

*Research Tells Us:*

## All Youth Deserve High-Quality After-School Programming

**H**igh-quality after-school programming can transform the after-school hours from a time of risk into a time of opportunity for youth to develop competencies that will help them become successful, engaged and contributing adolescents and adults.

- “All young people deserve access to a full range of developmental and engagement” services and supports that will enable them to fulfill the dreams that we have for them and they have for themselves in adulthood (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2001, p. 3).
- In a recent nationwide poll, 94% of American voters agreed that there should be organized after-school programming for children and teens to go to every day (Afterschool Alliance/Mott Foundation, 2004).
- However, the current availability of after-school programming is enough for only one-third to one-half of the youth who need programs (Afterschool Alliance/Mott Foundation, 2004; City Policy Associates, 2003).
- Consequently, the youth who have access to high-quality after-school programming are the ones that are the “easiest to reach and easiest to teach” (Pittman, Wilson-Ahlstrom, & Yohalem, 2003, p. 6).
- This leaves other groups underserved such as low-income, rural, immigrant, and older youth as well as youths with disabilities and sexual-minority youths (Hall, Yohalem, Tolman, & Wilson, 2003; Pittman, Wilson-Ahlstrom et al., 2003).
- Program content and quality also tend to vary, with enrichment-focused programming provided to low-risk populations while problem-based or generic programming is provided to populations deemed to be high-risk (Pittman et al., 2001; Pittman, Wilson-Ahlstrom et al., 2003).
- The goal of after-school programming should be to help ensure that *all* young people are not only problem-free, but fully prepared for the opportunities and challenges of adulthood as well as fully engaged in their own development and community (Pittman et al., 2001).

## References

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