well-being of their cities.”

*The Afterschool Hours:
A New Focus for America's
Cities*
National League of Cities

4.1.2 National League of Cities: Equipping Municipal Leaders

Noting deep concern among municipal leaders about afterschool gaps, and realizing that those leaders have “an enormous bully pulpit” to build coordinated citywide systems, the National League of Cities is doing much to equip its members for action and advocacy. Its initiatives include a three-year Municipal Leadership for Expanded Learning Opportunities technical assistance project to “deepen and enhance the role of municipal leaders in ensuring the availability of constructive activities for young people during non-school hours.”¹⁶

Launched in 2001 with the support of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the leadership project is building a toolkit of promising practices and resources through work with eight cities selected through a competitive process. Among the outcomes is *Expanding Afterschool Opportunities*, an action kit for municipal leaders.¹⁷ The kit urges municipal leaders to catalyze action in six specific areas:

- **Promote partnerships:** reach out to school officials, promote collaborations with youth-serving groups, keep key stakeholders informed.
- **Build public will:** repeatedly deliver straightforward messages that connect with people’s experiences in public appearances, via multiple media and in tandem with community coalitions.
- **Document local resources and needs:** Map existing afterschool programs by going to where the people are -- providers, youth, families – and analyze gaps and overlaps in geography, type of program, ages served, etc.
- **Improve quality so that programs deliver on promises:** promote and enable networks, standards, career ladders, volunteer energy (including youth, seniors and civic staff).
- **Broaden access:** create a resource directory, promote sliding scale fees, add programs in underserved communities, open municipal facilities to community groups, offer free or reduced-fee transit, locate programs centrally, program for diverse cultures, involve multicultural leaders.
- **Finance a stable citywide system:** chart costs for both direct services and support systems, create a framework for shared responsibility that involves business as well as governments and providers, advocate for core public funding, create a children’s budget.

The National League of Cities is also encouraging the formation of statewide networks. A strategy guide published in 2009 with that intent notes that afterschool networks have formed in 38 states since 2002, thanks in large measure to support

¹⁶ Ouellette, Mark, Audrey M. Hutchinson and Nina Frant. *The afterschool hours: A New Focus for America's Cities. A Report on the Municipal Leadership for Expanded Learning Opportunities Project funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.* National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, 2005.

¹⁷ *Expanding Afterschool Opportunities.* National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, Washington D.C. Action Kit for Municipal Leaders, Issue #4.

“Working in tandem with the Connecticut Afterschool Network to secure additional state afterschool funding in 2006, former Bridgeport Mayor John Fabrizi provided testimony to the Connecticut General Assembly on why afterschool programs are critical to Bridgeport. The city supported the network’s ‘ask,’ which helped pave the way for a state budget line item for \$4.5 million. Of these funds, \$500,000 went directly to the City of Bridgeport to support its local afterschool programs.”

Cities and Statewide Afterschool Networks Partnering to Support Afterschool
National League of Cities

from the Charles Mott Foundation. The networks have three main goals: to influence state afterschool policy, to secure more state funding and to ensure programs are of high value.

Many cities are working hand in hand with their statewide networks to improve afterschool opportunities. They’re lobbying, launching joint projects, sharing best practices and more. As a result, the networks are enabling growth in afterschool opportunities, standards, principles, evaluation and excellence.

“Given the broad reach, influence, and expertise of the networks, cities benefit from the training and statewide spotlight that the networks shine on them. These partnerships take many shapes, but in all cases, efforts to improve afterschool opportunities have moved ahead further and faster as a result of collaboration,” the guide says. “The combination of statewide efforts is evolving into a national network that is increasingly well positioned to influence national priorities and better serve children and families.”¹⁸

4.1.3 4-H Afterschool: National Funding Magnet and Resource Hub

One of many national partnership that supports state, regional and local programs, 4-H Afterschool¹⁹ is a focused effort within the 4-H Youth Development Program to create and improve afterschool programs in urban, suburban, and rural communities by offering youth development training and hands-on curricula to program staff. It also seeks to organize 4-H clubs in afterschool programs.

4-H Afterschool supports programs run by 4-H and other youth-serving organizations that aim to engage children and youth from kindergarten through high school in “long-term structured programs with support from caring and supportive adults.” The programs run outside of instructional hours, including before and after school, teacher workdays, school holidays, summer months, and sometimes weekends. Some examples:

- **Mini-society Entrepreneurship Training:** high school based training program in New England states supports youth in creating business opportunities.
- **Students Teaching Students:** high school students in New Jersey work with professionals to teach astronomy to fourth graders.
- **Agricultural Awareness Program:** urban youth learn about farming and animal husbandry.
- **Kalkaska County 4-H Skateboard Club:** youth in Michigan build their own equipment and skateboards and mentor younger children in safe skateboarding activities.

¹⁸ *Cities and Statewide Afterschool Networks Partnering to Support Afterschool*. Strategy Guide, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities, 2009.

¹⁹ www.4hafterschool.org

4-H Afterschool has succeeded in attracting support for specific aspects of its work from an impressive list of national partners, including the following:

- **JC Penney Afterschool Fund** provides financial support to 4-H Afterschool programs nationally and locally.
- **Metlife Foundation** provides training to afterschool program providers and connects youth with community civic engagement opportunities.
- **John Deere** provides educational resources for every 4-H program in the United States and supports the development of the national website.
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of America and YMCA** partner nationally with 4-H to build collaborative programming, minimize areas of duplication and leverage resources and funding opportunities.
- **Junior Achievement Afterschool** collaborates with 4-H to enhance the business and economic activities of local 4-H afterschool centers.
- **The Afterschool Alliance** provides research and outreach programs.

4.1.4 Massachusetts: Commission Recommends Statewide Council

An estimated 80% of children and youth in Massachusetts are not participating in afterschool and out-of-school opportunities due to cost, transportation and other barriers. That key finding and others prompted The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time²⁰ to propose a new Statewide Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council involving senior leaders from a variety of disciplines to create a more unified and coordinated response to the need. The Council would involve state and municipal governments, public safety, arts, libraries, parks and recreation departments, workforce development, business, higher education, private funders and youth, and other community leaders.

The commission recommended that new body be charged with implementing five key recommendations:

- building public **awareness**;
- providing **information** and increasing **access**;
- improving **quality** and supporting the **workforce**;
- fostering **partnerships** and **collaborations**, and
- **sustaining** the effort.

Massachusetts already has an afterschool network. Established in 2003, the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership works to expand and extend learning

“To spur the level of cooperation and collaboration that is necessary to achieve dramatic improvements, the Special Commission recommends the creation of a statewide Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council.”

*Our Common Wealth:
Building a Future for Our
Children and Youth*
The Report of the
Massachusetts Special
Commission on After School
and Out of School Time.

²⁰ Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth. The Report of the Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time. Executive Summary, November 2007. www.massafterschoolcomm.org

opportunities for school-age children, youth, families and communities through statewide policy development, local grassroots networks, education and advocacy and strategic public-private partnerships. It also provides resources for programs and families, including information and technical assistance, networking, advocacy support and peer-to-peer support.

“In the decade since the first OSI grant was awarded to TASC, public funding for after-school programs in New York City has increased considerably. More importantly, perhaps, is that this increase is not concentrated at any level of government.”

Public Funding for Comprehensive After-School Programs, 1998-2008
New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy

4.1.5 New York City: Challenge Grant Spurs Public Investment

Afterschool programs in New York City received an infusion in 1998 when The Open Society Institute (OSI) gave a \$125 million challenge grant to The After-School Corporation (TASC), which began operating that same year. Using the OSI infusion to leverage other dollars, TASC set about developing programs that demonstrably benefit children and youth, with the goal of transforming afterschool program delivery and funding to “essential service” status.

Spurred in part by the challenge grant, public spending increased dramatically. Of particular note, New York City’s investment more than quadrupled. The City now provides more than 50% of the public dollars, creating “the largest municipally funded system of afterschool programs in the nation.”

Ten years after the infusion, eight times more children and youth were participating in interschool programs that receive public funds, according to a policy brief by the New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy.²¹ About 160,000 were being served, up from 20,000. What’s more, partnerships between public schools and community based and cultural organizations greatly expanded the reach of the programs, in every sense of that term.

“Happily, increased enrolment has not led to a decrease in the amount of money spent per participant. In fact, spending per participants has increased by over 150% over the past 10 years,” the authors report. “Our research shows that public investment for after-school programs has increased tremendously in the past decade and is likely to continue into the future. Fiscal pressures at all levels of government may lead to declines in available funding in any particular year. Over the past ten years in New York City, however, public support for after-school programs has become one of the foundations of service for children and youth.”

“Fiscal pressures at all levels of government may lead to declines in available funding in any particular year. Over the past ten years in New York City, however, public support for after-school programs has become one of the foundations of service for children and youth.”

Public Funding for Comprehensive After-School Programs, 1998-2008
New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy

4.1.6 New York State Network: Advocacy + Action

The New York State Afterschool Network demonstrates the potential of united advocacy and action. Begun in 2001 as an advisory group to the New York State Education Department during transfer of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers to the states, the group became New York State Afterschool Network²² in

²¹ Public Funding for Comprehensive After-School Programs, 1998-2008. New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy, IESP Policy Brief, October 2008.

²² New York State Afterschool Network, www.nysan.org. © 2009, retrieved June 11, 2009.

2003 with funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and local fiscal sponsorship from The After-School Corporation (TASC). Now led by an 18-member Steering Committee, the network has five affiliated regional networks and hundreds of participating partner organizations.

The network advocates strongly for more intentional, less fragmented afterschool delivery and funding. Noting that afterschool programs reach 400,000 kids across New York State yet leave an estimated 600,000 unserved, a 2008 policy brief recommends a cohesive system whose guiding principles include the following:

“The families of New York State deserve better than our current approach to afterschool: a patchwork of poorly coordinated programs that does not reflect the reality that learning and personal development happen in times, places and ways the go beyond the traditional school day. State policymakers have an essential role to play in making change happen.”

Creating a Stronger Afterschool System for New York State
NYSAN Policy Brief

- state leadership to ensure full access;
- accountability to a common system of quality standards coupled with flexibility to meet local needs;
- partnerships at all levels;
- a coordinated, dependable and sufficient funding stream.²³

The network calls on New York State policymakers to take these actions toward a unified system:

- **Leadership:** Bring public and private sector leaders together to establish a common vision for the State’s afterschool system and create the planning and policymaking mechanisms needed to achieve it.
- **Coordination:** Establish a State-level leadership body to facilitate interagency coordination and stakeholder input on policy and funding – a body empowered to align expectations across agencies and funding streams and to find new ways to coordinate and leverage public and private resources.
- **Resources:** Align and ultimately increase investment to ensure all children have access to high-quality afterschool programs, based on a cost model that encompasses professional development, technical assistance, transportation, evaluation and other activities that promote program quality.
- **Accountability plus variety:** Ensure continued support for variety and choice in program approaches and settings while holding programs accountable for common quality standards and youth development outcomes.
- **Data-driven decisions:** Gather and use data on the supply-demand gap, uses of local-provincial-federal funding, etc., to drive policy development and resource allocation.
- **Intermediaries:** Support the expansion of intermediary organizations that facilitate afterschool program development and quality improvement at the state, regional and local levels.²⁴

²³ *A Policy Agenda to Achieve Afterschool for All in New York State.* NYSAN Policy Brief. New York State Afterschool Network, January 2008.

²⁴ *Creating a Stronger Afterschool System for New York State.* NYSAN Policy Brief. New York State Afterschool Network, January 2008.

Walking the talk, NYSAN has created a nationally recognized Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool and (free for download) user's guide and launched a year-long, invitation-only leadership institute for funders. It also builds system capacity through professional development and networking opportunities and by collaboratively seeking funding from varied sources. Among its awareness raising activities was an honorary lighting of the Empire State Building as part of Lights On Afterschool!

4.1.7 California AfterSchool Network: Mutual Support

Afterschool initiatives in California also have the benefit of a statewide network intent on improving and expanding afterschool opportunities. The California AfterSchool Network²⁵ includes leaders from state agencies, local governments, employers, education, law enforcement, philanthropic organizations and groups and associations for children and youth that support afterschool activities and can provide resources or other support to the network. The Center for Community School Partnerships at the University of California (Davis) School of Education provides fiscal and administrative support and serves as the university's liaison.

With working committees on research, quality, programs and policy, the network seeks to influence policy and coordinate local and statewide out-of-school efforts. It has five goals:

1. Of the field and for the field, we support each other.
2. We work to ensure access to necessary funds and resources for afterschool programs.
3. We help each other provide great programs benefiting children, youth, families, and communities.
4. We develop strategic partnerships with state level agencies involved in our field.
5. We build a strong California AfterSchool Network.

The network monitors issues, supports and disseminates best-practice research, launches advocacy and coordinates action. Its participants and allies are connected through such means as forums, a listserv and a website. Funders include the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and the California Department of Education.

4.1.8 New Jersey After 3: Statewide Public/Private Funder

Founded in 2004, New Jersey After 3²⁶ is the nation's first statewide public/private partnership created to fund afterschool programs. Funding comes through federal,

“Of the field and for the field,
we support each other.”

California AfterSchool
Network
Goal #1

²⁵ California AfterSchool Network, www.afterschoolnetwork.org, © 2007, retrieved June 11, 2009.

²⁶ www.njafter3.org/index.php

state and local governments but also from corporations and non-profit groups in communities throughout New Jersey. This combination of public and private support is essential to the partnership's success.

Led by a Board of Trustees drawn from business, education and the nonprofit community, the partnership funds an extensive network of school-based afterschool programs run by Boys & Girls Clubs, faith-based groups, museums, universities, community development corporations, YW/YMCAs, and other nonprofit youth-serving organizations. Together, they serve more than 14,000 children in 100-plus schools.

NJ After 3 uses a well established, research-based program model and works hard to support, inspire, empower and train staff, resulting in low turnover and a rich mix of projects and activities. Almost all programs include reading and math activities; 89% offer organized sports; 85% provide volunteer/service learning activities; and 76% include a health and nutrition component.

With minority enrolment and attendance both greater than 75%, NJA3 is benefiting a wide range of students as demonstrated in the following evaluation results:

- Keeping kids safe: 91% of students felt safe in NJA3 programs.
- Inspiring student learning: NJA3 students demonstrated statistically significant academic gains in language arts.
- Fostering skill development: program participants demonstrated enhanced workplace and social skill development.
- Encouraging positive youth development: 85% of NJA3 students are offered opportunities for service learning and volunteerism.
- Ensuring program satisfaction: 91% of parents were extremely or somewhat satisfied with the afterschool program their child attended.

On all accounts, NJA3 is meeting its goals and making a difference for those involved.

NJA3 benefits from the New Jersey Afterschool Network, one of the 38 that have sprung up across the United States. A three-year initiative of the New Jersey School Age Care Coalition, the network shares this vision:

- All children will have access to affordable, high quality afterschool programs that promote their intellectual, social, emotional and physical development.
- All communities will have safe, enriching and supportive environments for children after school.

The network advocates for broad-based support for quality, affordable programming and broader access to afterschool programs.

On all accounts, New Jersey After 3 is meeting its goals and making a difference for those involved.

4.1.9 Chicago: Citywide Hub and Successful Teen Network

In 2006, the Wallace Foundation selected Chicago as one of five cities to receive funding to create a stronger, sustainable public afterschool system. The Chicago Out-of-School Time Project²⁷ emerged as a publicly funded initiative to create city-wide support for afterschool programming.

Housed at the City's Department of Children and Youth Services, the project brings together leaders from various afterschool providers to support Chicago's afterschool programming, with a primary focus on addressing the challenges faced by urban teens. Out-of-School Time services include the following:

- A city-wide program and participant database that enhances the data and information collected from individual program providers.
- Leadership teams involving multiple levels of staff from the five project partners meet regularly to discuss their programs and coordinate decisions. Teams also meet with the Chief of Staff of the Chicago Park District and Deputy Commissioner of Children and Youth Services.
- The Project After-School Chicago website (www.afterschoolchicago.org), launched in 2008, includes library, school, park and other programs in one portal, allowing parents and teens to view all available programs across agencies.
- A Citywide Employment Initiative matches youth with potential employers and tracks work experience.

A unique aspect of the Chicago Out-of-School Time Project is the **After School Matters (ASM) Network** for teens, which offers hands-on job training in the arts, sports, technology, communication and science. While building positive relationships with adults and peers, teens learn skills that transfer to the workplace.

The largest program of its kind serving teenagers in the United States, ASM maintains formal partnerships with the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Libraries, the Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and various community-based organizations. In concert with these partners, ASM works with grassroots groups, teaching organizations and independent instructors to run nearly 600 programs at dozens of community "campuses," including afterschool locations, parks, libraries and other community-based organizations.

Chicago teens involved in ASM take part in engaging activities that expose them to educational and career opportunities in their neighbourhoods and the city at large.

"A key goal of any citywide afterschool system should be to ensure that all children have access to appropriate programs during nonschool hours. If parents cannot afford program fees, or if there simply are too few opportunities in their neighbourhood, large numbers of children may be left out. When that happens, families and cities both lose."

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
 Institute for Youth Education & Families
 National League of Cities

"Students who spend one to four times per week in extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities."

National League of Cities

²⁷ Information on this program can be found through the Department of Children & Youth Services on the City of Chicago website: www.cityofchicago.org

Programs are based on a developmental model in which participants follow a progression that allows for deliberate skill development and work experience over time. Among the choices:

- **Club 37**, a collection of afterschool programs that allow youth to drop in and explore various opportunities while making no formal commitment.
- Mayor Daley's **NeighborSports League**, which runs during the school year and summer months.
- **Apprenticeships and internships**. Teens are matched with skilled practitioners in comprehensive apprentice and skill training programs.

By coordinating city resources and anchoring programs around clusters of public high schools, parks and libraries, ASM demonstrably enriches the lives of teens.

By coordinating city resources and anchoring programs around clusters of public high schools, parks and libraries, the After School Matters Network demonstrably enriches the lives of teens.

4.1.10 Los Angeles: Accessible Grassroots Programming

An example of a community-based non-profit afterschool program, **THINK (Teaching, Helping, Inspiring & Nurturing Kids) Together – Los Angeles**²⁸ serves more than 35,000 students at 200-plus school and community sites in Los Angeles and surrounding counties. Begun as community action to combat increased crime in a local community, THINK Together has evolved into one of California's leading and largest providers of academically oriented out-of-school programs. Program partners include schools, corporations, foundations, faith communities, individuals and government.

In addition to free programs, THINK Together now offers fee for service programming for school-aged children in more affluent communities. While providing academic support, enrichment activities and daily physical fitness, these paid programs also earn matching funds for the THINK Together low income programs, which continue to charge no fees.

THINK Together Mission

To provide high quality academically-oriented afterschool programs for K-12 students regardless of race, creed, or socioeconomic status.

THINK Together Values

1. Education is the single most important factor in helping people achieve their full potential. Democracy requires educated citizens.
2. Every child deserves a chance to learn and grow. Learning is an ongoing joyful process that shouldn't stop when the final school bell rings.

"Municipal leaders and their school and community partners need to make sustainability a priority from day one. That means learning everything you can about diverse funding streams and designing an infrastructure that will outlast the term of any municipal leader."

*The afterschool hours:
A New Focus for America's
Cities*
National League of Cities

²⁸ <http://www.thinktogether.org/>

3. As schools cope with a difficult budget environment, they need community partners that will come alongside them and provide a scaffolding of support to their most needy students.
4. The community-at-large is responsible for all of its children and needs well-structured, well-managed opportunities to invest in them.
5. To have meaningful societal impact, afterschool programs need to be financially sustainable over the long term.

Distinguishing features

- Programs operate daily from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at local school campuses, church community rooms and apartment complexes.
- Program supervisors are a mix of professionals (often teachers) and volunteer tutors/mentors.
- Participants receive healthy snacks immediately after school and can choose from a broad selection of activities. They also receive an additional hour of instruction from teachers from local schools.
- Each centre offers an hour of structured and an hour of unstructured physical activity.
- A typical site serves 90 to 250 students a day.
- At the middle and high school centres, programs are less structured and provide a special interest club atmosphere.
- This is one of the few afterschool programs in the United States with built-in assessment systems to provide ongoing program and student evaluation.
- Sustainable funding is generated through fee-based enrichment programs.
- The program mobilizes an army of volunteers from various groups in the community to improve tutor-to-student ratios, thereby enhancing the quality of academic and enrichment programs.

More than 100 students from the Shalimar neighbourhood alone have gone to colleges, all being the first in their family to do so

Evaluation results

An independent evaluation by Hoffman, Clarke and Associates indicates improvement in students' academic results, along with high levels of parent and teacher satisfaction. Among the findings:

- More than 100 students from the Shalimar neighbourhood alone have gone to colleges, all being the first in their family to do so.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of participants show significant improvement in math and 60% demonstrate improvement in reading.
- Teacher surveys show that 73% of students improved in homework completion and 71% improved in overall academic performance.
- Parent surveys show that 92% of students are receiving better grades on their report cards.

- Student surveys indicate 68% feel better about their ability to read and speak English; 86% report an improvement on homework completion.

4.2 Overseas Case Studies

Examples of afterschool action from Sweden and Australia provide a perspective on directions being set in other parts of the world.

4.2.1 Sweden: An Integrated System

As part of a new approach to education and development, Sweden recently integrated schools, preschools and leisure centres. Reforms in 2001 and 2003 also increased the availability of preschool and school aged childcare.

In Sweden, preschool is universally available for 4- and 5-year-olds, as well as for children of parents who are unemployed or on leave. Childcare helps parents combine parenthood and work while ensuring a quality environment for children's growth and development.

Preschool classes, introduced in 1998, serve children aged one to five. Six year olds used to be served by preschool, but increasingly attend leisure centres, which are generally integrated with schools.

School aged childcare, for students through age 12, is provided through leisure centres, family daycare homes or open leisure time activity. Children of working or studying parents can go to dayhomes or enrol in leisure centres, where educational group activities are offered during non-school hours. Open leisure activities provide an alternative to both leisure centres and family day care homes for 10- to 12-year-olds. Participants do not need to enrol, and these may act as complementary activities for children in day homes.²⁹

4.2.2 Australia: Active Afterschool Communities

The Australian government launched Active Afterschool Communities in 2005 to address significant societal changes, including childhood inactivity (in part due to decline of physical education and sports in schools) and the inability of many working parents to engage their children in afterschool activities.

The program offers structured, free physical activity programs for primary students from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on school days. It particularly targets inactive children, with the aim of helping them build relationships with community organizations and

As part of a new approach to education and development, Sweden recently integrated schools, preschools and leisure centres.

²⁹ One potentially negative effect of the new integrated system that has been noted by Sweden's National Agency for Education is that preschool has become more like school than intended, with progress charted. This is seen to be in conflict with the basic intent of reform. *Source: Swedish National Agency for Education Report No. 283*

sporting clubs. Due to end in 2007, the initiative has received extended funding to 2010.

The Australian Sports Commission, which manages the program, aims to involve 3,200 primary schools and out of school care services between now and 2010, up from 900 in 2005. The Commission identifies local community involvement as a crucial cornerstone of the program.

Participating schools and out of school care services receive the following:

- funding to cover costs associated with program delivery;
- a regional coordinator to link them with program deliverers;
- a quality assurance framework;
- professional development opportunities for those involved in program delivery.

Results in one community

To evaluate the success of Active Afterschool Communities after the first three-year term, researchers studied the program's impact on a participating community. Focus groups and interviews with stakeholders, program deliverers, participants, schools and staff revealed a generally positive response to the program. The following were cited as benefits or positive outcomes:

- Increased activity levels among children participating in the program.
- Participants exhibit improved attitudes towards physical activity and improved confidence.
- Removal of barriers to participation in physical activity.
- Quality assurance programs gave parents and others confidence that the programs are safe.
- Success came from partnering with experienced children and youth service providers.
- Sport organizations appreciated the opportunity to showcase their sport, which has resulted in increased participation.
- The schools supported recreation activities that came with funding for sports equipment.
- Money and training for coaches is valued by both program deliverers and sport organizations.

Quality assurance programs
give parents and others
confidence that the
programs are safe.

4.3 Ensuring Positive Outcomes

Experiences in the United States and elsewhere are adding to the wide body of research³⁰ supporting the conclusion that afterschool programs can play a significant role in influencing the decisions, behaviour and development of our children and youth. Participants in CCLC funded programs are showing demonstrated positive effects in academic performance, social and emotional development, prevention of criminal/risky behaviours and overall health and wellness. Those positive outcomes benefit the students involved, but also their parents, teachers, employers and surrounding communities.

Beyond tending to immediate needs, time well spent in these formative years can shape patterns that become lifestyle choices, thus holding important implications in adulthood. Elementary school students attending BEST, an afterschool program in Los Angeles, not only improved their regular school day attendance and participated in 30% less criminal activity, but reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college.³¹

Quality afterschool programs are proving particularly helpful in developing “soft skills” such as communication, teamwork and problem solving – exactly the skills employers seek.³² As a result, afterschool programs are increasingly seen as an arena where older youth can develop important skills that equip them for the workforce as well as for daily life.³³ Some of the most successful U.S. programs, particularly for older youth, involve internships, mentoring and meaningful volunteerism.

When children have access to excellent afterschool programming, parents and their employers also benefit. Parents who know that their children are safe and engaged in positive activities and behaviours are able to focus on work and become more productive.³⁴

As those examples illustrate, experience in the United States confirms that the positive outcomes of afterschool programs are interrelated. What’s more, individual outcomes are matched by larger-scale benefits. When youth are engaged in positive behaviour, whole communities are safer – and in the long run, financially better off. An overwhelming majority (91%) of U.S. police chiefs agree that failure to invest in afterschool and educational child care programs reaps greater costs in crime, welfare payments and other public services. Eighty-six police chiefs said

“Every dollar spent on the Quantum Opportunities Program, a rigorously evaluated afterschool program in Philadelphia, returned \$3.04 in benefits to participants and the public, without even accounting for a six fold drop in crime by participating boys.”

National League of Cities”

“Youth who participate in afterschool programs improve significantly in three major areas: feelings and attitudes, indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance.”

Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg
The Impact of After-School Programs That Promote Personal and Social Skills

³⁰ General bibliography

³¹ 21st Century Community Learning Centers Providing Afterschool Supports to Communities Nationwide. Afterschool Alliance Fact Sheet, February 2008.

³² Miller, Afterschool Programs, p. 8-9.

³³ Harvard Family Research Project, “Research Update: Highlights from the Out-of School Time Database”. September 2008 No.3 p.4. <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/research-update-3-highlights-from-the-out-of-school-time-database>

³⁴ Miller, Afterschool Programs, p. 5.

“Recent evaluations suggest that strong afterschool programs might help participants academically, socially and behaviourally, but not all programs produce these benefits, and in those that do, the benefits are often modest....

To achieve strong outcomes, targeting those who need a program’s specific supports is important. Whatever group is thus identified, programs need to practice creative, persistent and aggressive recruitment efforts that focus on word of mouth and include contact with parents and school staff, especially in the case of school-based programs.”

Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“In many afterschool programs, recreation is thought of as the ‘hook’ that attracts children to become involved. However, simply involving children in fun and games is not viewed as sufficient for increasing recreational achievement.

Thus, in many settings, particularly when school personnel are involved, efforts are being made to ‘enrich’ recreation activities by using them as tools for purposive learning.”

Re-Examining the Role of Parks in After-school Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

expanding afterschool and educational childcare programs would greatly reduce youth crime and violence. Not only did the police chiefs indicate a preference for addressing juvenile crime through prevention, but more than half favoured afterschool and summer youth programs as the primary prevention strategies.³⁵

Yet it must be acknowledged that not all afterschool programs achieve what they set out to do. Observing that many program evaluations discover modest benefits if any, Public/Private Ventures commissioned a synthesis of a decade of findings. In the resulting report, *Getting It Right*,³⁶ the authors observe, “programs that try to fulfill too many goals are likely to achieve none.” They urge program providers to ask two key questions:

1. What can and do we want to achieve?
2. Are our strategies in line with our goals?

“To achieve a goal,” they advise, “a program must serve the ‘right youth’ with the ‘right stuff’ for the ‘right period of time.’”

Varied, purposeful, well-organized activities staffed by attentive adults with the right staff-to-youth ratios are essential to retaining youth, this research found. And retention is crucial, because the longer a young person participates in a variety of activities, the better the outcomes.

Staffing decisions are also key to outcomes, the authors say. “Having permanent staff is the most critical factor for creating the program’s culture and climate. But having a staff that shares a common vision and relates well to young people is also essential. Hiring, supervision, activity monitoring and careful allocation of available resources all contribute to strong programs.”

4.4 Integrating Recreation

In the United States, as in Alberta, recreation and parks have played a minor role in recent afterschool initiatives. As Dr. Peter Witt, Youth Recreation Speciality at Texas A & M University, puts it, “in many cases, park and recreation departments are left out of the after-school program discussion or relegated to a fun and games, service provision, role.”³⁷

That’s a shift from the past, Witt observes: “Park and recreation departments used to be one of the major providers of after-school services. However, shrinking budgets and the subsequent need to offer programs on a fee for service basis led to the demise of many of these efforts.”

³⁵ Witt, Peter A. “Re-Examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-school Programs,” p.1. http://rptsweb.tamu.edu/Faculty/Witt/after_school_article.PDF

³⁶ Raley, Rebecca, Jean Grossman, Karen E. Walker, *Getting It Right: Strategies for After-School Success*, Public/Private Ventures, 2005.

³⁷ Witt, “Re-examining the Role,” p. 4.

“Started in 1993, the Youth After Hours program offers elementary students from schools in high-risk neighborhoods a secure and stable environment to establish relationships with peers and adults; a safe place to relax; and an opportunity to develop life skills and goals, receive recognition, and enjoy a sense of purpose and belonging. Local youth serving agencies and groups submit proposals to run different activities in the program. The program is coordinated by the county’s substance abuse coalition but partners include the parks and recreation department, camp fire boys and girls, boy scouts and girl scouts, the YMCA, and the Washington State University Cooperative Extension/4-H.”

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
National League of Cities

Voluntary non-profit sector organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs have moved into the vacuum, aided by the fact that they serve a more targeted (often at-risk) population. Many have proven savvy at building cooperative relationships with schools, blending educational goals into a program mix that also includes recreation and social skills, Witt adds:

Other youth serving organizations have long recognized the value of recreation activities as settings through which instrumental goals can be accomplished. In particular, the parks and recreation field lags behind in efforts to incorporate program elements that maximize educational impacts. Recently park and recreation agencies have again begun to appreciate the necessity of being involved in the amelioration of social problems in their communities. Park and Recreation departments need to recognize societal expectations and the forces driving the need for after-school programs if they are to become a significant player in the after-school program movement.”³⁸

Indeed, it appears that most afterschool programs in the United States are located at school sites (see Appendix A for details). This may be a direct result of the U.S. CCLC funding program, which distributes funds through local school districts.

Even so, some municipal recreation departments have developed specific afterschool programs. In New York City, for example, the Parks and Recreation Department’s Parks Afterschool Program serves 3,000 children at 35 scattered municipal recreation centres with the aim of supporting “the overall wellbeing of children between the ages of 6 and 13.” Participants receive homework help and participate in a broad range of recreation, fitness, arts and cultural activities. The programs are certified under New York State’s School-Aged Care (SACC) Regulations. New York’s initiative represents a successful model of municipally run afterschool programming that enjoys the benefits of recreation expertise.

Given that most municipal recreation and parks departments do not have the capacity to run programs in this way, the literature suggests that a primary role be to support afterschool programs and encourage collaborative afterschool efforts. The Chicago Out-of-School Time Project³⁹ (Case Study 4.1.9) provides a case in point. Here, a municipal network supports program providers. Ideally, such a network includes ready access to recreation expertise.

Groups such as Boys and Girls Clubs have suggested that recreation departments can also support afterschool programming by making facilities available for afterschool use at no cost. Lack of access to community facilities in the afterschool

³⁸ Witt, “Re-examining the Role,” p. 4.

³⁹ Department of Children & Youth Services, www.cityofchicago.org

hours is often cited as a major barrier to supporting physical activity programs for children and youth. While facilities exist, liability issues often make it difficult to use them for recreation purposes outside of school hours. The development of reciprocal joint use agreements between schools and recreation departments would help ease unmet demand for afterschool space.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Dr. K. Kellie Leitch. Reaching for the Top: A Report for the Advisor on Healthy Children & Youth. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/pubs/child-enfant/advisor-conseillere/index-eng.php>, p.106.

5. CLOSER TO HOME: CANADIAN CASE STUDIES

Activity around afterschool programs in Canada is still in its infancy. Although various initiatives across the country offer support, there is not yet a national program or funding strategy in place.

“Internationally, converging movements, such as poverty reduction, welfare reform, crime prevention, sports and recreation, education, youth development and child care have led stakeholders and policy-makers to identify out-of-school programming as a potential solution for a multitude of societal challenges and issues facing children and youth.”

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada Submission to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance August 2008

Activity around afterschool programs in Canada is still, for the most part, in its infancy. As identified in the Leitch Report, there is not yet a national program or funding strategy in place to deal specifically with afterschool programming. While various initiatives across the country support the efforts of afterschool programs, they are not linked by a national network, as the United States programs tend to be.

There is another fundamental difference between afterschool programs in the United States and Canada. Leading American examples focus strongly on academics; in Canada, that focus is not as strong. While sources from both countries say afterschool programming supports a number of positive outcomes, including academics, Canadian afterschool programs tend to place greater emphasis on health and wellness issues related to inactivity, poor nutrition and anti-social behaviour.

Let’s meet several Canadian initiatives. In the first set are several designed to promote and encourage quality afterschool programs. Finally, we review initiatives that, while not focused specifically on the critical hours, could fill particular roles in a cohesive afterschool system.

5.1 Afterschool Initiatives Across Canada/Alberta

5.1.1 Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada: Proposing a National Initiative

In Canada, as elsewhere, realization is growing that a coordinated response to the afterschool hours is overdue. In that spirit, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada delivered a submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in August 2008 calling on the federal government to “develop and invest in a national out-of-school initiative for school aged children.” A comprehensive policy and funding at the federal level, the submission added “should support affordable, accessible out-of-school programs that address child and youth health and social inequities.”⁴¹

The proposal emphasizes that public investment in the short term will decrease the pressure on the social and health care systems in the longer term, noting that this outcome aligns with Dr. Leitch’s recommendations in the *Reaching for the Top Report* as well as the 2009, 2008 and the 2007 *Report Cards by Healthy Active Kids*.

Federal Government response to the Boys and Girls Club proposal is pending.

⁴¹ Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada Submission to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – August 2008, pg. 5

“Non-school hours represent the largest block of discretionary time in a child’s typical day. Programs during these critical hours can provide young Canadians with opportunities to improve their health and well-being by being physically active and productively engaged.”

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada Submission to House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance August 2008

Meanwhile, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, in partnership with Sears Canada, distributes grants to clubs across the country to enhance afterschool programs. Across Alberta, 27 communities have Boys and Girls Clubs; together, they serve more than 46,000 children, youth and families each year. Many of these clubs run afterschool programs either in their own facilities or in collaboration with local schools. Programs range from physical activities and homework and computer clubs to junior chef and arts activities.

5.1.2 Vancouver School Board: Community School Teams

The Province of British Columbia’s **CommunityLINK (Learning Includes Nutrition and Knowledge) Program** provides annual funding to school districts for programs and services to improve educational performance (academic and social) of vulnerable students. Each school district has the flexibility to determine the most appropriate strategy for its own community.

The Vancouver School Board used its funds to establish a network of **Community School Teams (CST)**, which grew out of a commitment to bring schools and community members closer together through a wide range of programs for all ages. Focus is given to augmenting services for vulnerable children.

Vancouver has 16 CSTs. In each, a secondary school serves as a hub for neighbouring elementary schools. Led by teams consisting of a Community Coordinator, a teacher and a Youth and Family Worker, each hub also involves community centres, neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood associations, social service agencies, day and after school care facilities and business improvement agencies. Community school coordinators work with the schools in the hub, along with the community, parents and community partners, to offer quality programs for children during and after school hours.

Vancouver CSTs received over \$1.28 million in grant funding for program support in 2007. Other grants and funding partnerships supplement this amount. Collectively, CSTs maintain over 266 partnerships.

Progress assessments for schools in the program revealed statistically significant improvement in literacy (27% weighted mean improvement) and social responsibility (11%). A number of vulnerable students have commented on the positive work environment between the team, administrator and teacher in the hub of schools.

The Vancouver CSTs have established a unique partnership with the Vancouver Parks Board, and particularly with **MoreSports**. A collaborative of numerous partners, MoreSports aims to create sustainable community sport programs in Vancouver neighbourhoods so that all children and youth have an opportunity to develop fundamental life skills and a love of sport. Community capacity building, sport development and youth leadership are key MoreSports goals. Significant attention is given to reducing traditional barriers to sport and physical activity, such

as cost, transportation, lack of programs and facilities and the inability to participate within more typical competitive sport systems, due to activity skills deficiencies and lack of parental understanding of community sport systems.

A signature MoreSports program is **YELL (Youth, Engage, Learn, Lead)**, a coaching program for teens. Launched in part to meet a need for qualified coaches who understand the MoreSports philosophy, YELL offers high school students from CommunityLINK hub schools the following training:

- BCPRA HIGH FIVE (Principles of Healthy Child Development)
- National Coaching Certification (NCCP) for such sports as basketball, badminton and soccer
- Red Cross Standard First Aid and Babysitting Courses, RespectEd Course
- Vancouver School Board Safeteen Program

YELL training opportunities are embedded in physical education and leadership classes, inside and outside of the school program. In exchange for training and certification, YELL graduates volunteer with various programs for MoreSports, the Vancouver School Board or the Vancouver Parks Board. Through these practical experiences, they build personal leadership portfolios. For many, that experience translates into paid positions with local neighbourhood recreation facilities. For example, many are hired as program staff for summer camps and playgrounds, where they have the satisfaction of earning a wage as they hone newly acquired leadership skills.

In exchange for training and certification, YELL graduates volunteer in local sports programs. For many, that experience translates into paid positions.

5.1.3 Ontario: Provincewide AfterSchool Hours Strategy

In August 2008, Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO), the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) and the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OHHEA), as part of the **Provincial Childhood Obesity Strategy**, jointly submitted an **AfterSchool Hours Programming Proposal** for consideration by the Ministry of Health Promotion. The primary goal of this collaborative strategy is “to mobilize Ontario service providers to provide more afterschool programs for 6 to 18 year olds that offer both physical activity and healthy eating components and that include youth engagement strategies, in order to fight childhood obesity.”⁴²

The proposal includes a funding strategy for expanding the work of health, recreation, school, community or other providers and/or community-wide programs that already address physical activity and healthy eating concerns with youth. Other promised supports include enhanced research from the health and physical activity sectors, and support from local schools.

Existing programs such as HIGH FIVE stand ready to help communities and service providers across Ontario offer quality recreation programs for children and youth through a concerted afterschool hours strategy.

⁴² AfterSchool Programming Proposal to the Ontario Government – Provincial Childhood Obesity Strategy p. 2.

Provincial partners have agreed to provide training, consultation and support to local agencies running the programs. Existing PRO programs standing ready to participate include HIGH FIVE, Youth Friendly Communities Recognition Program (Play Works Initiative) and Intentional Youth Development, all of which help communities and service providers offer quality recreation programs for children and youth.

AfterSchool Hours Programming would be implemented in two phases:

- Phase One: test the program by applying it to both individual agencies and communities by fall 2008.
- Phase Two: implement at least one demonstration program in each Ontario community by fall 2009.

This program proposal is currently still under review.

5.1.4 Quebec: What's Up After School

Quebec's **What's Up After School**⁴³ program combats sedentary lifestyles and promotes educational success by offering secondary school students increased access to a wide range of extracurricular activities.

The Quebec government initiated What's Up After School with the aim of doubling the number of public school students involved in extracurricular activities between 2003 and 2006. The program focused on removing barriers to participation – most notably, by funding bus services. Eligible programs include sports and outdoor activities, arts and cultural programs, and social or community activities. Secondary schools partner with a minimum of two community organizations develop a three-year plan of coordinated extracurricular activities.

Funding is provided by the Ministry of Education to school boards, who distribute dollars to individual schools based on the number of participants and the cost of busing. One of the aims of the program is to help youth realize that they play an important role in the community. Parents contribute to the success of the program by encouraging their children to get involved.

Among the program's noted benefits:

- increased activity among children;
- inclusiveness of program activities;
- improved attitude towards physical activity, improved confidence and removal of some key barriers to physical activity;
- quality assurance system makes program safe for children;
- quality program deliverers;

⁴³ Horizon 2005 - What's Up After School: Making School an Exciting Place to Be; Government of Quebec, Ministry of Education, 2003

- schools value funding for equipment;
- money and training for coaches, valued by deliverers and sports organizations;
- opportunity for deliverers to gain exposure for their sport, and
- increasing numbers of schools and deliverers are becoming involved.

5.1.5 City of Calgary Afterschool Programs

In collaboration with **UpStart: Champions for Children and Youth** (formally Calgary Children's Initiative), the City of Calgary supports a wide range of afterschool programs, from recreation activities to collaborative projects. In May 2008, when the provincial government announced a plan to support middle- and low-income families through a new provincial Out of School Care Subsidy program, Calgary's Community and Protective Services Department approached City Council to reallocate the budget previously dedicated to Out of School Care to support the creation and delivery of a city-wide "Critical Hours" Plan with these objectives:

- ensure a comprehensive range of safe and enriching programs for children and youth between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.;
- direct funds to existing agencies for expanded programming and partnerships;
- increase support in the Community and Protective Services Department (which includes recreation), for afterschool programs for children and youth;
- establish a Critical Hours Network;
- support research and the development of a Critical Hours Framework.

One example of the work augmented by this initiative is **TeenZone**. Aimed at youth 11 to 16 years of age in six northeast Calgary communities, it is a three-year collaborative venture of the UpStart (Calgary Children's Initiative), United Way of Calgary and Area, Burns Memorial Fund and The City of Calgary. TeenZone provides structured, high quality afterschool programs with a youth development focus. TeenZone funds have enabled providers such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary and the Virsa Punjab Da Society of Alberta to increase their offerings to 14 distinct programs.

In addition to dollars, providers receive the following support:

- enhanced services and organizational capacity to run programs;
- training and administrative support, and
- two youth "connectors" who engage youth directly and link them to the various programs.

A preliminary year one evaluation notes that, despite staffing and administrative challenges, TeenZone is accomplishing a great deal. In the first year, 279 youth participated in one or more programs, including youth who stand to significantly benefit from participation. Thirty-five parents of participants who were interviewed

said their children had benefited from participation and added that they were impressed with the level of support and quality of programming.

5.1.6 Town of Banff: After School Club

The Town of Banff offers an **After School Club** designed to introduce elementary school aged children to a wide range of programs and activities, including sports.

Due to its location in a mountain tourist environment, Banff’s cost of living is higher than that of other Alberta communities. Parents who are economically disadvantaged by tourist centre pricing may not qualify for the provincial subsidy program. For this reason, the Town has developed its own sliding scale subsidy program to accommodate residents who wish to register their children in the After School Club but are unable to cover the costs.

Town of Banff After School Club	
Program Element	Description
Focus	Environmental learning, sports, arts, crafts, drama, general interest activities such as cooking
Timing	School year during “critical hours”
Authority	Licensed school age care program
Staffing and other costs	Town of Banff Recreation
Participants	12 – 15
Facility	Banff Elementary School (dedicated classroom, plus access to gymnasium and other classrooms as required)
Fees	\$336 per month or \$21 per day for drop-in (recovers 50% of program cost)

The Banff Town Council has also made a commitment to support a new youth program that will focus on the afterschool hours. A series of focus groups with local youth will help determine program parameters. Among options being explored: adding a youth room to the municipal recreation centre, developing a youth leadership or mentorship program, youth engagement strategies to supplement the structured or registered afterschool programs in the community.

5.1.7 Town of Sundre: Supporting Community Programs

The Town of Sundre has a population of 2,520 and serves an additional 3,400 in the surrounding county. Facilities include an arena, sports fields and community hall operated by the Town and a swimming pool operated by an Agricultural Society. Primary recreation facilities are centrally located and within easy walking distance of schools, so transportation to afterschool activities is not an issue in this community.

Using an indirect delivery model, the municipal Recreation and Parks Department collaborates with the FCSS department and community non-profit organizations to

ensure a broad range of programs and services for youth. The Town funds a part-time Youth Worker who provides both FCSS and recreation programs for children and youth throughout the community. The municipal department also supports the voluntary sector in developing and managing sports and cultural programs for youth at the pool, arena and local community centre. Programs are also offered at Greenwood Neighbourhood Place and other community venues.

The FCSS Department supports Greenwood Neighbourhood Place, a focal point for community-based programs for members of the community who may be underserved or in need of support. FCSS programs and services are developed through collaborative dialogue involving youth, community service groups, schools and municipal staff and politicians.

Thanks to all those partners, a broad range of afterschool activities is available in the community. The AquaPlex offers specialized youth fitness and weight training programs and a Red Cross Babysitting Course at minimal cost. It also offers swim lessons and youth leadership training for teens. Greenwood Neighbourhood Place and the Youth Coordinator offer a volunteer program for boys and girls age 10 and up and support **Karma Club**, which helps seniors in the community with small tasks.

Municipal efforts to provide afterschool programs for students in Sundre do face challenges, however. Chief challenges include:

- **Affordability.** Citizens are interested in afterschool programs *if* there is no registration fee.
- **Space crunch.** Programming space in the community is at a premium. During “critical hours,” the school gymnasium is used by the school for its own programs. The community gymnasium at the recreation centre is used for youth programming by the local gymnastics club. As a result, there is not a lot of time to book other initiatives.
- **Finding staff.** It is an ongoing challenge to find qualified staff who are available to lead programs during the “critical hours”.

Challenges facing Sundre afterschool programs include community reluctance to pay program fees, finding enough space and hiring qualified staff.

5.1.8 City of Edmonton: Continuum of Approaches

The City of Edmonton is unique among Canada's major municipalities in that it provides programs throughout the city, both within and outside of its major facilities. Funded by a mix of municipal tax levy and registration fees, the directly delivered programs are provided by the Neighbourhood and Community Development Branch of Edmonton Community Services.

The City employs a continuum of delivery approaches, from direct program delivery to supporting and facilitating community partner programs. Staff work with community leagues, schools and other partners to provide a broad range of afterschool (including evening, weekend, and school break) programs for children and youth of all ages. The Recreation Program Team in each area develops an

annual program plan that includes a variety of program offerings geared to the following success factors:

In each area of Edmonton, a recreation team develops an annual program plan aimed at maximizing partnerships, access, staff, resources and affordability.

- **Partnerships:** Where possible, programs are run in partnership with local community leagues or schools. Typically, the City provides support through centralized program staff, programming expertise, equipment and registration. The community partner provides the facility and promotes the program. This partnership leverages community resources while enhancing affordability and ease of access. Demographics and available program budgets help determine whether to offer a program at regular cost, low cost or no cost to participants.
- **Locations:** Programs are hosted by schools or in community facilities adjacent to schools wherever possible. This alleviates transportation challenges, a primary barrier to participation.
- **Staffing:** Finding qualified leaders who can work during the “critical hours” is an ongoing challenge.
- **Resourcing:** Delivery partners have challenges finding adequate resources for the program.
- **Cost:** Affordability, as always, is an issue for low-income families. A City of Edmonton Leisure Access Program offers qualified children unlimited access to leisure centres plus a 75% subsidy for four leisure centres or community-based programs a year. In addition, free or low cost programs are offered in communities that contain a high concentration of “working poor” and other families who may not qualify for the Leisure Access Program but cannot afford to participate at full cost.

5.2 Alberta: Other Compatible Initiatives

Although the following initiatives do not focus on the afterschool hours or recreation per se, they do present an interesting opportunity to explore possible shared engagement strategies in the Alberta AfterSchool Agenda.

5.2.1 Ever Active Schools

Established in 2000, **Ever Active Schools** is a special project of the Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) of the Alberta Teachers Association. Funded through three ministries (Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Health and Wellness, and Education), its goal is to foster social and physical environments supportive of healthy, active lifestyles in school communities across Alberta.

- **Vision:** Alberta Schools live, learn and play in healthy, active school communities.
- **Mission:** The Ever Active Schools Program facilitates the development of healthy children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy, active school communities.

Through Ever Active Schools, 145 Alberta schools are actively engaged in promoting the benefits of physical activity, healthy eating and mental health. These three aspects are integrated into a holistic approach linking instruction, school environment and support services for students, teachers and community. While the **Alberta Daily Physical Activity Initiative** and provincial health curriculum serve as the foundation for Ever Active Schools, each school determines its own priorities and action plans based on four areas outlined in the program framework:⁴⁴

Ever Active Schools supports member schools with a wide range of programs and services aimed at enhancing Education Everywhere for Everyone based on demonstrated Evidence.

- **Education:** Providing innovative and supporting opportunities for students to make healthy choices and achieve the outcomes of health and physical education programs that will lead to an active healthy lifestyle.
- **Everywhere:** Encouraging and supporting active living initiatives in the community and opportunities for increased cooperation between school, home and community.
- **Everyone:** Providing opportunities to increase activity and involvement for all students including those identified as inactive and at-risk.
- **Evidence:** Planning and evaluating programs and services that demonstrate the success factors that support healthy and active lifestyles throughout the school community.

The central Ever Active Schools office supports the member schools with a wide range of programs and services.

- **Education:** Professional development opportunities help teachers and school administrators implement the health and wellness curriculum and develop active school communities.
- **Support to Schools:** Planning and implementation support includes a provincial database of members and associates, help with the planning process and resources for developing lesson plans that promote healthy living and lifestyle choices.
- **Communication:** The website, a key communication and support vehicle, provides resources, programming tools and best practice information. In addition, a newsletter (EverActive) informs members of current programs, available grants and funding opportunities.
- **Research:** Member schools receive current research from Alberta universities and elsewhere as well as evaluations tracking the work of Ever Active Schools.

⁴⁴ Ever Active Schools website and program information.

Signs of success

In the 2005 *Ever Active Schools Program Evaluation*,⁴⁵ stakeholders and strategic partners cited the following as some of the most valuable aspects of the program: resources and ideas, professional development opportunities and ongoing support.

Participants also said the following factors contribute to the success of Ever Active Schools:

- A **holistic** approach supported by common messages of health and wellness and linked throughout the school curriculum, community and family.
- School **teams** committed to creating a strong school environment that supports participation and leadership by all students and staff.
- Supporting **local priorities**, with schools determining their own plan of action while Ever Active Schools staff provide resources, professional development and other supports to implement the plans.
- Using the **comprehensive** school health approach as a foundation for school action plans.
- A commitment to **shared responsibility** between the school, students, parents and the community.

The program also excels at establishing partnerships with a variety of government ministries whose support is proving valuable to member schools. Some key examples:

- **Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation:** A strong working relationship has resulted in the promotion and participation of schools in various ministry sponsored programs, such as Summer/WinterActive, and Winter WalkDay.
- **Alberta Health Services** (formerly nine regional health authorities): Provides Healthy Active School Symposia across the province, including 11 in 2008. The symposia bring together health professionals, student leaders, Ever Active School champions, parents and community stakeholders to build relationships and explore strategies and partnerships for creating and supporting healthy active school communities.
- **East Central Health** and the **Battle River School Division:** Support a three-year **Battle River Project** that offers teachers resources, professional development, opportunities to share leanings and access to expert support from Ever Active Schools. Funded by government grants with in-kind contribution from participating schools, this project is designed to demonstrate the impact a holistic approach to healthy eating, physical activity and mental

The Ever Active Schools mandate is to promote and support the development of healthy active school communities by providing opportunities for schools, communities and families to work together in a collaborative approach to health and active living.

⁴⁵ Ever Active Schools Program Evaluation Final Report (2005) pg. 2

health can have on the school environment, students, families and their communities.

Case in Point: Charlie Killam School⁴⁶

The Ever Active Schools website highlights promising practices at several member schools, including the Charlie Killam School in Camrose. At this school, students and teachers have a variety of opportunities each day to engage in physical, nutritional and mental wellness activities.

- Students and teachers start the day with a walk around the school.
- A free breakfast is provided for approximately 100 students.
- The school day includes 55 minutes of physical activity, from physical education classes to lunchtime intramurals and extracurricular activities such as an outdoor education club.
- The school has a well equipped fitness centre; students learn to use the equipment in physical activity classes and then are invited to join an afterschool fitness club.
- Renovation plans include a common area to support unstructured activities such as ping-pong.
- A recent review of its health policies prompted the school to replace pop in vending machines with more nutritious options.
- A recent health fair and conference introduced students to a broad range of activities they might not otherwise encounter: a yoga class, a game of broomball and an alternate nutrition course.

“There appears to be a strong passion and commitment by the teachers and administration to having a healthy school environment, which then filters down to the excitement of their students. Charlie Killam is most definitely an Ever Active School.”

Website
Ever Active Schools

Charlie Killam is most definitely an Ever Active School. Strong passion among school leaders, coupled with commitment to a healthy school environment, is enticing students into action.

Lessons from Ever Active Schools

The Ever After School model of providing strong support services to members – including professional development, resources and networking – deserves consideration for the AfterSchool Agenda.

Clearly a key strength is the program’s ability to tap the variety of partnerships and strategic alliances within the health, wellness, and active living community throughout the province. While the provincial organization is not directly involved in afterschool programming, member schools are encouraged to work with community partners to provide a wide range of programs during and after school hours. Some schools run their extracurricular activities during the critical hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

⁴⁶ Best practices case study documented on the Ever Active School website.

In short, Ever Active Schools is well positioned to collaborate with and support any future development of an Alberta AfterSchool Agenda.

5.2.2 Creating Child Care Choices

As of September 2008, the Alberta Government expanded the **Child Care Subsidy Program** to support licensed care for children aged 6 to 12 years. Prior to this date, parents of low and middle-income families could apply for child care subsidies for children under six, but not for school aged children. With this new program, the Alberta Government is planning to create 14,000 new child care spaces over the next three years.

Providing subsidies for families to access licensed before and after school care programs is only one component of this initiative. Among its other aspects:

- A **Space Creation Innovation Fund** to encourage new licensed school-age child care spaces by offering grants for planning and start-up costs.
- **Local support systems** for child care programs, with Children and Family Services authorities working with regional partners.
- Purchasing **modular buildings** to increase the number of child care spaces that can be created adjacent to school sites.
- A new **Out-of-School Care Accreditation Funding Program**, effective spring 2009.
- **Staff retention dollars**, including wage top-up, staffing and professional development incentives, and scholarship programs.

“The ability of staff to build positive, caring and consistent relationships with the young people in their charge makes all the difference in their lives. As one program director in Worcester said: ‘Our job is not to do programs or activities but help kids become responsible adults.’

Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time

While the mandate of the School-Age Care Program extends beyond recreation, its presence in Alberta expands opportunities to work with out-of-school care providers to ensure the children and youth in their care have quality recreation options. Standards set by the new child care accreditation program closely align with HIGH FIVE[®] principles, requiring quality children’s sport and recreation programming. This is an ideal opportunity for ARPA to collaborate with Alberta Children and Youth Services, school-age care program providers and other agencies to make quality recreation integral to any purposeful school-age care program.

5.2.3 Youth Mentorship Project ⁴⁷

In June 2008 the Alberta Government announced an innovative partnership between government and community agencies to promote and support youth mentorship. Ten partnered Alberta ministries will contribute \$3.7 million over three

⁴⁷ News Release June 30, 2008: Province provides \$3.7 million for innovative youth mentoring project.

years, including \$800,000 for 2008-2009 from the Alberta Safe Communities Secretariat. Key project strategies:

- an awareness and recruitment campaign;
- improved training and resources for mentors;
- reducing the barriers to becoming a mentor, and
- mentoring programs specifically for children and youth-at-risk.

Mentoring is widely recognized as an integral part of any recreation and sport program, whether through senior leadership programs or coaching programs.

At inception, the mentorship project involved neither Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation nor ARPA. This was not an intentional oversight, but a case of “out of presence, out of mind.” As noted previously, the recreation and parks community has not had a strong presence in the broader provincial children and youth AfterSchool Agenda. The Youth Mentorship Project Team did recognize the need for involvement from recreation and sport, but was not readily able to identify an agency to represent the sector. When this oversight was brought to the attention of Liz O’Neill, Leadership Team Co-chair, there was an indication that ARPA would receive an invitation to participate.

5.3 ARPA Supporting Initiatives

ARPA leads a number of initiatives that specifically enhance recreation for children and youth by building the capacity of recreation providers and the recreation and parks sector as a whole. The following programs and initiatives deserve consideration for broader use in augmenting afterschool programs to meet today’s urgent needs.

5.3.1 HIGH FIVE® Alberta

Parks and Recreation Ontario developed HIGH FIVE® out of concern for the quality of recreation and sport activities offered to children aged 6 to 12 years. Based on significant research and consultation with experts, HIGH FIVE® is a quality assurance process intended to equip providers to foster the safety, well-being and healthy development of the children they serve. HIGH FIVE® is now available across Canada.

In Alberta, ARPA is the only authorized HIGH FIVE® provider. Recreation and sport providers in the program receive the following supports:

- training workshops and materials;
- unique and statistically validated performance measurement tools;

HIGH FIVE® offers a strong foundation for any afterschool program, whether in the recreation sector or more broadly focused. Indeed, its principles and training should be standard for programs serving children and youth in the critical afterschool hours.

- planning and data reporting systems to chart progress and work towards accreditation;
- educational/promotional resources for parents and leaders, and
- consultation and support from HIGH FIVE[®] Alberta.

Linkage with the AfterSchool Agenda

The HIGH FIVE[®] program, particularly its **Principles of Healthy Child Development (PHCD)** training, offers a strong foundation for any afterschool program, whether in the recreation sector or more broadly focused. Indeed, the principles and training offered through PHCD should be standard for programs serving children and youth in the critical afterschool hours. As Alberta's authorized HIGH FIVE[®] provider, ARPA is positioned to deliver HIGH FIVE[®] and welcomes opportunities to align Alberta's Out-of-School Care Accreditation Funding Program with HIGH FIVE[®].

5.3.2 Alberta Play Leadership Development Program

Created in collaboration with Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, the **Alberta Play Leadership Development Program** is a well researched curriculum for comprehensive play leadership training. In this curriculum, senior play leaders take an active role in developing new play leaders, specifically for recreation and out-of-school care. The program has five learning modules:

- Module 1 – Play Perspectives
- Module 2 – Games
- Module 3 – Creative Play
- Module 4 – Chaotic Play
- Module 5 – Putting It All Together

Linkage with the AfterSchool Agenda

Like HIGH FIVE[®], Alberta Play Development Leadership Program is an initiative developed within the recreation and parks sector that could benefit all who work in the afterschool community. In particular, the program offers an approach and tools that meet critical needs within both the new Alberta Youth Mentorship Project and the School Aged Care Program.

The curriculum also holds significant potential for older youth, addressing the challenges providers report in attempting to engage youth between the ages of 13 and 17. The Alberta Play Development Leadership Program directly engages older youth in leadership roles, pulling them away from sedentary, negative or even destructive pursuits during the "critical hours."

Alberta Play Development Leadership Program offers tools that meet critical needs within both the new Alberta Youth Mentorship Project and the School Aged Care Program.

The curriculum also holds significant potential for older youth, pulling them away from sedentary, negative or even destructive pursuits by engaging them in leadership roles.

5.3.3 Alberta Active, Creative, Engaged (ACE) Communities

ACE Communities is a provincial community development initiative spearheaded by ARPA in partnership with the Creative Cities Network of Canada. Funded by the Alberta's Rural Development Fund, the initiative is also supported by EnCana and Canwest Media. Its aim is "to enhance quality of life in rural Alberta by strengthening community leadership, collaboration and innovation through recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage."

Participating communities build on their strengths towards achieving the characteristics of an "ACE Community", namely:

- have diverse recreation and active living opportunities
- promote a sense of belonging
- citizens are involved in decision-making
- have strong volunteer involvement
- have inviting, sustainable design
- have a high quality of life available and accessible by all

Partner communities in the ACE Communities network are supported by coaches, planning tools and other resources as they identify and address local needs. In communities where youth engagement is surfacing as an important issue, teams involving youth are coalescing to respond. Work is also proceeding on an active/creative communities network that will link and inform partner communities. Although the ACE Communities initiative is still young, community leaders are nearly unanimous in expressing appreciation for their coaches who, like the provincial consultants of Alberta's past, offer advice, affirm their work and link them to a vast network of expertise.

Linkage with the AfterSchool Agenda

Coaching for collaborative leadership and enhancing the capacity of community service providers, key thrusts in ACE Communities, are exactly the approach needed by the AfterSchool Agenda. Collaborative strategies and expanded community capacity will be essential to maximizing resources so that communities can engage all the children and youth who could benefit from quality afterschool programs.

Alberta Play Development Leadership Program offers tools that meet critical needs within both the new Alberta Youth Mentorship Project and the School Aged Care Program.

The curriculum also holds significant potential for older youth, pulling them away from sedentary, negative or even destructive pursuits by engaging them in leadership roles.

Collaborative strategies and expanded community capacity will be essential to maximizing resources so that communities can engage all the children and youth who could benefit from quality afterschool programs.

Section Two: Community Use of Schools

6. USING SCHOOLS FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Schools offer likely venues for afterschool programs. Conveniently located for many who would attend, they are also well equipped for play and other likely afterschool activities. Yet, even in Alberta communities that have agreements with local school boards for joint use of facilities, afterschool programs typically are not able to use school buildings. Elsewhere, by contrast, afterschool programming regularly occurs at schools as part of a “community school” movement that turns schools into hubs for a broad array of services and programs.

6.1 Survey Summary

The online survey of municipalities conducted as part of this research makes it clear that few afterschool programs have access to school facilities. About two-thirds (66%) of respondents said they have a joint use agreement with local school board(s). Even with a joint use agreement in place, however, community groups are not assured access to schools during the “critical hours.” Nearly half (46%) of respondents said they have limited access to their local elementary schools; fully three-quarters (75%) noted limited access to high schools during the 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. time period.

In both online surveys and interviews, respondents said the most significant barrier to community use of schools lies in lack of support from local school administrations.

6.2 Analysis of Joint Use Agreements

Chart 7 (pages 64-65) compares key components of 20 joint use agreements in Alberta. Interview results, also included in the chart, generally align with findings from the online survey. While each agreement is unique, the analysis identified common elements, namely:

- Joint use agreements exist in most provincial municipalities.
- The agreements cover reciprocal use of both school and municipal recreation and parks facilities.
- The vast majority of agreements outline policies related to the shared use of facilities, facility booking procedures and (where applicable) rental fees.
- Approximately 52% of the joint use agreements reviewed and 46% of the survey respondents indicated community groups are charged for school rentals.
- In all cases, recreation and parks departments administer joint use agreements on behalf of municipalities.

- School groups have priority use of schools between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. and often use the facilities for afterschool clubs, team sport training and league games, or for intramural sports leagues.
- In all cases, youth groups have priority use. Rental fees average \$20/hour for youth groups; most cases, this rate applies only after 6 p.m.
- Additional costs can be as high as \$74 an hour (Calgary) when a second custodian has to be called in to open the school.
- Insurance is required to rent the facilities; several municipalities cover the insurance for community groups who go through their booking process.
- Community use of schools typically begins after 6 p.m., or in some cases after 5 p.m. Prior to this time the school has priority use for its extracurricular programs. In some cases, schools work with service providers, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, to offer afterschool programs for their students.
- Other agencies offering a variety of afterschool programs in school facilities between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. include Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Sisters and Big Brothers, FCSS agencies, Girl Guides and child care programs. While not traditionally viewed as recreation organizations, they offer activities that are clearly recreation-based/oriented.

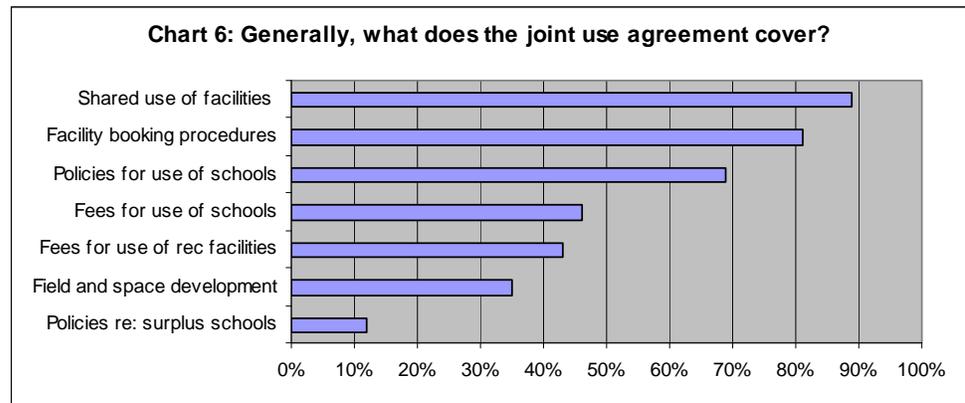


Chart 7: Community Use of Schools: Joint Use Agreement Comparative Analysis

Community	Hours Agreement Applies	Rental Fees for Youth Groups	Booking Procedure	Insurance Requirement ⁴⁸
Red Deer (Population 87,816) (Public School System)	After 5 p.m. for elementary schools. After 6 p.m. for senior high schools.	Small gym \$19/hour; Gym \$26/hour Weekly use \$150/year No charge for fields, outdoor rinks, skating oval or neighbourhood facilities. Schools are not charged for use of recreation facilities for educational purposes.	City books community use of schools after hours.	
Lacombe (Population 11,562)	No time is dedicated outside of school activities.	Youth groups have priority and are not charged. Adult groups charged \$20 for the first hour and \$10 after.	Bookings through school principal.	
Sturgeon County (Population 19,165)	No hours identified.	Actual costs for custodian fees etc. are charged.	Schools handle bookings.	
Stony Plain (Population 12,363)	Agreement for maintenance of St. Matthews school grounds: Town receives \$3,813.25 from the schools board to provide school ground maintenance and playground repairs. Agreement does not appear to cover community use of schools.			
Strathcona County (Population 88,521)	6 p.m. for elementary 7 p.m. for senior high schools. One agreement: after 4:30 p.m. for elementary school	No charge for reciprocal use of facilities. (Elk Island Public Schools compensates Strathcona County 45% of actual costs to maintain playground and sport fields.)	Schools handle bookings.	
Legal (Population 1,192)	5 p.m. –10 p.m.	No charge.	School Administration.	
Calmar (Population 1,992)	After 5:30 p.m.	No charge.	(No information provided.)	
Slave Lake (Population 7,031)	No designated afterschool hours.	No charge, other than expendable equipment, but can charge users if they need to recover costs.	Town	

⁴⁸ Not all joint-use agreements identify whether community groups require their own insurance policy. Generally the city or town comprehensive insurance covers not-for-profit organizations that do not have comprehensive insurance.

Community	Hours Agreement Applies	Rental Fees for Youth Groups	Booking Procedure	Insurance Requirement ⁴⁸
Whitecourt (Population 9,202)	No hours identified.	A fee may be charged at discretion of facility authority.	Town	
Beaumont (Population 10,820)	No hours identified .	No charge.	Town	
Morinville (Population 7,228) <i>School Board pays Town to take care of fields.</i>	After 6 p.m.	Gym \$15/hour Classrooms \$10/hour	Town	
Fort McMurray (Population 88,131) <i>Joint development agreement.</i>	6 p.m. - 10 p.m.	Youth groups range between \$5/hour and \$11/hour	High schools do their own bookings; others done through the City.	
Grande Prairie (Population 50,227) <i>A joint land development agreement covers construction/ maintenance of school grounds.</i>	No hours identified.	Adult charges: \$20 – \$40. Youth charges: \$16.50 – \$20.	City	
Pincher Creek (Population 3,712)	After school hours.	No charge	Town	
Medicine Hat (Population 60,426)	6:15 p.m. -11 p.m.	Fees for rooms in school range from \$7 to \$15.	City	
Lethbridge (Population 83,960)	Elementary schools 5 p.m. Secondary schools 6:30 p.m.	No charge for gym and meeting rooms. Youth Institutional Programs \$21/hr.	City	Groups using facilities are covered by the city and school insurance.
Banff (Population 8,721) (agreement under review)	After school hours	New: The school board is starting to charge a minimal fee to cover monitoring costs.	Town	Community rental: insurance covered.
Okotoks (Population 18,996)	6:30 p.m. -10 p.m.	Gym \$25.41; similar fees for other spaces.	Town	
Canmore (Population 12,039)	6 p.m. - 10 p.m.	Fees not identified in the agreement, but minimal rental fees are in place.	School Division books schools. Recreation books town facilities.	Groups using facilities are covered by town and school insurance.
Calgary (Population 1,042,892)	6:30 p.m.	Large gym \$23; small gym \$20. Extra charge to rent a school with one caretaker - \$74.05.	City	Groups using facilities are covered by city insurance.
Edmonton (Population 752,412)	Anytime after instructional hours.	Small elementary gym \$1.10. Larger gym \$13.90/hour.	City	Groups using facilities are covered by city insurance.

6.2.1 City of Edmonton Joint Use Agreement

Historically, no rent was charged for community use of Edmonton schools – or for the schools' reciprocal use of recreation facilities. In the 1990s, in response to rising costs associated with facility operations, Edmonton's joint use agreement was revised to reflect the need to recover some of the costs associated with increasing community and school facility usage. Adult groups were charged a minimal rate for school use, while children and youth groups were not charged.

The joint use agreement was reviewed again in 2007, and the funding model was adjusted to reflect growing facility operating costs. Effective September 2008, the current agreement provides an overview of a standard reciprocal agreement between a City and School Boards for joint use of facilities.

The agreement involves the following parties:

- the City of Edmonton;
- the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Catholic Separate School District No.7;
- the Board of Trustees of Edmonton School District No.7, and
- the Board of Trustees of the Regional Authority of the Greater North Central Francophone Education Region No. 2 (Conseil Scolaire Centre-Nord).

A Steering Committee of up to two representatives from each party forms a decision-making authority that administers the agreement. Their guiding principles can be summarized as follows:

“The Parties shall work together as partners, recognizing that the needs of the community for educational and recreational opportunities can be best achieved through a combination of their respective resources.”⁴⁹

More specifically, the agreement is based on the following principles:

- The parties support sharing of publicly funded facilities to maximize benefit to students and citizens of the City of Edmonton.
- The parties will make available their respective facilities for use by the other parties and the community, subject to availability.
- Each party will determine its own facility use first, then will identify facility availability for use by other parties.
- The parties will work together to resolve any difficulties or issues.
- Every effort will be made to keep the costs as low as possible, and cost recovery shall be a portion of the cost of making the facilities available. It is

⁴⁹ City of Edmonton Joint Use Agreement, effective 2008, Clause 41.

acknowledged that rental charges will not fully recover all costs associated with making the facilities available to the other parties and for community use.

Facility availability: Every spring, each party confirms the hours available in its respective facilities. While the agreement does not designate a specific time for community bookings, in most cases the schools reserve their own space for their own programming until 6 p.m. Some high schools also reserve evenings to accommodate sports leagues. Schools may allocate additional hours to meet demand.

In sum, most school facilities are available for community use 6 to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and on weekends. Schools book City of Edmonton recreation facilities during school hours to accommodate their programs. The City of Edmonton coordinates all non-school use of civic and school sites.

Rates are reviewed each year by the steering committee. And in some cases, such as weekend rentals in smaller schools, rates are adjusted to cover additional staffing costs.

City of Edmonton 2008 – 2009 Joint Use Gymnasium Fee Schedule

	Rate per hour	
	Adult Programs	Child/Youth groups
AA Gym (large gymnasium able to handle major events and programs)	\$27.80	\$13.90
A Gym (large gymnasium suitable for adult/ teen competitive sports)	\$27.80	\$13.90
B Gym (smaller gyms attached high schools, junior/middle schools or newer elementary schools)	\$20.90	\$10.45
C Gym (smaller gyms, generally between 350 to 400 m2, good for children's programs)	\$13.90	\$6.95
D Gym (smaller space, normally at elementary schools)	\$2.20	\$1.10
Ancillary Space	No Charge	No Charge
Classroom	No Charge	No Charge

Reciprocal funding: The agreement sets a standard \$10 an hour charge for any facility use by all parties – an amount designed to offset the incremental cost of the additional use of the facilities. In consultation with user groups who book school facilities, the City of Edmonton determined a fee schedule for community use based on the following principles:

- Child and youth groups are charged half of the adult use rate.
- A sliding fee scale reflects the size of the rental space.
- For bookings beyond the designated base hours (\$10/hour scheduled time) such as on weekends, or evenings an additional \$38/hr is charged with a three-hour minimum. This additional charge covers the cost of bringing in additional staff, such as overtime charges for caretakers in single caretaker schools. In addition a school may be charged an additional rate if they request swimming instruction during their rental period.

Insurance requirements: The parties to the joint use agreement carry individual comprehensive insurance policies to cover their own use of facilities. Community groups either provide their own insurance or are covered by The City of Edmonton’s comprehensive insurance policy.

Support for afterschool programming: Schools principals have the authority to designate programs as “school programs.” As a result, organizations such as Big Brother and Big Sisters run afterschool programs in several schools. The rental fee is waived provided the program serves local school children. When the same organization wants to book a facility during the evening or on weekends, however, they are required to pay the standard program fee. In this way the agreement supports collaborative programming for children and youth groups during the “critical hours” of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

6.3 Case Studies: Community Schools

Across Canada, several initiatives focus on expanding community use of schools not as an add-on, but as an integral part of the schools’ reason for being. Given their broader mandate and associated funding, these schools have reason to put higher priority on enabling their facilities to be used for afterschool programming.

The Coalition for Community Schools, a mobilizing and supporting body for U.S. community schools, says these schools enjoy at least three advantages over traditional public schools:

- additional resources to reduce demand on school staff for addressing all the challenges students bring to school;
- a broader span of academic and non-academic learning opportunities;
- greater social capital, networks and relationships that support learning and create opportunities for young people while strengthening their communities.

The Community School initiatives summarized below, including some from Alberta, provide just a sampling of the examples discovered through interviews and an online search.

“Unlike traditional public schools, community schools link school and community resources as an integral part of their design and operation.”

Coalition for Community Schools
www.communityschools.org

"In short, community schools represent an excellent investment for society to make. They are especially helpful where a significant number of children are 'at risk' but their value is universal, and their philosophy should be promoted throughout the province."

Task Force on the Role of the School
Saskatchewan

"The City of Bridgeport, Connecticut, in partnership with the school district and several community nonprofit agencies, devised a strategy to open the doors of schools in the afterschool hours. A combination of municipal, state, and federal funds keeps the programs running.

Funds supporting the program are allocated to local institutions of higher education, religious groups, community service centers, ethnic organizations, education service and special needs agencies, regional museums, and innovative nonprofit and educational entrepreneurs. School administrators partner with city officials to plan, implement, and evaluate programs."

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
National League of Cities

6.3.1 Ontario: Community Use of Schools

The **Government of Ontario Community Use of Schools** program provides funding to school boards to offset custodial fees, energy and other costs associated with community use of schools. For the 2008-'09 school year, the provincial government is investing \$33 million to make it easier and more affordable for community organizations to use schools outside of regular instructional hours.

The program was launched after a coalition of ministries and non-profits such as Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) and the Ontario Sport Alliance identified the following factors limiting the ability to use community schools:

- unavailability of space;
- unaffordable rental fees;
- costs (e.g., heat, lighting; custodial care, insurance) incurred by district school boards when keeping schools open for community use, coupled with a shortage of dedicated funds to offset those costs;
- insurance or liability issues, and
- inconsistent fee schedules from one community to the next.

In funding the Community Use of Schools program, the Ontario Government made a significant policy statement: schools should be the hub of the community. In receiving the funds, Boards of Education across the province signed an agreement assuring community based programs access to schools after school, on weekends and in the summer for a nominal fee.

Fundamental principles: The Community Use of Schools is based on six principles, which can be collectively summarized as follows:

Schools are welcoming and inclusive and offer parent groups, community organizations and other citizens fair access to use of school space at affordable rates for community purposes in non-school hours.⁵⁰

Fundamentally, the program aims to create fair and equal access to schools across all Ontario communities, with children and youth programs receiving priority access.

Effective Practices: After three years with the program, district school boards have identified promising practices that need to be in place to support a successful community access process:

- Make access free of charge for not-for-profit groups where possible.

⁵⁰ Ontario Ministry of Education Web site

- Help users with insurance requirements by working with the groups to obtain third-party insurance.
- Use specialized software and processes to make access and payment as easy as possible.
- Post the available schools on the school system website.
- Consult with other boards to benefit from their experiences.
- Develop reciprocal agreements with municipalities to streamline booking and administration processes.

Preliminary research and interviews indicate the program has succeeded in increasing access to schools throughout the province. As an example, provincial funding has enabled Ottawa’s public school boards to cut rental fees by 60%. Having signed the agreement with the province, school principals are obligated to open their schools to community groups. By all accounts this appears to be a very successful model for Ontario.

6.3.2 New Brunswick: When Kids Come First

The New Brunswick Government views community schools as essential to its goal of making the province self-sufficient by 2026. Toward that end, the New Brunswick Department of Education is launching and supporting the Community School concept in up to 75 schools in five years.

“We have to make a promise to our kids, and to each other, that we will all take an active interest in their learning and achievement.”

When Kids Come First
Province of New Brunswick
Ministry of Education

It’s part of a larger **When kids come first**⁵¹ initiative that “challenges all New Brunswickers to build the best education system in Canada.” An Education Covenant for Our Children released by the Minister of Education outlines specific commitments various stakeholders and citizens must make to realize that goal.

In response, in fall 2007 the New Brunswick Business Council signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Education to encourage business involvement in community school partnerships and support networks.⁵² The ministry is also proposing that the Legislative Assembly launch a dialogue with New Brunswickers on developing “a culture of learning and achievement in the province.” Provincial support includes a new Innovative Learning Fund.

Expansion of community schools is one of eight commitments made to New Brunswick’s children in *When kids come first*. Promising “to engage communities and partners in improving schools,” the plan “acknowledges that success in education is linked to a new alliance between the school and its community.

⁵¹ *When kids come first*. Province of New Brunswick, Department of Education, 2007.

⁵² *Memorandum of Understanding between New Brunswick Department of Education and The New Brunswick Business Council*. September 28, 2007.

"As we pursue our quest for self-sufficiency, it is important to remember that the children entering kindergarten next September will be in their mid-twenties and entering the workforce in the same timeframe... if we fail to invest in our children today, we will not reap the benefits of self-sufficiency tomorrow."

Honourable Shawn Graham
New Brunswick Premier
in *When Kids Come First*

Community schools set the stage for more active community, volunteer sector and private sector engagement throughout our kids' education."

The plan outlines two phase of the shift toward community schools. In phase one, a new community schools policy will direct the launch of up to 30 new community school projects. Meanwhile, collaborative projects will focus on expanding out-of-school physical activities, promoting safe schools, enriching learning and teaching opportunities and encouraging governments and community providers to offer services through the schools. Phase two will see the launch of as many as 45 new community school projects as well as sharing of best practices and more freedom for community schools to develop elective and independent study courses consistent with their community mandates.

As part of a "balanced scorecard" for monitoring progress, the province has set a target of having at least 75 community schools by 2013. A benchmark report in December 2007 identified 22 schools (11 anglophone and 11 francophone) poised to become community schools.⁵³

6.3.3 Saskatchewan: School^{PLUS} Community Schools

Saskatchewan created its first community schools in 1980 in response to urban Aboriginal poverty. Promising results prompted growth in the number of community schools, guided by a conceptual framework entitled *Building Communities of Hope: Effective Practices for Meeting the Diverse Learning Needs of Children and Youth*.⁵⁴ In 2001, the Community Schools Program expanded to include rural and secondary schools, supported by an implementation guide.⁵⁵

Also, in 2001, a provincial Role of the Schools Task Force⁵⁶ recommended that all Saskatchewan schools adopt the community schools philosophy, which it called "a great success" and "the right way to 'do' school."

The term **School^{PLUS}** was coined for the envisioned community school model, in which schools dedicated to excellence in education join with (PLUS) families, communities and human services agencies to create "a new kind of institution dedicated to the needs of children and youth." Ideally, each school would serve as a hub for a network of community supporters that together provide learning excellence, community education and leadership.

"Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their families and communities.... responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging. The learning program and environment effectively build on strengths to address the needs of the communities they serve. As hubs for the delivery of an array of services and supports, they use collaborative approaches to achieve learning excellence and well-being for the entire community."

School^{PLUS} at a Glance
Government of
Saskatchewan
SchoolPLUS@saskedgov.sk.ca

⁵³ *A Benchmark Report on the Targets of When kids come first – 2007*. Province of New Brunswick, Department of Education, December 2007.

⁵⁴ *Building Communities of Hope*, Saskatchewan Learning, revised 2004.

⁵⁵ *Process and Partnerships: Rural Community Schools Implementation Guide*, January 2005.

⁵⁶ *School^{PLUS} at a Glance*, Government of Saskatchewan, www.education.gov.sk.ca, SchoolPLUS@saskedgov.sk.ca.

By 2004, one in every five Saskatchewan students attending provincially funded schools was in a community school. These schools serve two expanded functions:

- to educate children and youth and nurture the development of the whole child - intellectually, social, spiritually, emotionally and physically, and
- to support service delivery, with schools as hubs of the community partners delivering services to children and their families.

As the Task Force predicted, shifting to School^{PLUS} required a significant change in culture, processes, structures and relationships within the provincial educational system, as well as across human service sectors and among families and community members. Provincial funding helps schools become hubs that coordinate and integrate services for students. Development support is also available for families and communities, and to enable school leadership teams to develop inclusive planning and programming strategies.

Among many tangible outcomes of School^{PLUS} is *A Community School Quilt*,⁵⁷ a whimsical story based on students' conversations, pictures, opinions and enthusiasm about life in a community school.

School^{PLUS} principles

- Schools have the capacity to meet developmental and learning needs, assisted by a network of human services.
- Schools are centres of the community; they actively engage young people, families and the broader community as partners.
- Human service providers work within the schools or are linked to them.
- Teachers are able to focus on providing high quality learning opportunities.
- Government departments collaborate more effectively through the establishment of new structures, networks and process at the provincial, local and regional levels.
- Resources are re-aligned and barriers are removed to make services more accessible and coordinated.
- Outcome measures inform continuous program and service improvements.

6.3.4 Manitoba: Community Schools Partnership Initiative

Adopting the Saskatchewan community school model as a template, the Province of Manitoba developed its own program. Launched in January 2005 by Manitoba

Manitoba's community schools initiative envisions schools as centres of activity in a neighbourhood, places to gather for educational, social, recreational and cultural activities.

⁵⁷ *A Community School Quilt*. Children's Voices in Community Schools. ISBN 1-894743-51-2, www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/branches/pol_eval/community_ed/docs/quiltbook2.pdf.

Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY), the **Community Schools Partnership Initiative (CSPI)** is based on the fundamental principle that community schools act as a hub for a broad range of services. The initiative supports opportunities that strengthen and support schools, communities and families, with a primary focus on communities of low socio-economic standing.

CSPI is designed to increase student success while engaging parents, community leaders and community agencies as partners in meeting community needs. It envisions schools as centres of activity in a neighbourhood, places to gather for educational, social, recreational and cultural activities.

With the school as a hub of a community, CPSI hopes to foster the following outcomes:

- Children begin the school day alert and healthy, with their basic needs met.
- Staff draw on community resources.
- Health, recreation, cultural and social needs are met in the school.
- Parents and community work with the school to direct programs.
- Schools are a resource for the whole community.

The project fosters partnerships between parents, government, educators and other interested partners to meet specific needs. One partnership may focus on afterschool programs, another on community health care, another on continuing education. Together, they secure the resources to meet these needs.

6.3.5 Vancouver: Community School Teams

Vancouver school facilities are rarely used on evenings and weekends due to the lack of a joint use agreement between the City and the school boards. Community groups are able to rent school facilities but tend to avoid doing so on weekends because of higher costs.

The Community School Teams introduced earlier in this report have recently taken steps taken to encourage community use of Vancouver schools. Using funds from the Union of BC Municipalities and School Trustees, they are offsetting the extra custodial costs incurred when schools are opened on Saturdays. One of the Hub CSTs is partnering with Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department to offer children's programming at the school on Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. The community school coordinator organizes the programs, which are primarily for children and youth from the hub school and surrounding areas. The Parks and Recreation Department manages staffing and covers other program costs.

"We tend to put considerations of family, community, and economy off-limits in education-reform policy discussions.

However, we do so at our peril. The seriousness of our purpose requires that we learn to rub our bellies and pat our heads at the same time."

Paul Barton

Facing the Hard Facts in Education Reform
quoted at

www.communityschools.org

Flexible funds that can be used to respond to specific needs can be an important impetus for getting the community school off the ground.”

Coalition for Community Schools, United States

What is most pivotal from a financing standpoint is money to pay for a Community School Coordinator. This individual is responsible for mobilizing community resources and integrating them into the life of the school....Ideally, initial funding would be available for the salary of a full-time community school coordinator at a salary that gives them status at the school and encourages a long term commitment, and \$50,000 in flexible program dollars.

Coalition for Community Schools, United States
www.communityschools.org

6.3.6 Coalition for Community Schools

In the United States, community schools are mobilized and supported by the **Coalition for Community Schools**, an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K-16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government and philanthropy as well as national, state and local community school networks. The coalition’s website, www.communityschools.org, provides a window into the philosophies and experiences of its members.

The Coalition strongly recommends hiring a Community School Coordinator to integrate community resources into the life of the school – at a competitive salary. This position is vital, it says, because success depends on “creating an environment in the school that encourages community agencies and organizations to bring their programs into the school, and has the school reaching out into the community.”

The Coalition also disputes the emphasis on academics exemplified by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Instead, it says, schools and their communities must work together to fulfill five conditions for learning:

1. The school has a core instructional program with qualified teachers, a challenging curriculum, and high standards and expectations for students.
2. Students are motivated and engaged in learning -- both in school and in community settings, during and after school.
3. The basic physical, mental and emotional health needs of young people and their families are recognized and addressed.
4. There is mutual respect and effective collaboration among parents, families and school staff.
5. Community engagement, together with school efforts, promotes a school climate that is safe, supportive and respectful and connects students to a broader learning community.

6.4 Alberta: Movement toward Community Use of Schools

Research within Alberta uncovered promising practices that appear to be moving the province in the direction of greater community use of schools. Note: A detailed summary of 20 joint-use agreements is provided in section 6.2 on pages 62 – 68.

6.4.1 Alberta Commission on Learning

The Province of Alberta has not formally endorsed community schools, but there are signs of increasing political will to explore this concept further. At least two recommendations made by *Alberta’s Commission on Learning Final Report* follow that pattern.

The Province of Alberta has not formally endorsed community schools, but there are signs of increasing political will to explore this concept further.

- Recommendation 20: “Ensure that schools become the centre of a wide range of coordinated, community services targeted at meeting the needs of children and youth.”
- Recommendation 21: “Encourage shared use of facilities, programs and services among school jurisdictions and with the community.”

The report also identifies that facilities are expensive to build and maintain and that schools and community groups are struggling to find space for programs and services. It highlights models, such as Sylvan Lake, where public and catholic school divisions have joined forces with the municipality to build community gymnasium space that can accommodate a blend of community and school programs.

Although, it premature to say whether those particular Commission on Learning recommendations stand to be implemented, they do provide a starting point from which to explore the concept of community schools with the provincial government.

6.4.2 Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)

In 2008 The City of Edmonton put forward the following resolution to the annual AUMA conference to increase school board funding for after hours use of schools:

“Therefore be it resolved that the Alberta Municipalities Association request that the Government of Alberta provide additional funding to school boards to support and promote after hours community use of schools, thereby facilitating increased recreation and community development opportunities for residents.”

The resolution was subsequently endorsed and sent to the provincial government, where it awaits formal response.

6.4.3 Calgary Region: Community Use of Schools Pilot Project

In Calgary, the cost of renting a school facility during afterschool hours (after 6 p.m. on weekdays) is determined by the school boards. For dual or multiple caretaker schools, rental rates for non-adult activities range from \$20.30 an hour for a small gymnasium to \$23.30 an hour for a large gymnasium. In one-caretaker schools, where the caretaker must be paid overtime, the rental rate increases to \$74.05 an hour. A caretaker is required to supervise the facility for health and safety reasons. Unfortunately, one caretaker schools are often located in the older, lower-income, inner city neighbourhoods, where the need for low-cost children and youth programming is most acute.

Recognizing high rental fees as a significant barrier, the United Way of Calgary and Area and **UpStart Champions for Children and Youth** (formally The Calgary Children’s Initiative) collaborated with the City of Calgary and Calgary school

Calgary region partners are calling for provincial investment to reduce school rental fees and thus encourage use of school facilities by children and youth service providers.

boards to develop a position paper entitled *Community Support for Successful Children and Youth: Enhancing Access to Facilities during the Critical Hours*. The proposal called for a provincial investment of \$1.5 million a year to reduce school rental fees and thus encourage use of school facilities by children and youth service providers.

The United Way and the City of Calgary met with the Minister of Culture and Community Spirit in October to discuss the development of a policy framework for enhancing community use of school facilities during non-school hours in the City of Calgary. As of January 2009, the Province of Alberta agreed in principle to fund a pilot project involving the City of Calgary and the Rocky View School Division. The two-year pilot will provide \$1.5 million to subsidize enhanced use of school facilities for children and youth programs during non-school hours.

In Calgary, the funds will primarily be used to reduce rental costs in one caretaker schools from \$74.05 an hour to \$20.30 an hour. The funds will also be used to hire a “community connector” to match the needs of children and youth agencies with appropriate school facilities, thereby increasing community use of schools in areas where they are traditionally underutilized.

Rocky View School Division rental fees for non-profit children and youth oriented programs are:

- \$7 an hour for school gymnasium rental during instructional days, and
- \$35 an hour on weekends and other no instructional days, such as stat holidays.

The Rocky View School Division is determining its priorities for the pilot project.

6.4.5 UpStart Position Papers

UpStart: Champions for Children and Youth commissioned two discussion papers in 2008:

- a review of practices that support school and community collaboration, and
- strategies to enhance the role of faith-based organizations in providing quality children and youth programming during the “critical hours.”

The *Community School Collaboration* research paper considered the policy direction needed to support children and youth programming by enhancing access to school facilities during non-school hours. The research focused on promising practices that would support a community school concept, in which schools serve as community hubs that serve both community and school needs

Both discussion papers are still undergoing internal review, but a key finding in the community school collaboration research deserves mention in light of a recent decision to build P3 schools (schools built through public-private partnerships) throughout the province. While P3 schools will be built to school specifications,

they may not provide additional space for community use, including larger gymnasium space that could enhance community use after school hours.

The issue of building schools that meet both school and community needs deserves further exploration with the Alberta Government. UpStart is still considering future directions and strategies to address these and other issues associated with a conceptual shift to community schools.

Section Three: Analysis and Recommendations

7. BEST PRACTICES IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Clearly there is need to strengthen Alberta’s response to the critical out-of-school hours. What are the characteristics of a more robust system that will meet the needs of all children and youth? In interviews, in case studies and in research, the following key elements surface repeatedly as best practices in afterschool programming and infrastructure.

Frontline Programming and Delivery

1. Caring, committed adults
2. Qualified, well-paid, stable staff
3. Purposeful, organized and varied activities
4. Age-Appropriate Programs for youth as well as children
5. Community engagement
6. Affordable and accessible programs

Supportive Infrastructure

1. Enabling public policy and sustained funding
2. Enhance what works rather than duplicating
3. Strong partnerships and networks

7.1 Frontline Programming and Delivery

7.1.1 Caring, committed adults

Perhaps the most commonly recurring theme in both case studies and evaluative research is the importance of positive, personal relationships among volunteers, staff and participants. Having seen this reality in action, the highly successful Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada emphasizes the importance of “relationship-based programming.”⁵⁸ It is no accident that one-on-one mentorship is central to its work. For mentor relationships to provide the greatest benefit, they need time to mature. Stability is crucial to building relationships of trust.

7.1.2 Qualified, well-paid, stable staff

Given the importance of consistent mentorship, it follows that afterschool programs need qualified staff who are motivated to stay. Yet afterschool service providers and municipal recreation and parks staffs alike describe chronic inability to find and keep the right people. Salary level is often an issue, as is the lack of money for

“The ‘right’ goals, the ‘right’ young people, the ‘right’ stuff, the ‘right’ period of time and the ‘right’ management choices: All are intertwined.... When program components work, they build on one another to form a strong foundation. But a problem in one area can have a domino effect, hurting the program as a whole and weakening the benefits to children and youth.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“Community Education is a remarkable approach to teaching and learning that serves all children and youth. It is an inclusive approach that involves school staff, parents, family, caregivers, seniors, elders, volunteers, health nurses, police, business people, social workers, administrators, and anyone who has a vested interest in seeing students succeed.

When this level of cooperation is achieved, not only do the students flourish – the community does as well.

A spirit of joyful collaboration takes hold and something remarkable happens when community education is embraced, a learning community is created, and a Community School emerges.”

Saskatchewan
Community Schools
Association

⁵⁸ Boys and Girls Clubs, 18.

“Studies of after-school programs identify turnover, especially among part-time staff members, as one of the most pervasive challenges for all organizations serving young people.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“... programs that try to fulfill too many goals are likely to achieve none. Those who run programs need to answer two crucial questions. First, ‘what can and do we want to achieve?’... [and second], ‘Are our strategies in line with our goals?’”

Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“Whether adopting an academic, recreational or cultural-enrichment focus, programs must be designed to fit youth’s interests and needs. Too often, funding requirements or the skills and interests of available instructors derail this simple goal.”

Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

support and development. Meanwhile, programs such as HIGH FIVE are demonstrating the marked gains that are possible when staff are properly trained.

Getting It Right,⁵⁹ the synthesis of research done for Public/Private Ventures, observes that staffing decisions are crucial. “Having permanent staff is the most critical factor for creating the program’s culture and climate. But having a staff that shares a common vision and relates well to young people is also essential. Hiring, supervision, activity monitoring and careful allocation of available resources all contribute to strong programs.”

Attentive, well-organized leaders in the right staff-to-youth ratios are essential to retaining youth, *Getting It Right* advises. “Strong relationships with staff members and a range of engaging activities keep youngsters coming back month after month.” When programs are understaffed, children do not receive the personalized attention that would inspire trust and entice continued participation. In many cases outreach suffers as well, creating a downward cycle in attendance that leaves youth unserved.⁶⁰

7.1.3 Purposeful, organized, varied activities

The benefits of organized activities, recreation included, echo throughout this research and program review.

A recent paper for the U.S.-based National Institute on Out-of-School Time recommends that researchers and policymakers pay more attention to the potential role of organized sports, arts enrichment activities and academic enrichment activities in shaping quality afterschool programs.⁶¹ The researchers pointed to studies in which “young people reported increased engagement and more positive emotions during programs, and a greater sense of apathy when not in programs.”⁶² In particular, they concluded, “the social and emotional benefits of engagement in organized sports cannot be overemphasized.”⁶³

Getting It Right,⁶⁴ the synthesis of research done for Public/Private Ventures, advises that programming should have strong theoretical base and be developmentally appropriate. “Individual activities should operate according to a

⁵⁹ Raley, Rebecca, Jean Grossman, Karen E. Walker, *Getting It Right: Strategies for After-School Success*, Public/Private Ventures, 2005.

⁶⁰ America’s After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime, Or Youth Enrichment and Achievement. <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/as2000.pdf> p.21.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.9.

⁶² Youth Engagement and Quality of Experience in Afterschool Programs, by David J Shernoff and Deborah Lowe Vandell, National Institute on Out-of-School Time: Afterschool Matters Occasional Paper Series. #9 Fall 2008 Pg. 7

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Raley, Rebecca, Jean Grossman, Karen E. Walker, *Getting It Right: Strategies for After-School Success*, Public/Private Ventures, 2005.

“Well-organized activities staffed by attentive adults are essential to retaining youth. Establishing the right staff-to-youth ratios is a key part of this formula. Limiting the total number of participants to 20 per activity helps focus the adults’ attention, but youngsters also benefit greatly from activities that offer closer contact with adults. Strong relationships with staff members and a range of engaging activities keep youngsters coming back month after month.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“To improve youths’ personal and social skills, programs must devote sufficient time to skill enhancement, be explicit about what they wish to achieve, use activities that are coordinated and sequenced to achieve their purpose, and require active involvement on the part of participants.”

Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg
The Impact of After-School Programs That Promote Personal and Social Skills

few basic principles: They must be interesting to participants and doable at participants’ current level of skill or knowledge but intentionally and incrementally challenging to help them grow.” A program designed to strengthen leadership skills, for example, might offer youth-led community service alongside open-court basketball, dance or mural arts. Some may initially participate in sports or arts in which leadership opportunities are subtly imbedded, but later join more formal leadership activities. Variety expands the range of positive outcomes and keeps youth coming back as their interests shift. Retention is crucial because the longer a young person participates in a variety of activities, the better the outcomes.

7.1.4 Age-appropriate programs for youth as well as children

Traditionally, research related to afterschool programming has centered on elementary school aged children in the belief that older youth have more available options for filling the afterschool hours. Given access to jobs and sports, it’s assumed they are less interested in structured programs. Recent concern about the negative habits invited by unstructured and unsupervised time is directing belated attention to the needs of this older age group.⁶⁵

While data do indicate that younger children are more likely than older youth to enjoy participating in organized activities, youth are still in need of structure and guidance. In the words of an important 1992 study by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, “the transition to adolescence has become more difficult because of the increasing number and accessibility of dangerous alternatives for time use when young people are not in school, coupled with the uneven availability of safe and healthy activities with enough appeal to attract and hold the attention of young people.”⁶⁶

Some programs have particular relevance for certain age groups, but prove markedly inappropriate for others. For children aged 6 to 12, it is especially important that afterschool programs not simply feel like an extension of the classroom. To appeal to this group, programs must be accessible, varied and relevant, combining elements of both learning and play.⁶⁷ In junior high and beyond, opportunities for volunteering in the community appear particularly important. Outreach is also crucial at this age, as are efforts to address the perception that facilities are unwelcoming to youth.

In high school, programs that teach career as well as life skills are proving a good fit. A successful program of this type is the previously described Vancouver YELL

⁶⁵ Research Update, 4.

⁶⁶ Witt, “Re-examining the Role,” p. 2.

⁶⁷ Witt, “Re-Examining the Role,” p.3.

program,⁶⁸ a critical component of the Vancouver Community School Team initiative. High school students receive training and certification in healthy child development, coaching and program design, then volunteer as program leaders for afterschool programs in their neighbourhoods. The benefits of this program to participants and the community are well documented. What's more, many of the youth earn paid employment with local recreation offices and youth agencies as summer and part-time program leaders.

The White Plains Youth Bureau offers a Foster Granny program in which local senior citizens help with homework and play games with youth. Building on the success of this program, afterschool students now volunteer at the Senior Center. Recently, the Youth Bureau received a grant to have middle school youth work with the senior citizens to develop a book and video chronicling seniors' lives.

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
National League of Cities

"Ensuring coverage in underserved communities requires both new investments and effective outreach to parents."

National League of Cities

7.1.5 Community engagement

Several sources stress the benefit of programs that involve participants in the community, particularly in junior and senior high. Building community linkages is central to Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Schools and other provider models, and for good reason. Whether mentoring a younger student, helping in a community cleanup or serving as a leader in training, club members learn that they are part of a larger body, with all the give and take that implies. Along the way, they gain confidence and a sense of fulfillment.

Those emotional outcomes have the power to shift behaviour. Research tells us that youth who volunteer in their communities are less likely to become involved in criminal activity or to exhibit anti-social tendencies.⁶⁹ The rewards of community involvement pull them toward positive habits instead.

Community schools take the concept of community involvement one step further, redefining schools as hubs for community service and learning. Afterschool programs operating from a community school have the benefit of streamlined access to an array of community services and partners.

7.1.6 Affordable and accessible programs

Numerous case studies highlight program fees and transportation issues as significant barriers to participation for students who might otherwise benefit from afterschool programs. Not only must the cost of attending be affordable, but students need easy access, particularly since most parents are still at work when the programs begin.

Using schools as a base for afterschool programming can be one way to address transportation issues and make programs more accessible. In many Alberta communities, expanded community use of school facilities is complicated during the "critical hours" by cost factors and by the schools' own use of gymnasiums and playing fields. Nevertheless, programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs are proving

⁶⁸ "America's After-School Choice," p. 22.

⁶⁹ "America's After-School Choice," p. 16; *Boys and Girls Clubs*, 16.

that it is possible to co-locate with schools. Flexible busing schedules and innovative use of other community facilities are also proving workable in some cases.

“Afterschool programs are uniquely positioned to encourage a more supportive bridge between home and school.”

Blenda J. Wilson
in *Afterschool Programs and Educational Success*

Adopting a Community School model is one way to encourage schools to pay attention to students’ needs in the out-of-school hours as well as during the day. Government leadership is also important. In jurisdictions such as Ontario and Chicago, provincial and state government commitment to fill funding gaps is helping schools in a cost-recovery environment move beyond such questions as “who pays for lights, heat and janitorial services” and expand their afterschool offerings.

7.2 Supportive Infrastructure

“The citizens of Fort Worth, Texas, passed the city’s first-ever ‘crime tax,’ with \$1.4 million of the \$14 million in annual revenue going to afterschool. With this initial seed money, the city has been able to leverage matching support from the Fort Worth Independent School District.”

*The afterschool hours:
A New Focus for America’s
Cities*
National League of Cities

7.2.1 Enabling public policy and sustained funding

Support from federal, provincial (and state) and/or municipal governments is a common denominator among strong afterschool initiatives and networks. Local agencies report that crucial forms of support include enabling policy statements and frameworks accompanied by some form of sustained financial backing.

In the Canadian examples, provincial education departments are instrumental in supporting local initiatives. In Ontario, this support includes funding for community school access; in British Columbia, this support kick-started the Vancouver Community School Team Initiative. A blend of support especially from federal and/or provincial governments, as well as local school districts and the community enables agencies to design and expand programs that meet local needs is deemed essential.

7.2.2 Enhance what works rather than duplicating

“*Critical Hours* points to the importance of communities, school systems and government working together to overcome barriers to effective programs in order to provide young people with experiences that contribute to their development, safety and academic achievement.”

Beth Miller, Ph.D.
Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

In designing public investment, it’s crucial to avoid duplicating programs that are already doing remarkable work with limited resources. Administratively, all successful initiatives support collaboration among existing service providers such as schools, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs and municipal recreation and parks agencies. This support enables communities to enhance service delivery partners’ capacity rather than creating new agencies or programs to deliver services.

7.2.3 Strong partnerships and networks

This review of afterschool gaps and initiatives confirms the need to move away from a soiled, sector-specific approach to afterschool programming. Some of the most positive outcomes have their roots in publicly supported networks and collaborations that cross traditional boundaries. These networks typically support

and engage a broad spectrum of community partners and program delivery agencies. In the United States examples include a number of major national partners such as the Federal Education Department and national youth agencies such as Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA and 4-H.

“Successful coordinating entities appear to share the following features:

- ◆ A single organization or partnership empowered to set afterschool policy across multiple agencies and to blend or better align funding streams

- ◆ A multi-year state afterschool plan developed with extensive stakeholder input and encompassing the full range of strategies and resources needed to produce high-quality programs

- ◆ Use of data and research to drive decisions regarding program models, resource allocation and accountability standards.”

“the social and emotional benefits of engagement in organized sports cannot be overemphasized.”

David J Shernoff and Deborah Lowe Vandell
Youth Engagement and Quality of Experience in Afterschool Programs
National Institute on Out-of-School Time:

In Canada, three significant afterschool proposals – City of Calgary, AfterSchool Programming (Ontario) and Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada – focus on senior level government investments and inter-sectoral strategies to enhance the capacity of current program providers and create a stronger network of service providers. The idea of enabling providers to build a strong afterschool network also is cited as a key success factor in the American Afterschool Initiative. The Vancouver Community School Team program uses this same approach.

By establishing networks and developing collaborative strategies, communities find they can enhance the capacity of individual program and service providers, and thus serve more children and youth. Provincial, state and national networks build the critical mass needed for effective advocacy, evaluative research and spread of best practices. This finding is consistent across both international and Canadian research and case studies.

7.3 Recreation as a Key Program Component

In all case studies reviewed for this research, recreation has been identified as a key “front-line” element of successful afterschool programming, and municipal recreation departments or recreation based organizations emerge as critical supports. They are identified as service delivery partners and in a few cases take a lead role, as in Ontario, Vancouver and Calgary. Yet recreation and parks tend to be absent at key policy and decision making tables.

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind Initiative primarily focuses on afterschool programs for academic enrichment through tutoring, mentoring, healthy social and physical development, arts and culture. While the stated outcomes of such initiatives do not include recreation, afterschool networks often pursue social outcomes and development *through* recreation. Municipal recreation and parks departments are often identified as needing to play a greater role as program delivery agent and partner in afterschool networks.

8. TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE AFTERSCHOOL AGENDA

There is no doubt that focused attention must be paid to the critical afterschool hours, when many parents are still at work and idle time so easily turns negative. Across Alberta, varied agencies in the education, social services and non-profit

“Afterschool programs are uniquely poised to help young people see themselves as learners in an informal, hands-on learning environment. They can bring parents, schools and the community together. They can create the foundation for a positive peer culture that values learning skills and contributes to society. To engage early adolescents who are seeking identity and independence, effective programs must find ways to compete with the streets and the mall. They must help youth overcome the effects of poverty, racism, isolation, and negative media influences, as well as support those whose parents are working ever-longer hours to make ends meet. Out-of-school time programs operate in the context of increasing pressure to help students achieve test-based academic outcomes. The good news is we know what works and why.”

Beth Miller, Ph.D.
Afterschool Programs and Educational Success

sectors are busy providing afterschool programs. In many communities, however, the need for purposeful engagement during the critical hours is not being met.

What’s more, opportunities to fully integrate recreation and parks into the programming mix are being missed. Given escalating concern about epidemic child obesity and inactive living, given recreation and parks’ vital capacity to enhance healthy and holistic development, it is crucial to address recreation and parks needs and potential as part of a larger review of afterschool needs.

Municipal recreation and parks departments are providing some afterschool recreation, most commonly in municipal facilities. Some extend their reach by collaborating with non-profit organizations but gaps remain. An area of particular concern is outreach to youth. Municipalities offering their own programs focus almost exclusively on facility-based activities. Reliance on a limited number of facilities poses transportation issues, making the programs less accessible. What’s more, youth tell us they don’t find public recreation facilities, as traditionally run, particularly welcoming.

Municipal recreation and parks department whose mandates and funding have evolved to indirect program delivery face even greater challenges in ensuring their children and youth are well-served. With reduced staffing and budgets, they lack the capacity to fill gaps. This challenge is particularly acute in communities with no community-based agencies that can offer sustained, quality afterschool programs.

In the larger picture, meanwhile, the absence of a provincial strategy for building and equipping the network of community-based agencies required for a comprehensive afterschool agenda results in numerous ad hoc, overlapping and underfunded stopgaps. A systematic review and response is imperative.

8.1 Recommended Action

This research identified several specific areas in which ARPA and the recreation and parks sector can work with the provincial government and other stakeholders to support a strengthening of “critical hours” program delivery in Alberta.

8.1.1 Get the word out that the “critical hours” must be top priority

Develop and launch a strategy to build awareness among recreation and parks professionals, other afterschool providers and political leaders about the urgent need for quality afterschool recreation in every community. The resulting campaign might include forums, seminars and dialogues inviting multiple stakeholders to discuss how recreation and parks departments can engage the AfterSchool Agenda in their own communities. The conversations that ensue will focus attention on the need for more resources – dollars, people, training, spaces and places – to support and link all quality afterschool providers in every community.

“Activities targeting youth who perform poorly academically or behaviourally can lead to the largest effects. Staff members who want to attract this challenging population need to frame recruitment strategies positively and pursue them aggressively.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

“Academic programs are most successful when they meld recreational and academic activities.”

Rebecca Raley, Jean Grossman, Karen Walker
Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

There is a vital need for Alberta to develop community-based models of integrated service for school-
“Eleven of Bullock County’s fourteen schools provide enrichment activities for students outside of regular school hours. Elementary school students get help with their homework from college students, and participate in games and activities. The program for middle school students focuses on academics, community service, recreation, and conflict resolution. Afterschool care has been so successful that the county’s School Board and Parks and Recreation Department share the salary costs for a teacher to help run the program at each school.”

Expanding Afterschool Opportunities
National League of Cities

8.1.2 Advocate for an MLA Committee to draft a coordinated AfterSchool Agenda

Urge the provincial government to strike an MLA Committee involving ministries mandated to oversee children, recreation, education, health and social needs to study this crucial issue and draft a coordinated Afterschool Agenda. Background that Committee’s work with a survey of Alberta municipalities and stakeholder agencies that confirms and maps the programs already addressing “critical hours.” Examine existing relationships, challenges and outcomes with the intent of strengthening rather than duplicating the excellent agencies already doing good work with children and youth in the out-of-school hours.

8.1.3 Showcase the benefits of integrating recreation into afterschool programming through pilot projects

Work with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and other government ministries to launch a pilot program that entices municipal recreation and parks departments to take deliberate steps toward integrating recreation into community afterschool programming.

Choose pilots that focus not only on direct recreation and parks delivery, but also on equipping community agencies to integrate quality recreation-based activities into afterschool programs. This mix of projects will invite involvement by recreation and parks departments that have an indirect program mandate as well as those that offer their own programs. Where other afterschool providers exist, encourage collaboration. Encourage the pilots to explore innovative outreach programming that engages more young people in healthier lifestyles within and beyond recreation facilities.

Explore the possibility of linking with the ACE Communities initiative and other ARPA projects to support and promote these pilot projects using a grassroots community development approach.

Use learning from pilot communities to create a business case and framework for shared recreation responsibility in afterschool programming. That foundation laid, apply the framework throughout the province so that children across Alberta benefit from full access to quality recreation and parks activities during the afterschool hours.

8.1.4 Coalesce an Alberta AfterSchool “Critical Hours” Consortium

Take an active lead in forming an Alberta AfterSchool “Critical Hours” Consortium to build a model for integrated community-based afterschool programs and to promote collaboration.

Experience in other jurisdictions demonstrate the value of out-of-school networks that are community-based yet strongly supported by provincial and other funders. Alberta urgently needs to develop such a model. Ensuring the model is holistic and realistic will take cross-sectoral leadership from government and from provincial organizations with ties to frontline service. The ARPA Children and Youth Committee is well equipped to initiate dialogue with involved sectors, agencies and ministries to determine the consortium’s most appropriate structure and function. Among likely participants:

- Tourism, Parks and Recreation;
- Culture and Community Spirit;
- Education;
- Children and Youth Services;
- provincial children and youth program delivery agencies, such as Alberta Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Sisters and Big Brothers, 4-H, YW/YMCA’s, Ever Active Schools, and
- other aligned provincial organizations, such as the Alberta FCSS Association.

8.1.5 Lobby to include recreation in provincial child development funding

Work with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Alberta Children and Youth Services to build understanding of the relationship between recreation and wellness. In particular, that recreation has power to enhance child and youth development and should be funded as such.

Enshrining the concept of “healthy child development through recreation” would enable afterschool programs to receive support from the most appropriate funding source, whether FCSS, recreation or both. Providers such as Boys and Girls Clubs would no longer need to disguise their recreation offerings to obtain FCSS and other child development funding. Communities would then be in a better position to maximize resources through a program strategy that meets both development and wellness requirements.

8.1.6 Promote excellence in afterschool programming

With Alberta Children and Youth Services, explore the possibility of recognizing HIGH FIVE[®] quality assurance standard as part of the *School-Aged Care Accreditation Program* demonstration sites scheduled for fall 2009.

As this research confirms, recreation activities are often part of afterschool programs regardless of the delivery agency. ARPA is in an ideal position to work with other sectors to enhance and ensure the quality of the recreation enjoyed by Alberta’s youth. As certified delivery agent in Alberta, ARPA could offer *HIGH*

“Park and Recreation departments need to recognize societal expectations and the forces driving the need for after-school programs if they are to become a significant player in the after-school program movement.”

Re-Examining the Role of Parks in After-school Programs
Dr. Peter Witt

“It is recommended that reciprocal joint-use agreements be developed that cover the joint use of schools and municipal facilities so that schools can use municipal facilities and sport and recreation departments can use school facilities after school hours. “

*Reaching for the Top:
A Report by the Advisor on
Healthy Children and Youth*

“Systems to monitor activity quality are among the most worthwhile but underused management strategies in after-school programming.”

Getting It Right
Public/Private Ventures

Seattle has a long history of cutting edge afterschool support strategies. Project Lift-Off seeks to create effective and affordable early learning and out-of-school time opportunities for Seattle’s kids, ages birth to 18 by challenging an association of philanthropies to contribute to an Opportunity Fund. The city invests \$1 for every \$2 invested by philanthropies, and the grantmakers can invest the pooled funding in any project that matches the Project Lift-Off “Blueprint for Change” strategies.

Based on
*Expanding Afterschool
Opportunities*
National League of Cities

FIVE® and Play Leadership courses to afterschool providers as a means for professional development.

Promote excellence as well by advocating for the support all afterschool providers need to offer excellent programming that uses recreation as a vehicle to address social, community and cultural issues.

8.1.7 Make community use of schools a guiding principle

Advocate with Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Alberta Education and allied stakeholders e.g. AAPHERD to adopt community use of schools as a guiding principle, and to establish a cross-sectoral enabling body.

One of the greatest challenges for afterschool program providers is finding affordable, accessible and appropriate space. Providing a financial incentive to keep schools open after hours appears to be helpful, but is not sufficient in the Alberta context. While cost is clearly a concern for some communities, the larger issue appears to be the availability of sufficient space, particularly immediately after school.

The children and youth of this province will surely benefit from a made in Alberta “Community School Initiative” that puts priority on engaging and influencing all children and youth in purposeful activities, including quality recreation, during the critical afterschool hours.

There is overwhelming support for schools acting as community hubs. A report released by the government of Ontario, “*Roots of Youth Violence*” identifies three priority recommendations for urgent action against youth violence, and one of them is to establish community hubs and afterschool programs, especially in at-risk communities.

8.1.8 Ensure the sustainability of an accessible quality afterschool system that incorporates recreation

Advocate for ongoing core funding to support a strong afterschool network of community-based providers whose members are equipped to tap recreation and parks potential for healthy child development.

This research strongly confirms the importance of ensuring full access to quality afterschool programming during the critical afterschool hours. Although a solid foundation of providers from the recreation and parks, education, social services and non-profit sectors are providing quality programs, unmet need persists. Of particular note for this study, recreation and parks departments are not able to meet afterschool demand, especially for youth focused programs that are truly welcoming and accessible.

All of the above recommendations depend on public investment that is adequate, dependable and appropriate to Alberta's needs

All of the above recommendations depend on public investment that is adequate, dependable and appropriate to Alberta's needs.

8.2 Summary

Given growing recognition of the need for quality recreation-focused afterschool programs, the time is now to re-engage the recreation and parks sector in working with others to ensure that all Alberta and youth have access to quality experiences in those "critical hours."

It is in everyone's interest for ARPA to advance the recommended solutions with its members, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and with the Province of Alberta so that the role of recreation and parks and municipal service providers is properly positioned in the emerging area of "critical hours" programming.

The presence of the recreation and parks sector at the table will help to ensure that recreation and parks achieves its potential as a powerful force for holistic development in a time when the health of coming generations is at risk.

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Witt, Peter A. *Re-Examining the Role of Recreation and Parks in After-school Programs.* http://rptsweb.tamu.edu/Faculty/Witt/after_school_article.PDF

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Australian Government: *Australian Sports Commission: Evaluation of AASC Program: Community Case Study – Vasse Community: Summary of Key Findings.* Edited by Research and Corporation Planning Section, Australian Sports Commission, July 2008.

Sweden: *After School Centres Child Care Statistics 1998-1999.* Swedish National Agency for Education, Report 283.

PROGRAM WEBSITES

1. Critical Hours Beyond School: Calgary Children’s Initiative

www.childrensinitiative.ca/criticalhours/practices/index.asp

A summary of afterschool best practices and links to various afterschool initiatives and programs in Canada and the United States. Critical Hours research conducted by the Calgary Children’s Initiative can also be downloaded from this site.

2. Harvard Family Research Project

www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/overview

The Harvard Family Research Project focuses on promoting quality, accessible and sustainable Out of School Time programs and activities across the United States. Its research is focused on promoting best practices and building organizational capacity by developing practical guides, tools and other resources. The project publishes summaries and analyses of the latest research and evaluations in the *Issues and Opportunities in Out-of-School Time Evaluation* series; updates and maintains the *OST Program Research and Evaluation Database*; provides practice and policy recommendations; and supports networks and collaborative ventures involving local, state and national organizations.

3. National Institute on Out of School Time: Wellesley Centers for Women

www.niost.org

A clearinghouse of OST information, the National Institute on Out of School Time website offers valuable resources and items for download. “Our work bridges the worlds of research and practice,” says the institute, whose mission is to ensure “that all children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours.”

4. New Jersey After 3

www.njafter3.org/index.php

For service providers, the New Jersey After 3 website contains information on promising practices and how to apply for grant funding. For families, there are links to various support organizations as well as a comprehensive online directory of afterschool programs in New Jersey.

“Our mission is to ensure that all children, youth, and families have access to high quality programs, activities, and opportunities during non-school hours. We believe that these experiences are essential to the healthy development of children and youth, who then can become effective and capable members of society.”

National Institute on Out of School Time

5. Public Private Venture: Innovation, Research, Action

www.ppv.org

A repository of current program information, evaluations and documentation for American afterschool programs collected by Public Private Venture, a non-profit, non-partisan organization focused on “overcoming the challenges faced by low-income communities.” P/PV employs research, policy and program development experts specializing in education, employment, prisoner re-entry, juvenile justice, public health and youth development, among other fields. Located in Philadelphia, New York City and Oakland, it follows three core principles:

- **Innovation:** Working with leaders in the field to identify promising existing programs or develop new ones.
- **Research:** Evaluating programs to determine what is effective and what is not.
- **Action:** Reproducing model programs in new locations, providing technical assistance, communicating with policymakers and practitioners regarding what works in afterschool programming.

6. Wallace Foundation

www.wallacefoundation.org

The Wallace Foundation offers excellent downloadable resources for out-of-school learning, including reports, best practices literature and evaluation documents. With a mission of enabling institutions to expand learning and enrichment opportunities for all people, the foundation seeks to support and share effective ideas and practices that strengthen education leadership, arts participation and out-of-school learning. Its Wallace Knowledge Center is useful to policymakers, practitioners, researchers and concerned citizens make progress in their fields of work.

Section Four: Appendices

Appendix A. Promising AfterSchool Programs in the United States

The following chart summarizes a selection of the afterschool programs reviewed for this research. Additional detail is provided in the body of the report.

Community & Program	Program Description Elements	Primary Program Partners	Key Learnings /Challenges
<p>Los Angeles <i>L.A.'s Best- Better Educated Students for Tomorrow</i></p>	<p>Established in 1988, <i>L.A.'s BEST</i> — (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow) is a nationally recognized afterschool education, enrichment and recreation program serving more than 25,000 children with the greatest needs and fewest resources throughout the City of Los Angeles.</p> <p>The program provides a safe haven for children age 5 to 12 at 153 elementary school sites each day during the “critical hours” — at no cost to parents.</p> <p>Field staff includes a coordinator for each site and program support staff as required. Consultants at local program sites provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ homework help; ▪ fun recreation activities chosen by participants; ▪ arts and science programs, and ▪ healthy snacks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Los Angeles ▪ Unified School District ▪ Private Sector 	<p>Learnings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programs are located in lower income communities. ▪ Children should have choices of activities and input into the program design and options. ▪ Programs are vehicles to learning and developing values, relationships, skills, etc.
<p>San Francisco <i>Team Up for Youth</i></p>	<p><i>Team Up for Youth</i> exists to increase the capacity of sport program providers to engage youth during the “critical hours.” This is an excellent example of an active, committed collaborative that engages community stakeholders and organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non profit community organizations ▪ Churches ▪ School board ▪ University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner with afterschool programs, offering training and consulting. ▪ Coaching support is a critical factor for success. ▪ Focus on providing a safe place for youth

Community & Program	Program Description Elements	Primary Program Partners	Key Learnings /Challenges
	<p>to enhance facility access.</p> <p>The program provides consulting and training for leaders so that sport program providers can engage a broader range of youth.</p> <p>Sports programs include basketball, hip hop dance, frisbee, running soccer and volleyball as well as programs designed specifically to attract more girls to sports. A full 500,000 children from kindergarten to grade 8 participate in sports at both school sites and nearby parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation and Parks Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to participate in sports. ▪ Expand sports programs, including girl specific programs, to increase participation. ▪ Design the program to build and support community delivery partners to engage youth.
<p>Chicago <i>Out of School Time Project</i></p>	<p>Municipally funded initiative designed to create a city-wide support system for afterschool programming.</p> <p>The <i>After School Matters Project</i> is a critical partner, providing job training in the arts, sports, technology, communication and science.</p> <p>City support increases the local capacity to offer quality programming. The support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ integrated information and database system; ▪ leadership team for staff from the various service providers; ▪ project afterschool website that supports program information and registration, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Chicago ▪ Chicago Public Schools ▪ Chicago Parks District ▪ Chicago Public Libraries ▪ Chicago Department of Children and Youth Services ▪ Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs ▪ Community-based organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program sites include a local school, park and library. ▪ Collaboration with key partners provides quality programming. ▪ Civic support to community program providers is fostering a vibrant city-wide network and support system.

Community & Program	Program Description Elements	Primary Program Partners	Key Learnings /Challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ city-wide employment effort matching youth with potential employers. 		
<p>Baltimore <i>City After School Time Initiative</i></p>	<p>Afterschool programs run by non-profits are located in 58 public schools. They operate 4-5 days a week, three hours a day. The goal is to expand to middle schools throughout Baltimore.</p> <p>An expanded program enables youth to gain technical skills in arts, academics and athletics. Programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the Algebra project; ▪ literacy programs; ▪ apprenticeship opportunities, and ▪ high school preparation for middle school students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Baltimore ▪ Baltimore Public Schools ▪ Private partners 	<p>Current research and program evaluations identify the following best practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ age-appropriate structure and supervision; ▪ a menu of program options that students can choose from; ▪ consistent youth and adult role models who establish supportive and trusting relationships, and ▪ strong connections to family, school and community.
<p>4- H (National Project)</p>	<p>This national program collaborates with other national funders and service providers to create and improve afterschool programming. Provides youth development training to afterschool program staff across the nation. Through the partnerships, 4-H activities reach a broad scope of urban, suburban and rural communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JC Penny ▪ Metlife Foundation ▪ John Deere ▪ Boys and Girls Clubs of America ▪ YMCA ▪ Junior Achievement (Afterschool Alliance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration is the key to success. ▪ Successful strategies support community-based program delivery agencies, such as Boys and Girls Clubs or the YMCA. ▪ It is important to find ways to enhance capacity and resources without duplicating programs in local communities.
<p>Phoenix <i>AfterSchool Center</i></p>	<p>The <i>Phoenix Afterschool Center</i> offers fun and education at several school and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Municipal Recreation Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional afterschool programs do not work at senior high schools. High school

Community & Program	Program Description Elements	Primary Program Partners	Key Learnings /Challenges
	<p>community centers throughout Phoenix. Kids spend time in supervised programs close to home.</p> <p>Educational enrichment programs include study sessions, homework help, computer sessions, cooking, sports, crafts and games. The program has a website and online registration. Registration fees are minimal to none.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Library Department <p>Together, the partners provide afterschool programs in 90 schools.</p>	<p>students are often busy right after school with sports programs or working part-time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Phoenix, a number of high schools run the programs during the noon hour. Recreation and library staff visit the schools and offer a wide range of activities involving music, games, computer, job fairs, etc.
<p>Westminster, Colorado <i>Afterschool Recreation Programs for Youth</i></p>	<p>Afterschool centres provide quality recreation and recreational programs three days a week for 1.5 hours. Their goal is to provide alternatives that discourage youth from gangs or engaging in anti-social and other unhealthy behaviours.</p> <p>Activities include sports, cultural arts clubs, tutoring and guitar lessons.</p> <p>Transportation is provided for program participants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involves teachers and students ▪ Grants are provided to schools, by Youth Crime Prevention and local Rotary Clubs ▪ Community scholarships for specific programs ▪ Parks and Recreation supplement the program with budget allocations and minimal registration fees. 	<p>The following learnings are included in a recent evaluation report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Afterschool programs provide stronger connections between families, school and community. ▪ The programs resulted in a greater degree of strategic planning and efficient use of resources. ▪ Enriched educational experiences and opportunities were in place. <p>The evaluation also noted that the schools, communities and families saw themselves as partners, not competitors, in addressing afterschool program priorities.</p>
<p>New York <i>AfterSchool Program</i></p>	<p>The <i>Parks Afterschool Program</i> seeks to enhance communities and enrich the lives of children in the City of New York by providing safe, supportive and structured environments that support overall health and</p>	<p>New York City Department of Youth and Community Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 35 <i>Parks AfterSchool Centres</i> certified under the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Programs are offered through recreation centres. ▪ It is important to provide enrichment programs that focus on education, recreation and culture.

Community & Program	Program Description Elements	Primary Program Partners	Key Learnings /Challenges
	well-being. Its quality educational, recreational, and cultural programs that promote the social, physical, intellectual, and emotional development of children and youth.	School Aged Care of New York State.	

Appendix B. Components of Exemplary Afterschool Programs

While there is no single formula for success in afterschool programs, practitioners and researchers have identified a number of common elements of successful programs. (www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/chapter2.html)

- **Holistic:** Effective programs combine academic enrichment, cultural and recreational activities, while ensuring particular local community needs are served.
- **Goal setting, strong management and sustainability:** programs should have clearly articulated program goals, with appropriate organizational structures.
- **Qualified, supported staff:** Staff with the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience are required to work with school aged children. A professional development program should be in place, ideally including opportunities for both paid staff and volunteers.
- **Safety:** Attention to safety is a critical success factor and cannot be compromised.
- **Health and nutrition:** Quality afterschool programs provide a nutritional snack to ensure the children have the energy to participate fully and to model healthy nutrition.
- **Effective partnerships:** All successful programs identified the need for collaboration with diverse partners, including parents, educators and community and municipal service providers. Through collaboration, community resources can be used effectively to maximize the capacity of program providers to deliver quality programs.
- **Involved families:** Where possible, programs should allow parents and/or children to participate in planning and design.
- **Enrichment learning opportunities:** Academic achievement is more likely when social, emotional and physical development requirements are met. Afterschool programs should offer enrichment opportunities that complement regular school programs, but do not replicate them.
- **Formalized data collection and evaluation:** Effective afterschool programs have a built in continuous evaluation component to monitor progress and determine whether programs are accomplishing their defined goals.

Appendix C. Alberta Interview Summaries and Key Learnings

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
Alberta Community Services Communities		
<p>Calgary Cheryl Joynt <i>Manager Children and Youth Services</i> Doug Borch <i>Strategist Children and Youth Services</i> Heather Cowie <i>Manager Leisure Centre</i></p>	<p>As part of Children’s Initiatives – Critical Hours Task Force, the City of Calgary is involved in joint programs with Calgary Children’s Agenda and other partners.</p> <p>A new afterschool proposal submitted to City Council is designed to support both FCSS and recreation-based programs. The proposal includes program funds, website enhancement, infrastructure support and research and policy development.</p> <p><i>TeenZone</i> is the primary program designed specifically for youth during the critical hours. Aimed at enabling service providers to increase their capacity to offer programs during these hours, the program has had a slow start but after a year is building momentum.</p>	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finding sustainable funding after the pilot phase is completed. ▪ Recruiting/retaining qualified staff; paying competitive salaries is difficult. ▪ Communication and networking with partners. ▪ Accessing municipal recreation facilities during the critical hours. Need to coordinate efforts, which is part of the new program strategy. ▪ Engaging youth in afterschool hour programs is always a challenge. <p><u>Learnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaboration with service providers is the key to success. ▪ It is important to give the program time to develop, for it takes time to engage youth and build momentum. ▪ Key factor to success are the two Recreation Connectors, who work in the schools to promote the programs and link youth to programs that meet their interest. ▪ Need resources to support the network and ensure effective communication is in place.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>Sundre Rab Rawlins <i>Parks and Recreation Manager</i></p>	<p>A part-time youth worker is paid with both recreation and FCSS dollars.</p> <p>As part of their mandate, Parks & Recreation offers a combination of afterschool recreation programs such as ball hockey, plus prevention based activities for youth.</p> <p>The Community Resource Centre offers some afterschool activities with the schools.</p> <p>Gymnastics club, sports programs, swimming and hockey programs are all offered during the “critical hours.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biggest challenge is finding qualified staff to run programs during these hours. ▪ Transportation is not an issue with this community, since recreation facilities and community centre are within a block of the local schools. ▪ Generally, there are no programs specifically for teens, unless it is a registered group, such as 4H or Scouts. They are trying some youth drop-in skating programs during the afterschool hours. ▪ Most activities are sport based with limited alternate programs for arts, culture or music.
<p>Town of Banff Mary Brewster <i>Community Services Director</i> Cheryl Ello <i>Children’s Program Supervisor</i></p>	<p>The Town of Banff funds the licensed afterschool care program.</p> <p>Recreation staff run programs located within the elementary school. A separate room is allocated to the program, as well as access to the gym and other classrooms as required.</p> <p>Limited youth programs at this time, but they are conducting an assessment with local youth to identify future program opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biggest challenge is finding programs that will engage teens. ▪ Council policy is 50% cost recovery for children’s programs. ▪ The cost of living is so high in the town that the new provincial subsidy level for child care does not apply to many who need it. The town is considering extending its preschool subsidy levels to families who cannot afford the registration fees for afterschool. ▪ Transportation is an issue for some due to the location of the current recreation facility. Depending on the site chosen for a new facility, this may or may not be addressed.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>Pincher Creek Diane Burt Stuckey <i>Director of Community Services</i></p>	<p>An indirect program service delivery model means Pincher Creek does not offer specific afterschool programs. Community groups do run programs, such as a church group, 4H and youth groups.</p> <p>A non-profit group runs a youth centre in town, but it does not focus on recreation.</p> <p>Town Council is interested in starting a youth program and will be conducting a review of services over the coming months to determine a plan of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the current indirect program delivery model in place, the recreation department does not have the resources or mandate to run programs. ▪ Programs do run at the recreation facility, but transportation is an issue for some families.
<p>Edmonton Bryan Monaghan <i>Director, Program and Events, Recreation Facilities Services</i> Brad Badger, <i>Director, Partnership Development and Facility Bookings &</i> Rob Smyth <i>Director, Recreation Facilities Services</i></p>	<p>City of Edmonton does provide programming for all ages, often in partnership with community leagues and other groups but also through direct delivery.</p> <p>Programs are also offered after school in recreation facilities, usually as part of regular drop-in or instructional courses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biggest challenges are transportation and accessibility to programs for economically disadvantaged families. The City does have a subsidy and transportation service that brings kids from selected communities to programs, but the service is not city-wide. ▪ It is difficult to retain staff due in lower paying jobs when the market offers higher pay. ▪ Challenges in offering facility based recreation programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ need to recover costs causes accessibility issues for some families; ○ transportation – especially difficult during the “critical hours,” and ○ tension between structured (registered) vs. drop-in programming. ▪ Successful youth Programs tend to be more leadership /volunteer focused. Often these involve certification training, such as swim instructor courses.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
Edmonton (con't)		
<p>Anne McCluskey <i>Coordinator, Joint use Agreement</i></p> <p>Dee Dee Carr <i>Supervisor, Community Development Programs</i></p> <p>Lisa Scheuer <i>Millwoods Rec Centre</i></p>	<p>Afterschool recreation programs are primarily recreation facility based. No specific programs target the “critical hours.” Instead, those hours are programmed as part of the regular facility menu of programs, which is centred on sports and drop-in physical activity.</p> <p>FCSS – Social Planning Department supports children and youth programs and child/afterschool care programs. The child care program runs in 12 schools.</p>	<p>Need to make the point that FCSS and Recreation based programs for children and youth are not mutually exclusive. We need to promote the concept of “prevention through recreation.”</p> <p><u>Challenge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation ▪ Accessibility ▪ Fees <p><u>Opportunity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Recreation, Parks and Culture and Social Planning departments are considering a joint program for afterschool that may be located in a community hub. The programs would be run in a joint site – community centre and school. They are looking at more community based programming if resources can be redirected.
<p>Red Deer</p> <p>Greg Scott <i>Manager, Recreation, Parks and Culture</i></p> <p>Scott Cameron <i>Manager, Social Planning</i></p> <p>Kay Kenny <i>Recreation Superintendent</i></p> <p>Deb Comfort <i>Neighbourhood Facilities Community Development Supervisor</i></p>	<p>Afterschool recreation programs are primarily recreation facility based. No specific programs target the “critical hours.” Instead, those hours are programmed as part of the regular facility menu of programs, which is centred on sports and drop-in physical activity.</p> <p>FCSS – Social Planning Department supports children and youth programs and child/afterschool care programs. The child care program runs in 12 schools.</p>	<p>Need to make the point that FCSS and Recreation based programs for children and youth are not mutually exclusive. We need to promote the concept of “prevention through recreation.”</p> <p><u>Challenge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation ▪ Accessibility ▪ Fees <p><u>Opportunity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Recreation, Parks and Culture and Social Planning departments are considering a joint program for afterschool that may be located in a community hub. The programs would be run in a joint site – community centre and school. They are looking at more community based programming if resources can be redirected.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>St. Albert Margo Brenneis <i>Athletics and Leisure Coordinator</i></p>	<p>No direct programming outside of the recreation facilities. The City supports community groups to provide these services.</p> <p>Facilities predominantly offer lessons or drop-in programs after school (citywide).</p> <p>These circumstances may change with the hiring of a community programmer for the youth portfolio.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation is the biggest challenge in programming during the “critical hours”. ▪ Teen programs are based around sports and drop-in time at the recreation facilities.
<p>Mountain View County Michelle Honeyman <i>Manager Community Services</i></p>	<p>The county acts as an indirect program service provider. If direct programs were offered during these times, they would be either recreation facility based or run by an FCSS funded agency.</p> <p>Fewer children need care in a smaller community; therefore, it is important to support collaborative strategies.</p> <p>Licensed afterschool care programs are available in most communities; they are not recreation focused.</p>	<p>Smaller communities do not have the capacity and resources to offer these types of programs, particularly due to lack of people and budget.</p>
<p>Richmond Steve Baker <i>Area Coordinator</i></p>	<p>The majority of afterschool care programs are run through community associations, which offer registered child and afterschool care programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budgeting and resources are the primary challenges. ▪ Afterschool programming is a primary revenue stream for many community associations, which run the recreation facilities. ▪ The City of Richmond has a policy of not running programs in competition

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
Richmond (con't)	Major recreation centres have a youth coordinator and run some programs, both drop-in and registered.	with the community association or other youth serving agencies.
Vancouver School Board Brenda Burroughs <i>District Principal, Community School Teams</i>	Vancouver has a major afterschool program based on a hub system. High schools and elementary schools in each hub are supported by a Community Coordinator and other staff. Partnership with the recreation department is strong, resulting in joint programs in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A strong youth leadership apprentice program enables senior high school students to become program leaders in the afterschool program. ▪ Collaboration and the hub approach are key success factors.
Peace River Tanya Bell <i>Director of Community Services</i>	Operates with an indirect program service delivery model. Town program resources are earmarked for recreation facility operations and programming. Past attempts to offer afterschool programs in the Peace River recreation facility were canceled due to lack of registration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation is the critical barrier to participation. ▪ Resources and programming capacity are also challenges for both town and community groups.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
Other Sectors and Jurisdictions		
<p>Big Brothers and Sisters of Edmonton Liz O'Neil <i>Executive Director</i></p>	<p>Programs are aligned with schools and offer mentorship, tutoring and homework clubs. Recreation is a component.</p> <p>Joined with government ministries, youth agencies and non-profit groups to develop an Alberta Mentorship Partnership.</p>	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation is a critical concern. For this reason, programs are located in schools as much as possible. ▪ Capacity to meet needs is always a challenge <p><u>Learnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on relationship between adults and youth is a critical success factor. ▪ Infrastructure /capacity challenges are addressed through partnerships and networking – maximizing the individual resource capabilities. ▪ If local municipalities (e.g., Community Services Department) can provide core support for agencies, non-profit groups can provide quality programs. ▪ Recreation sector needs to be proactive and participate in provincial and local children and youth development planning initiatives.
<p>Edmonton YMCA – Community Programs Jackie McGowan <i>Assistant Manager</i></p>	<p>YMCA is one of the primary providers of licensed afterschool programs in Calgary and Edmonton.</p> <p>They also offer a range of registered afterschool programs at various facilities.</p>	<p>Staff turnover is constant. Finding qualified staff at a competitive wage is a challenge.</p>
<p>Alberta Children and Youth Services Child Development Branch</p>	<p>New School-Age Child Care Program: A new subsidy for school age care programs has been in place since September 2008. The standards appear to be similar to those contained in the</p>	<p>There are two primary opportunities for ARPA to connect with the school-age care programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Part of the Accreditation Program includes professional development plans; <i>HIGH FIVE</i>[®] may be an ideal course for staff training. ▪ Work with the provincial government to recognize the HIGH FIVE Program

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>Alberta Children and Youth Services Child Development Branch (con't)</p>	<p><i>HIGH FIVE</i>[®], Principles of Healthy Child Development “course.”</p> <p>This comprehensive program will also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a new School-Age Care Accreditation program, scheduled to be in place by spring 2009; ▪ placement of 138 modular classrooms adjacent to school facilities, to accommodate licensed afterschool programs. <p>Some recreation departments and Boys and Girls Clubs have licensed afterschool programs.</p>	<p>for program and staff development.</p>
<p>Linda Yudiga, <i>Senior Manager</i> Carrell Bertsch, <i>Child Development Branch Manager</i> Karen Thompson, <i>Central Region</i></p>		
<p>Boys and Girls Club of Alberta Jane Hirst, <i>Regional Executive Director</i></p>	<p>Boys and Girls Clubs are active in 27 Alberta communities. Clubs offer afterschool programming ranging from homework club and special interests such as cooking to sports.</p> <p>Some clubs will run programs in schools as well in community facilities. Some, including Fort McMurray and St. Paul, run licensed afterschool programs.</p> <p>Most clubs are supported by FCSS funding with minimal support or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most programs are for 6-12 year olds; teen programs tend to be more leadership/volunteer based. ▪ Club facilities are always open after school for youth to drop in, with minimal structured activities. ▪ Some clubs run programs at schools to address the transportation issue. ▪ Lethbridge Club has arrangements with local school transportation to pick kids up before and after school and drop them off at the club. ▪ There are opportunities for collaborative programs with the municipal recreation departments, especially around “critical hours” issues. ▪ In particular, there is a natural partnership between recreation and Boys and Girls Clubs. ▪ Caution: Programs are free or at minimal charge, but if the club were to

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
Boys and Girls Club of Alberta (con't)	relationship with recreation departments.	run licensed afterschool programs, they might need to charge fees to cover costs.
Red Deer Youth and Volunteer Centre – Boys and Girls Clubs David Murphy <i>Executive Director</i>	<p>An afterschool program is in place in Red Deer and surrounding communities.</p> <p>The program makes use of school space if available.</p> <p>A strong in-school mentoring program and other activities are supported by FCSS – Social Planning of Red Deer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key to success is bringing the programs to where the kids are – at schools or at the club facility. ▪ Address the transportation issue from the beginning. ▪ Older teens are used as program leaders in the afterschool program. ▪ Community recreation facilities tend not to be youth friendly – not an open and welcoming place to hang out.
Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO) Marion Price <i>Manager, Education and Training</i>	<p>Submitted a provincial proposal to support children and youth serving agencies to provide quality afterschool programming.</p> <p>Recognized by the Ministry of Community and Social Services as certified program for child care. Programs that meet <i>HIGH FIVE</i>[®] standards qualify for subsidies.</p> <p>PRO is working with other provincial groups to develop provincial strategies that support local initiatives such as <i>Youth Friendly Communities</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies that support program service providers, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, are the key to success and sustainability. ▪ Networking at all levels, provincial to local, is critical to leverage resources. ▪ Youth programming tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer youth leadership programs in which older youth serve as leaders for younger children’s programs. ▪ Where possible, work with local schools to promote and support programs. ▪ Recreation Centre operations are not always “youth friendly” and could benefit from a course or training programs targeted at engaging youth.

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>Alberta FCSS Association Sharlyn White <i>Executive Director</i></p>	<p>This is a provincial association representing 312 municipality and community based FCSS supported agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Groups must be careful not to say they are offering recreation programs while receiving FCSS funding. This is a “game” they have to play; many programs do have a recreation component.
<p>Ever Active Schools Doug Gleddie <i>Director</i></p>	<p>Offers a variety of school based programs focusing on physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being.</p> <p>Encourages and supports extracurricular activities, which may run during the “critical hours.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finding the facilities and support for programs during the afterschool hours is the challenge. ▪ Partnerships with youth program agencies and recreation departments are key. ▪ Youth are most likely to participate if the school physical education and intramural program is connected to afterschool hours activities.
<p>Edmonton Public School Board Josephine Dequette <i>Supervisor, Rental and Leasing Department</i></p>	<p>Schools have priority use of their facilities for their programs until 6 p.m.</p> <p>Some schools have arrangements with a Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers and Big Sisters or Kids in Action to run afterschool programs.</p>	<p>A large percentage of students are bused and thus less able attend afterschool programs at their schools. Busing is an issue for school boards in that routes are not flexible to allow children to stay after school.</p>
<p>UpStart Champions for Children and Youth, Calgary (formally Calgary Children’s Initiative) Margi Ronca <i>Associate</i></p>	<p><i>UpStart</i> is funded by the United Way of Calgary, Burns Foundation and others.</p> <p>It aims to ensure that every child has access to quality recreation afterschool programs.</p> <p>Through partnership with the City and other children and youth agencies,</p>	<p><u>Opportunity:</u> The Children’s Initiative is interested in working with ARPA to develop a provincial strategy for afterschool programs and services.</p> <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staffing issues – it is difficult to find the right people to run the programs. ▪ Youth engagement programs are expensive to operate; staff are needed to engage and link youth to programs. Yet for this age group, it is all about

Community & Interviewees	Afterschool Program	Challenges / Learnings
<p>UpStart Champions for Children and Youth, Calgary (con't)</p>	<p>UpStart has sponsored several research and pilot projects. Among its initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child and youth issues research ▪ Learning Village – online resource for programs ▪ “Critical Hours” research ▪ TeenZone Pilot Project ▪ Community use of schools 	<p>building supportive and trusting relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barriers to participation include: transportation (especially during “critical hours”), accessibility for low income families and lack of awareness among parents and guardians regarding the value of recreational activities. ▪ Questions are being raised about whether P3 schools will be available for community use after hours. <p><u>Learnings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New immigrants tend to trust schools and are more comfortable supporting afterschool programs run at schools. ▪ The Children’s Initiative (a collaborative) provides needed infrastructure support to increase the capacity of the program providers.
<p>Rural North and Bow Corridor – Calgary Health Region Teree Hockanson <i>Health Promotion Strategist</i></p>	<p>Teree works with communities to develop healthy living and healthy child development initiatives. At times, she provides support for local afterschool programs with a focus on healthy lifestyle choices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting the need for quality childcare and afterschool care is always a challenge in smaller communities.

Appendix D. AfterSchool Recreation Agenda Forum - Hosted by Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (November 2008)

Overview of the Forum

Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) invited representatives from various agencies who are engaged in afterschool programming in Alberta to participate in a one-day forum focussed on the afterschool recreation agenda. The goal of the Forum was to explore opportunities where recreation and parks can work with other sectors to promote quality afterschool recreation programs in Alberta. The objectives of the Forum were:

- To present a summary of research conducted to date by the Research Consultant (CDC Consultants) about afterschool programming to inform participants about the scope and nature of the afterschool agenda in Alberta and elsewhere.
- To identify opportunities where recreation can work with other sectors to ensure recreation afterschool programs are in place.
- To consider innovative strategies that will result in increased community access to school facilities, focusing on the critical hours of 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Participants

The Forum participants came from a background of children and youth serving organizations including City of Red Deer, City of Edmonton, City of Calgary, and Boys and Girls Clubs of Alberta. Denise Gariépy, Program and Member Services Manager represented ARPA. Toby Rabinovitz attended as the consultant working on the AfterSchool Research. The facilitator was Barb Pedersen of Barbara Pedersen Facilitation Services Inc.

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda

Heather Cowie, Chair of ARPA's Children and Youth Committee welcomed the participants to the Forum. She thanked them for their interest and time, and provided background information about the timeliness of addressing afterschool children and youth recreation programming, and the work of ARPA and the Children and Youth Committee. Facilitator Barb Pedersen explained the proposed Forum agenda and asked that the participants adjust it to ensure the most important topics were discussed.

Presentation of Alberta Afterschool Research

Toby Rabinovitz, Research Consultant, presented information from her research project through a PowerPoint presentation.

Background of Research Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) received grant funding from the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture to examine the current state of afterschool recreation programming and to identify opportunities for engaging recreation practitioners and allied stakeholders in developing a provincial strategy for action. Recent research has highlighted the need for safe and quality afterschool programs during the critical hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This is a time when children and youth are most vulnerable, as they may establish unhealthy habits such as inactivity, poor eating, and to the extreme, participate in antisocial behaviour. While the need for quality recreation programs is well

documented, the ability of the recreation and parks sector and children and youth serving agencies to meet these demands is increasingly more challenging. The ARPA research project over the past three months involved:

- A review of current research related to (a) children and youth during the critical hours; (b) successful programs and services designed to address the critical hours issue, and; (c) strategies to enhance the use of community schools during the hours of 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- Interviews with recreation practitioners and other sectors/agencies who are involved in providing afterschool programs at both the local and provincial levels.
- An online survey sent to 120 municipal recreation departments, which resulted in a 40% response rate (48 municipalities completed the survey).
- A macro analysis of community/school joint-use agreements and various Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) in Alberta.

Following the presentation of the significant findings from the research and a question and answer period, participants engaged in a focussed discussion centred on the following questions:

- Do you have any comments about the research?
- What stands out from the research?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Is it a fair representation of those agencies involved in afterschool programming in the province? Is anything missing?
- What do you agree with? What fits with your experience?
- What are the key messages?

Input about the Research Report

Participants provided the following comments about the research report:

1. The research report needs to clearly delineate the spectrum of afterschool programming and all of the deliverers. Afterschool programming can be perceived as “soiled”, that is, provided in distinct and separate programs. The research needs to explain the players.
2. The research report may need to better explain the role of recreation departments in Alberta and how they are or can be involved in afterschool programming. The research appears to state that it is difficult for recreation and parks departments to deliver programming.
3. The research report may need to emphasize that recreation agencies have limited resources to provide high quality afterschool children and youth programming.
4. The definition of recreation in the research report needs to include play, sport, leisure, outdoor recreation, arts, culture, parks, etc.

5. Participants from Red Deer stated that the “research is real”, that is, it speaks to our experience of activities for children and youth during afterschool hours.
6. The challenges in offering programs for youth aged 13 to 17 years may need to be further investigated.
7. Administrators of school-based sport programs often do not see themselves as aligned with the afterschool agenda. They run activities for their school students but do not consider them as afterschool programming.
8. Collaboration is extremely important as shown by the research; however, it may be a utopian view. Struggling to partner effectively may be the reality.
9. Prevention through recreation is a key component of the research; however, at what cost?

Key Messages from the Research

Participants identified key messages from the research report presentation:

1. There is a gap in recreation services in the afterschool hours (3:00 to 6:00 p.m.) for children and youth.
2. Recreation is a critical part of any afterschool program for children and youth. A recreation “presence” is necessary in the critical hours (afterschool) programming. Recreation and parks departments have a role in provision of the programs either as a provider or supporter.
3. Intentional recreation programming is required. Any agency that provides services for children and youth can provide it; not only recreation agencies.
4. Many children and youth serving agencies, including municipal recreation departments, have limited or no resources to provide recreation programming in the afterschool time period.
5. Collaboration between providers is critical for successful afterschool recreation programming.
6. The Calgary experience of convincing City Council about its role in afterschool programming showed that it is necessary for recreation practitioners to focus upon why a municipality needs to take the lead in providing services for children and youth during afterschool hours. Leaders usually understand why it is important to provide services, that is, they know that children and youth may not have appropriate activities between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. In Red Deer, leaders know it is important to provide services. The debate is who leads? The message from these experiences is to advocate at the provincial level for appropriate leaders including the provincial government to take the lead and explain the reasons for them to do so. Focus the message: *“Why them? Why now?”*
7. Participants discussed whether there is value in conducting additional research with children and youth serving agencies other than recreation ones. An advantage of doing so is to show collaboration by ARPA. However, the data may already be available through research conducted by Calgary. As well, the research would likely not change the results of the research; it would be very similar.

Case Studies of Afterschool Programs and Community Use of Schools

Toby Rabinovitz, Research Consultant presented a PowerPoint presentation of case studies of afterschool programs and agreements for community use of schools. Following the presentation of the significant lessons

from the case studies and a question and answer period, participants engaged in a focussed discussion centred on the following questions:

- a. What would you identify as interesting observations from the case studies?
- b. What can we take away and consider in Alberta?

Comments about the Case Studies Information

Participants provided the following comments about the case studies:

1. Participants observed that the momentum towards afterschool programming may be negatively affected by the current economic situation.
2. The lessons from the case studies support most of the key messages from the research report.
3. A message from the research report was to consider establishing a Children and Youth Consortium. A message from the case studies was to not start “anything new”. Are these two comments contradictory?
4. Participants liked the concept of enhancing what already exists; rather than starting new activities and organizations.
5. The case studies show that agencies need to be creative in ways to provide afterschool programming. An example is transportation to the program.
6. When collaborating with other agencies, it is important to talk with academia, that is, post secondary institutions.
7. The focus in the case studies appears to be on gymnasiums. Why is this so? Is there too much emphasis on sports? How can outdoor spaces be used for afterschool programming?

Identifying Opportunities for Working Together

Using information from the research and case studies, participants worked in three small groups to (a) identify opportunities where recreation can work with other sectors to ensure recreation afterschool programs are in place, and (b) to suggest next steps for individual action, collective action, and recommendations for ARPA.

Group One

- a) Develop a network for lateral collaboration between municipalities (learning from each other’s best practices)
- b) Develop communication strategies between facilities and neighbourhood services
- c) Research and develop funding opportunities (private, grants, government)
- d) Take advantage of technology to assist the process (e.g. Children and Youth links/blogs/forums on ARPA website)

Group Two

- a) Identify the other sectors (e.g. healthcare, faith based, immigrant serving); and once identified, look for duplication of services
- b) Provide training about quality afterschool recreation programming, e.g. HIGHFIVE, Developmental Assets, etc.

Next Steps:

- a) ARPA needs to take the lead to bring all afterschool players to the table.
 - Create a subcommittee of the Children and Youth Committee to look at the afterschool programs
 - Hold a one-time Think Tank provincially or facilitate regional specific groups
- b) ARPA to advocate for both licensed and non-licensed programs to reduce barriers to programming. (Note: Sometimes licenses such as those required by agencies such as Out of School Care and Children's Services are a barrier to running a great program.)
- c) Develop a "Toolkit" for small rural communities explaining what/why/how of afterschool to facilitate programming
 - Big players to support small communities in awareness and implementation and ensure a flow of communication
 - The Boys and Girls Club has a New Club Development Toolkit that might be able to be used as a template.

Group Three

- a) Finalize the research report and advance it to the ARPA Board, Minister of Alberta Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture, and to other partners. Focus the message on:
 - Why now?
 - Why you?
- b) Maintain and broaden the role of ARPA's Children and Youth Committee
- c) Explore the establishment of a "Provincial Critical Hours Consortium"
 - Shared leadership
 - "Solidify" the work at the 2009 ARPA conference in Lake Louise during a pre-conference session
- d) Maintain momentum: critical hours issue is and will continue to be important for children and youth even during tough economic times:
 - More need for services...
 - Large number of immigrant families
 - More families working longer and finding it harder to keep up economically

Use of the Term “Critical Hours”

Participants discussed whether the term “critical hours” should be used rather than “afterschool”. Most participants were in favour stating that the use of the term “critical hours” may:

- Reduce confusion about the many terms for afterschool such as out of school, after school, etc.
- Reduce resistance displayed by educational institutions (school boards) to the idea that programming during 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. may be the responsibility of school boards.
- Increase awareness by other sectors
- open afterschool programming to include more sport activities

What would a Critical Hours Consortium look Like?

Participants were supportive of some form of collaborative initiative such as a Critical Hours Consortium. When questioned as to what it would look like, they indicated that some ideas were suggested in the work from the three small groups (see above notes). However, most participants said that they were not sure yet about the role and composition of a Consortium, i.e. would it include province, others, etc.? Most participants thought that the concept needed to be further explored. Potential funding might be used to determine what the Consortium could be and do, e.g. a Leadership Team goes out to regions of the province, holds forums, etc.

Next Steps in the ARPA Afterschool Research Project

Denise Gariépy with ARPA and Toby Rabinovitz, Research Consultant outlined the next steps of the Afterschool Research Project. The draft report has been submitted to ARPA, and a final report will be written over the next month for final approval. The research report will be placed “on-line” at some time in the future. The Forum report will be prepared by the Facilitator Barb Pedersen and submitted to Toby Rabinovitz. The Forum report will be distributed by ARPA to the Forum participants.

Closing Conversation

Participants shared their thoughts about the Forum based on the following questions:

- What stood out for you?
- How might you use today’s information and discussions?
- What are key messages to ARPA and other organizations?

1) Being informed, and becoming aware that our community is not the only one that faces the afterschool children and youth programming issues.

2) I am able to bring information back for decision-makers in our community.

3) The “Ideal Future”: work towards an accessible, high quality afterschool programming for each child and youth in Alberta

- 4) Consortium is a step towards this ideal future and I support it.
- 5) A key message: continue with the ARPA Children and Youth Committee as they can have a key role in advancing afterschool programming.
- 6) It sounds like good work is happening. We need a driving force to move it forward. ARPA could be the driver.
- 7) Information from today is very valuable.
- 8) Information about afterschool programming is a key component for the Consortium, if formed. An Executive Summary of the research report is needed. Do not let the information die.



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