

Spring 5-30-2013

A Case Study of After-School Activities in one School that is Making Progress in Closing the Achievement Gap

Susan Robin Shugerman
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), and the [Educational Methods Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Shugerman, Susan Robin, "A Case Study of After-School Activities in one School that is Making Progress in Closing the Achievement Gap" (2013). *Dissertations and Theses*. Paper 1111.
<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.1111>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations and Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.

A Case Study of After-School Activities in One School That is Making Progress in
Closing the Achievement Gap

by

Susan Robin Shugerman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership: Postsecondary Education

Dissertation Committee:
Candyce Reynolds, Chair
Patrick Burk
Esperanza De La Vega
Thomas Keller

Portland State University
2013

© 2013 Susan Robin Shugerman

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Abstract

Closing the achievement gap has been a national conversation for several decades and a priority for educators and researchers. By looking closely at one school which is showing exceptional success with closing the achievement gap for low income students and English language learners, this study seeks to understand how school personnel and parents view after-school activities and ways in which those activities may be impacting students who are making significant gains in spite of the achievement gap. After-school activities have been shown to bring many positive outcomes for students. That said, there is much that we do not yet know about what takes place at the intersection of schools and after-school activities. To maximize after-school opportunities for disadvantaged students and use or redirect existing resources most effectively, we need to ask and understand how schools perceive their role vis-à-vis after-school activities. We also need to explore how school personnel and parents perceive access and barriers to participation in after-school activities. Using secondary data from a large on-going study, this case study asks how one school understands engagement with after-school providers to bolster those students who may have the most to gain from such enrichment in the form of the many opportunities after-school resources can offer. This study will contribute to our understanding of how after-school resources can support success for low income and English language learners.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the dedicated guidance of my advisor, Dr. Candyce Reynolds. Her encouragement, critical feedback and sense of humor guided me throughout and helped me keep moving forward. I thank the participants in this study for their generosity and time and am grateful for the warm welcome I received from the Roby School community. I would also like to thank my colleagues and supervisors at OHSU for their support and patience throughout this project, as well as the members of my PSU cohort for their good will and support. Very special thanks to my family - Joseph, Roby, Ruth, Don, Miss Kitty and AnnaBelle. Their unwavering support, many cups of hot water with lemon, blooms from the garden, and carrying on without me for three years were exactly what I needed to get this done. Finally, huge abrazos to Dr. Esperanza De La Vega for inviting me into her scholarly world and extending herself so generously as I navigated this heretofore unknown place.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Chapter One: Introduction to the Study	1
Disparities in Student Performance	2
Aspects of the Achievement Gap	3
General State of Knowledge about the Research Problem	5
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions	8
Chapter Two: Literature Review	12
Social Context in Which our Schools Exist Today	12
Increasing diversity and economic challenges	12
Challenges of disjointedness in schools	15
Culturally Responsive Practice	18
After-school Activities	22
History of after-school activities	22
How after-school activities have been shown to impact students – effects from the broader literature	24
Academic outcomes	24
Social and developmental outcomes	25
Prevention outcomes	26
Four Models to Consider for Students Affected by the Achievement Gap	27
21st Century Community Learning Centers – a national program	28
Studies of Local Activities	31
Schools Uniting Neighborhoods	31
“I Have a Dream” at Alder School	35
Multnomah County Cradle to Career initiative	39
Challenges in Participation and Potential of After-school Activities	42
Theoretical Framework	47
Critical theoretical lens	47
Social capital lens	49
Overview and definitions	50

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Intersectionality theoretical lens.....	55
Noam’s typology.....	57
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	61
Research Questions.....	62
Research Approach.....	62
Case Study.....	64
Case study research situated within the Closing the Achievement Gap study.....	66
The role of the researcher.....	67
Setting.....	68
Participants.....	69
Informed consent.....	70
Confidentiality.....	71
Data collection.....	72
Artifacts.....	73
Interviews.....	73
Focus groups.....	75
Timeframe for Study.....	76
Data analysis.....	77
Study Approval Process.....	81
Chapter Four: Findings.....	82
Coded Data Reveal Themes.....	83
Climate.....	85
Power of distributive leadership.....	85
Welcoming environment is key.....	92
Entire school community takes responsibility for students’ success.....	96
Our work is never done.....	101
Social Relationships.....	104
All students are known by name.....	104
Relationships among staff are key.....	108
Parent engagement is key.....	112
Services and Activities.....	117
Barriers/access to participation.....	117
Community driven is key.....	119
Rich variety of inputs.....	122
Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students.....	131
Voices from Home and School: Research Questions 2 and 3.....	135

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter Five: Discussion	142
Revisiting the Theoretical Framework	145
Critical theoretical lens illuminates the data.	145
Social capital lens illuminates the data.	147
Noam’s theory of intersectionality illuminates the data.....	152
A new model.	154
Implications: A Holistic View	157
What Schools Can Do.....	159
Recommendations for Additional Research	161
Limitations of the Study	162
Conclusion	163
References.....	168
Appendix A: Informed Consent (for interview participants).....	181
Appendix B: Informed Consent (for focus group participants)	183
Appendix C: Interview Protocol.....	185
Appendix D: Focus Group with Community Members and Parents	189
Appendix E: Human Subjects Research Review Committee #111761 Approval	193
Appendix F: Renewal of HSRRC #111761 Approval.....	195
Appendix G: Code Book, CTAG Study, Version 5.....	197
Appendix H: Follow-Up Questions for SUN Program Coordinator	199
Appendix I: Code Book, Roby School Study	201

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

List of Tables

Table 1	SUN Program Outcomes as Compared with School District Outcomes.....	34
Table 2	Roby School Participants.....	70
Table 3	Timeframe for CTAG Study and Dissertation.....	76
Table 4	Data Analysis Revealed Broad Themes and Related Elements.....	84

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

List of Figures

Figure 1	Cradle to Career process.....	41
Figure 2	Roby School mosaic (detail).....	88
Figure 3	Roby School garden.....	124
Figure 4	Culturally responsive practice: The heart of the matter.....	157

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Schools have the important job of preparing students to become successful citizens in an increasingly global society, helping them learn to solve problems, to take on the responsibility of caring for themselves and their families, to get along well in a variety of life settings, and to become motivated, contributing members of a democratic society (Comer, 2001). However, these tasks are enormous and challenges to accomplishing them are many. For example, the growing diversity among our students, while bringing great richness to classrooms and communities, also poses significant challenges for schools of meeting the needs of an increasingly culturally, racially and linguistically varied student population. The numbers are dramatic. “Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population in the U.S. grew by 43 percent - increasing by 15.2 million and accounting for over half of the 27.3 million increase in the total population of the United States” (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011, p. 3). Looking more closely at Oregon data, since the early 1990’s, the number of Hispanic students in Oregon schools increased over 200 percent, and the overall minority population doubled (Oregon Department of Education, n.d.).

In addition to the large influx of minority and English Language Learner (ELL) students, the harsh economic downturn since 2008 presents a host of challenges for schools and families, many of which impact parents’ ability to actively support their children in school. Highly undesirable solutions to these problems include school closures and consolidations, layoffs of teaching and administrative personnel, larger class

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

sizes, loss of academic activities and reduced course offerings, deferring much needed building maintenance, cutting extracurricular activities and more (McCord & Ellerson, 2009). Increasingly, maintaining a focus on student learning, gains in student achievement, progress in narrowing the achievement gap and the capacity of schools to deliver essential services are threatened. And, as the realities of the financial crisis impact their lives, parents are experiencing increasing levels of anxiety and stress. These pressures ultimately make it more and more difficult for parents to be involved in a child's curricular and extracurricular activities (Morris, 2011). "When considered in total, the economic downturn and its accompanying challenges have exacted a heavy toll on communities, families, and learning" (McCord & Ellerson, 2009, p. 6). Accordingly, these stresses negatively impact student success, especially for more vulnerable populations such as low income and ELL students (Rouse & Fantuzzo, 2009).

Disparities in Student Performance

Challenges for schools and students are further illustrated by high school dropout and graduation statistics. Despite improved high school dropout rates in Oregon in 2008-09 the achievement gap for low income and ELL students remains wide. The Oregon dropout rate hit an all time low of 3.4% in the 2008-09 school year and we saw the greatest decreases among our Hispanic and Native American student populations. This is encouraging news... However, our African American, Hispanic, and Native American students still have higher dropout rates ... than their White or Asian peers (Oregon Department of Education, n.d.). Sadly too, high school graduation rates in the U.S. are low for all students and are substantially lower for most minority groups (Orfield, Losen,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Wald, & Swanson, 2004). Only 68 percent of ninth-grade students graduate on time, and only 18 percent of ninth grade students go on to earn at least an associate's degree within three years of graduation (Tierney, 2006). And even though the percentage of American college students who are minorities has increased over fifteen percent in the last three decades (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009), without a significant network of support in place to prepare them for and connect them to a university community, low income students are less likely to successfully make the transition from high school to college and to persist there than their white counterparts (Blanco, Crowe, Lingenfelter, Longanecker, L'Orange, Rainwater, & Somerville, 2003). Of those low income students that do access college and enroll in postsecondary programs, there is a growing concern regarding their completion rates (Haycock, Barth, Mitchell, & Wilkins, 1999). Compounding these issues, student support systems across the education continuum are fragmented, difficult to evaluate and measure, and often isolated from one another (Krueger, 2006).

Aspects of the Achievement Gap

The socioeconomic status of a child's parents continues to be one of the strongest predictors (along with parental level of education attainment) of the child's academic achievement and educational attainment (Reardon, 2011), and findings based on recent surveys by authoritative sources (including the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that ELL students struggle significantly to meet their native English speaking peers in academic achievement and educational attainment. For example, the 2005 NAEP reports that:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

...nearly half (46%) of 4th grade students in the English language learner (ELL) category scored “below basic” in mathematics, which is the lowest level possible. Nearly three quarters (73%) scored below basic in reading. In middle school, achievement in mathematics was lower still, with more than two-thirds (71%) of 8th grade ELL students scoring below basic. Meanwhile, the same share (71%) of 8th grade ELL students scored below basic in reading (Fry, 2007, p.i).

Furthermore:

Nationally, the ELL student population is expected to grow rapidly as the projected number of school-age children of immigrants will increase from 12.3 million in 2005 to 17.9 million in 2020, accounting for all the projected growth in the school-age population (Fry, 2008, p.5).

Indeed, both the low income and English language learner student populations are growing and vulnerable.

One of the ways schools and educators have begun to address the growing diversity of today’s classrooms and the hope of decreasing the achievement gap is to use culturally responsive practices. These practices ask schools and teachers to reflect and draw upon their students’ cultural and language strengths. “. . . Cultural diversity is a strength – a persistent, vitalizing force in our personal and civic lives . . . and is a useful resource for improving educational effectiveness for all students” (Gay, 2000, p. 14.)

Culturally responsive practice presents an important opportunity to engage and address the needs of all learners. Indeed, the growing diversity among our students requires that schools and teachers create inclusive learning environments reflecting cultural and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

linguistic sensitivity to all students. Even in this time of severe resource shortages, there can be no short-cuts taken in achieving culturally responsive schools and classrooms.

Meeting the needs of today's disadvantaged students also requires participation and involvement by many sectors in our society. In most communities, there are many after-school activities and education initiatives which are located externally to K-12 schools and which are designed to bolster student success. These activities have unique purposes, structures for implementation and audiences. They report varying degrees of success on measures from A to Z. Understanding what happens at the intersection of these extracurricular, or after-school activities and schools is the focus of this research study.

General State of Knowledge about the Research Problem

The problem around which this study is organized is the following: there is a persistent gap in achievement for low income and ELL students. Because of this achievement gap, these disadvantaged students are ultimately at risk of not attaining academic success at the same levels as their white peers. They risk missing out on high level learning opportunities, gaining new knowledge, developing their sense of civic responsibility, having personal, interpersonal, and leadership development opportunities, acquiring a deep understanding of subject fields, gaining highly developed problem-solving abilities, and having practical opportunities to prepare for careers and adult life in a highly globalized world. Indeed, we do know there are many important implications of these results. At the same time, while it must be said that studies about the effectiveness of after-school activities report widely varying results, it has been shown

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

that after-school activities bring many positive outcomes to students (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2003; Witt & King, 2009). Many studies show that activities using evidence-based approaches have been consistently successful in producing improvements in children's personal, social and academic skills as well as their self-esteem (Payton, Weissberg, Durlak, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, & Pachan, 2008). That said, there is still much that we do not yet know about what takes place at the intersection of schools and after-school activities.

To maximize opportunities for disadvantaged students and to use or redirect existing resources most effectively, we need to understand how schools perceive their role vis-à-vis after-school activities. We also need to know how school personnel and parents perceive access and barriers to participation in after-school activities so that resources are made available to all students and families. If and how schools use after-school resources to support success for low income and ELL students is not fully understood. Do after-school activities incorporate culturally responsive practices? Do the partnerships after-school activities bring yield valuable social capital for students and families? Would stronger collaboration among out of school providers and school personnel lead to more effective use of existing resources and to better access to their activities for students and families? Certainly P-20, which creates a connected, cooperative system of public education from preschool to the achievement of an associates, technical, baccalaureate, advanced, or professional degree (Ortiz, 2008), and other strategies for reform such as the I Have a Dream program, and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program all invite and bring together enrichment and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

support activities for students along the education continuum. But how well are these activities known and used in the community by the populations that need them most? What is the current landscape of existing activities? Do we have the full range of activities we need? Do the systems of the school allow for the strongest partnerships possible? These are questions that persist, however, in order to get to a place to address these, there needs to be an understanding of how the interaction between schools and after-school activities gets enacted. In other words, one needs to understand the interaction phenomena in order to build upon it and to improve the relationships and partnerships involved.

We must also ponder the consequences of not asking these questions and of not exploring the places where students are beating the odds. All too often, student achievement remains stagnant, producing low college enrollment and completion rates, disengaged young people and a community split along racial and ethnic lines for levels of educational attainment, income and employment. I believe that understanding what is working, so that others may bring successful strategies to bear for their disadvantaged students is an opportunity we cannot afford to dismiss.

Over the past six years, a special group of schools in Oregon has been recognized for their significant gains in student achievement especially with their low-income and ELL students. For example, in 2009-10, data from one of these schools showed 80% of students meeting or exceeding the math benchmark, and 75% of students meeting or exceeding the reading benchmark (Oregon Department of Education, 2011), whereas in the same year, Oregon Department of Education (ODE) data indicate that only 16% of

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

limited English proficiency 8th grade students in Multnomah County met or exceeded the reading standards and only 34% of those students met or exceeded the math standards (Portland State University, 2010). For their significant progress in closing the achievement gap, seven of these Oregon public schools were awarded a “2011 Celebrating Student Success Champion award” (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). Another group of six Oregon public schools received “Continuing Success” awards in the same year. These schools are past “Celebrating Student Success Champions” that have continued to show gains and have further reduced their achievement gaps. Roby School*, one of these schools which is showing exceptional success with closing the achievement gap, is at the heart of this study.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to understand how school personnel and parents view after-school activities and ways in which those activities may be impacting students who are making significant gains in spite of the achievement gap. The research questions that guide this exploration include a main question and three sub-questions. They are as follows:

Main:

What occurs in the intersection between this school and its after-school activities?

Sub-questions:

- 1) a. How are linkages manifested in support of students of poverty and English language learners?

*pseudonyms are being used to insure confidentiality

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- b. How is social capital realized or not realized in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
 - c. How are partnerships structured in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
- 2) What are the perspectives of administrators and key school personnel regarding the benefits of after-school activities?
 - 3) What are the perspectives of parents regarding the benefits of after-school activities?

The unit of analysis for this study is one K-8 school that was selected by the Oregon Department of Education for its significant progress in 2009-2010 in closing the achievement gap (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). An exploration of the systems at play within this school, especially the system of after-school activities and its intersection with the system of the school, on students, are naturally central to this discussion. Many students are disadvantaged in schools and suffer from a growing and persistent achievement gap. Because of the importance of socioeconomic status as a predictor of academic achievement (Reardon, 2011) and the significant struggle of ELL students to meet native English speaking students in academic achievement (Fry, 2007), for the purposes of this study, when identifying a student audience, I will be looking at low income students and English language learners. Low income will be defined by a student's eligibility for free and reduced lunch. English language learners are defined as students who are in the process of learning English and have a first language other than English (The Education Alliance, n.d.).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In asking the stated research questions, this study seeks to uncover ways in which school personnel have successfully arranged for improved access to these resources for their low income and ELL students who traditionally have not had access to these resources to the extent that have their more advantaged and native English speaking peers. Of interest to the researcher as a potential means of increasing access and effectiveness of after-school activities is the emerging P-20 framework. However, for this study, the focus will be on existing after-school activities and ways in which they connect with schools. Throughout this paper, I use after-school to refer to a broad range of activities for K-12 students with an academic enrichment, social development or recreational focus that take place in schools, outside of the school day. (Other types of after-school activities, which take place in settings such as community centers, universities, museums, and park districts, are outside the boundaries of my study.) It is my hope that the knowledge we gain from this in-depth look at one school may ultimately help providers develop after-school activities that are more responsive and relevant to their audiences and more in tune with what is needed in the schools.

The literature review in the following chapter begins by addressing the social context in which schools find themselves today. Then the chapter provides a discussion of the role of culturally responsive practice in schools. Next, it introduces after-school activities and explores their history. Then, looking broadly at the literature on after-school activities, we look at the impact of these activities on students. This is followed by a discussion of four current strategies for low performing schools which, as a key aspect of their programming, each contain a strong after-school or extracurricular

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

element. Those strategies are 21st Century Learning Communities, the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods program, the I Have a Dream program (and the new Dreamer School model) and Cradle to Career, a strategy which is gaining considerable momentum and visibility in our community at this time. Challenges and potential of participation in after-school activities are discussed next. The chapter ends with the theoretical framework for the study.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter Two: Literature Review

As background for reviewing the research about after-school activities and the role they may have in closing the achievement gap, Chapter 2 begins by addressing the social context in which schools find themselves today. Specifically, that is a context of increasing diversity in schools, severe economic challenges for families, and disjointedness in schools and the education system as a whole. The role of culturally responsive practice in our increasingly diverse schools follows. Then, I will introduce after-school activities broadly, with a look at the history of their development and studies about the various ways in which they have impacted students. Then, research looking at four extracurricular strategies (one national and three local) with after-school activities as central components will be followed by challenges and potential of participation in after-school activities. The chapter ends with the theoretical framework for the study.

Social Context in Which our Schools Exist Today

Increasing diversity and economic challenges. K-12 students in Oregon schools, like those in secondary schools throughout the U.S., are highly diverse and face severe economic challenges. At the case school, which is representative of many Oregon schools:

25% of students are Asian, 18% are African American, 18% are Hispanic, 27% are white, and 12% of students are of multiple races or ‘other.’ 25% of students are learning English as a second language and 19% receive Special Education services. The school also houses 2 self-contained classes serving students with

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

communication and behavior disorders. The students largely come from low-income households (78.3%) (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

Statistics at schools throughout the U.S. reveal similar demographic changes, including increasing racial and cultural diversity in communities, increasing numbers of students from non-English speaking backgrounds and increasing numbers of families experiencing widespread economic challenges. Genessee et al. (2005) report that students from non-English speaking backgrounds represent the fastest growing segment of the student population in U.S. public schools by a wide margin:

From 1991–1992 through 2001–2002, the number of identified ELLs (English language learners) in public schools (K–12) grew 95%, while total enrollment increased by only 12%. In 2002–2003, more than 5 million school-age children were identified as ELLs, 10.2% of the K–12 public school student population (p. 364).

Further, “students of color are becoming the majority of students across the county. Growing from 30.1% of the population to 45.0% in the last ten years, ...the structure of our racial profile is clearly and quickly undergoing change” (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, & Coalition of Communities of Color, 2010, p.26). As is well known, increasing diversity of the student population brings many challenges to schools. These challenges include ensuring a deep understanding of all students’ cultural and individual development, building strong partnerships between home and school, implementing appropriate teaching methods for all students, fully integrating students’ values, beliefs, experiences and culture in instruction, creating a learning environment that addresses and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

enhances cultural and linguistic diversity, and understanding the intersection of school context with the student's family, home and community contexts.

In addition to these challenges, since well before the economic upheaval of 2008, many low-income working families remain economically disadvantaged and without the earnings necessary to meet all of their basic needs (Working Poor Families Project, n.d.). Further, as economic necessities have led to more working parents (in many families, one or both parents is working often more than full time), society's economic stresses negatively impact the level of support parents can provide for their children's education, making it difficult for them to participate in school activities. Many parents of children in our schools are not English speakers, which can bring feelings of alienation for parents and make connecting with their children's school even more challenging. Other nonschool factors affect children's development, such as nutrition, time spent watching television, and destabilization resulting from shortages of affordable housing and changes in student mobility. Blank and Berg (2006) cite the "Parsing the Achievement Gap" study (Barton, 2003) which showed that "minority students and those living in poverty were far more likely to face academic challenges than their higher income peers, resulting in a widening achievement gap" (2006, p. 7). Research shows other social issues, including educational attainment of parents and single-parent household, youth culture and student behaviors (such as motivation and effort for learning, alcohol and illicit drug usage, crime) and schooling conditions and practices (course taking, dropout, segregation) may also contribute to children of color, low-income and English language learners (ELL) failing to achieve similar academic standing as their peers in White

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

communities (Lee, 2002). Haycock (2001) has noted that African American and Latino students' mean 12th-grade math and reading skills are comparable to those of Caucasian eighth graders. Indeed, substantial differences exist among groups not only in subject matter mastery, but also in completion of high school and college.

Challenges of disjointedness in schools. In addition to the challenges presented by increasing diversity, economic instability, less-than optimal parental support for students, parental alienation from and disconnectedness to schools – issues external to the school itself - schools and school systems suffer from the internal challenge of disjointedness which manifests in many ways. One fundamental aspect of this disjointedness is the fragmentation of subject matter that students receive. One researcher illustrates the nature of curricular practice in many classrooms:

By third grade, children view subjects as changes in behavior, teacher attitude, areas of the room, and times of the day. Rarely does anyone explain to them the nature and power of the disciplines or how the subjects relate to one another (Jacobs, 1999, p. 11).

More broadly, we can see disconnection in the way that at all levels, instruction in schools is typically carried out by individual teachers in isolated classrooms. Especially in elementary schools, children are taught in self-contained classrooms with one or two teachers. Citing school reform programs such as Race to the Top, Fullan (2010) predicts that initiatives which push teachers toward a singular focus on their students' test scores and pay little attention to developing the capacity of leaders and teachers/the school to

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

improve together or as a system are leading teachers into isolation rather than toward collaboration. Measures such as performance-related pay to raise teacher quality are:

. . . based on a failed theory that teacher quality can be increased by a system of competitive rewards, and . . . rest on a badly flawed model of management where everyone manages their own unit, is accountable for results, and competes with their peers—creating fiefdoms, silos, and lack of capacity or incentives for professionals to help each other (Hargreaves, 2011, p. xvi).

Looking from yet another vantage point at disjointedness in our schools, “we know that in many states, the standards, curricula, and assessments were developed independently and are not fully aligned. In some states, the assessments came before the standards” (Wehling, 2007, p. 9). Still other significant disconnects in our schools take place at transition points in children’s school experience between the levels in our education system – that is between pre-school and kindergarten, between elementary and middle school, between middle and high school, and between high school and post-secondary.

Taking this issue of disjointedness in schools further, Firestone and Herriott (1982) explore the image of a school as an anarchy. While the term anarchy may suggest disorder and confusion, in this context, I believe the writers are describing aspects of school culture which have an individual, or independent focus rather than an integrated group ethos or worldview. For example, Firestone and Herriott describe K-12 school administrators offering advice, but not necessarily providing specific direction to teaching staff. They point to the considerable individual discretion that teachers have in teaching their students. “Interdependence is minimized and individuals work in solitary

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

settings in which they are free to make the important decisions guiding their work on their own” (Herriott & Firestone, 1982, p. 44). The primary work of the school, when considered through this anarchy lens, may not be led or controlled by administration and may exist without high regard to a central purpose or clear school mission. Regarding the environment in which the school finds itself, the image of anarchy suggests that each part of the school “interfaces directly with some small segment of that environment and makes adjustments to it without upsetting the whole system” (Firestone & Herriott, p. 43). So, disjointedness or disconnection shows up in schools in multiple places at one time and could be one of the reasons that gaps among diverse populations have arisen. More recently however, with the No Child Left Behind Act (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002), the transition to more collaborative work via professional learning communities, data teams and grade level standards has been encouraged and taken root in many K-12 schools.

Then, extending the anarchy metaphor to the statewide system of schools, the example of Oregon today also presents a highly disjointed environment (though Kitzhaber’s Oregon Education Investment Board [SB 1581, n.d.] may help):

Oregon’s disconnected system of education funding and policy-making treats early learning, K-12, and post-secondary education as separate silos rather than a continuous pathway that leads all Oregon students to a successful future. The result is a competition for resources, and a lack of coordinated policy making. Decisions are often made based on who controls the dollars - and not necessarily what’s right for students (Stand for Children, n.d.).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

There are early stage state (SB 1581, n.d.) and county level (Multnomah County Cradle to Career [Portland State University, 2010]) initiatives which may go far to heal the disjointedness described above.

Culturally Responsive Practice

The social context of today's schools is indeed one of increasing diversity among students, ongoing economic challenges for families in most communities, and disjointedness within schools and throughout the education system. So, these realities require us to ask about how education programs can in fact make a difference for the growing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students. One of the ways schools and educators have begun to address this growing diversity is to use culturally responsive practices in the hopes of decreasing the achievement gap. In Gay's seminal work, culturally responsive practice is described as the process of:

. . . using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning . . . more relevant . . . and effective . . . teaches to and through the strength of these students. It is culturally validating and affirming (Gay, 2000, p. 29).

Gay goes on to describe culturally responsive teaching as having the following characteristics:

- It acknowledges the legitimacy of the culture heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- It builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socioeconomic realities.
- It uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected to different learning styles.
- It incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (p. 29).

Because culture strongly influences the attitudes, values, and behaviors that students and teachers bring to the classroom, it has to be a major determinant of how the problems of underachievement are solved (Gay, 2002). Richards, Brown and Forde are in agreement and suggest that a culturally responsive educator “. . . acknowledges students’ differences as well as their commonalities, validates students’ cultural identity in classroom practices and instructional materials, educates students about the diversity of the world around them, and promotes equity and mutual respect among students” (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006, p.4). As does Gay (2002), Richards et al. also highlight connections between students, families and the community. Culturally responsive practice seeks to bridge students’ in-school lives with the broader experience of being in the world. This is a fundamental aspect of the perspective.

Delpit (1988) speaks to the critical role of culturally responsive teachers and their responsibility for managing the inevitable imbalance of power that presents itself in the classroom:

. . . we must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In other words, we must become ethnographers in the true sense. Teachers are in an ideal position to play this role, to attempt to get all of the issues on the table in order to initiate true dialogue. This can only be done, however, by seeking out those whose perspectives may differ most, by learning to give their words complete attention, by understanding one's own power, even if that power stems merely from being in the majority, by being unafraid to raise questions about discrimination and voicelessness with people of color, and to listen, no, to hear what they say. I suggest that the results of such interactions may be the most powerful and empowering coalescence yet seen in the educational realm—for all teachers and for all the students they teach (Delpit, 1988/1995, p. 47).

This vigorous call to seek out differing perspectives and opinions and to hear what students have to say as a means for validating and affirming diverse students is also central to the notion of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Hanley and Noblit (2009) describe important aspects of culturally responsive practice in an example about cultural attributes held by African American students. They explain that African American culture “incorporates verbal expressiveness, personal style, emotional vitality, musicality and an emphasis on facing life without pretense . . .” (p.6). In a culturally responsive educational environment, these attributes would be used throughout, including in curricular and instructional planning, classroom organization, motivational strategies and discipline, and assessment; all of which provide opportunities to engage student interest, develop ownership of learning, and inspire achievement.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

This example demonstrates how culturally responsive practice takes shape in and permeates many aspects of the education arena. Richards et al. (2006) affirm the notion that culturally responsive practice takes shape in multiple dimensions:

Culturally responsive pedagogy comprises three dimensions: (a) institutional, (b) personal, and (c) instructional. The institutional dimension reflects the administration and its policies and values. This is where resource allocation figures in prominently. Where and how are resources allocated? The personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional processes teachers must engage in to become culturally responsive. The instructional dimension includes materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction. All three dimensions significantly interact in the teaching and learning process and are critical to understanding the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy. Underlying all three is the institutional approach to community involvement – how connections with families and communities are sought and developed.

Again we see the emphasis in this perspective of taking a very broad view of how and where culturally responsive pedagogy is enacted. That is, in addition to the classroom, culturally responsive pedagogy extends to policy makers and administration, and ultimately to connections between the school, its students, their families, and the greater community. Lindsey, Roberts and Campbell Jones reinforce this by saying that culturally proficient leaders redefine education as an inclusive endeavor focusing on learning from, with, and about new groups in the community (2005, p. 111). In their work about culturally responsive leadership, they go further to say that: “School administrators and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

other school leaders have the moral responsibility to set a positive tone for valuing diversity in schools” (Lindsey, Roberts & Campbell Jones 2005, p. 91). Ultimately, culturally responsive practices, on the part of teachers and of administrators and leaders, are essential means for serving in today’s increasingly diverse schools and classrooms and for supporting the many challenges that diversity presents.

After-school Activities

In this context, we look now at after-school activities, which in their many forms, may be considered as a collaborative effort (with community agencies and providers) to help address inequities and the disjointed nature of schools. An overview of the history of after-school activities follows and helps to further describe the social context in which these resources appear. This is followed by a review of how after-school activities have impacted students.

History of after-school activities. From their inception in the late 1800’s, the growth and development of after-school activities in the U.S. has been closely linked to societal and political shifts. Today, these activities which are still vulnerable to societal and political trends meet many different goals for student participants and take place in many different settings. A brief history of after-school program development follows. After-school activities in the U.S. first appeared as boy’s clubs (Halpern, 2002). Girls were invited to join soon thereafter and clubs gave way to drop-in centers hosting assorted classes (such as carpentry and art classes), playground time and other organized activities. In the early 1900’s, many schools began hosting recreation and social activities for youth outside of school hours. Most of these activities were concerned with

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

keeping children safe and off the streets. Other activities were intended to provide opportunities for students to develop independent social relationships and still others supported academic goals for youth. These after-school activities continued to grow in number and focus until the Depression years, when due to severely reduced funding for social service activities, program growth was halted. Later, during World War II, after-school activities flourished again with new government support for childcare for the children of the many mothers joining the workforce. The 1950's brought continued increased federal funding for after-school activities, many of which were caught in the racial transitions taking place in inner-city neighborhoods at that time. Providers were forced to choose between their commitment to a neighborhood and their commitment to families, many of which were leaving the cities in favor of the suburbs. In the 1960's, funding was focused on early childhood activities more so than on after-school activities, and while funding for after-school increased again in the 1970s and 1980s, it was now directed to new suburban initiatives rather than inner-city ones (Halpern, 2003).

While funding and public attention for after-school activities in the early 1990s was weak, by the mid-1990s "after-school," as a distinct social service, grew enormously. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, created under the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (After School Alliance, n.d.), more than doubled the previous year's funding for after-school activities, and national and local private foundations increased their grant-making enormously as well. Research on after-school activities also increased – from just a few studies in the 1980's to a substantial body of reports, evaluations and studies by 2005 (Honig & McDonald, 2005). By 2003, federal funding

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

for these activities became stagnant again. According to the Afterschool Alliance (n.d.), after-school activities currently serve about fifteen percent of K-12 children in the U.S. In Oregon, K-12 children participate in after-school activities at about the same rate (Afterschool Alliance, 2012). By 2001, over two thirds of public elementary schools regularly host after-school activities for their students, joining the many out of school providers in their efforts to provide a safe environment, support positive development of youth, and improve academic performance (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001).

How after-school activities have been shown to impact students – effects from the broader literature. There is widespread recognition that after-school activities serve a variety of purposes for youth and families, including providing adult supervision to keep children who may otherwise be home alone after school safe and off the streets, providing opportunities for positive youth development, developing independent social relationships, exposing youth to socially and culturally enriching experiences, and academic skill development (Lauer et al., 2003; Witt & King, 2009). Next, we examine studies reflecting some of those outcomes in more detail.

Academic outcomes. The Afterschool Alliance (2012) summarizes studies that show a variety of academic outcomes, including improved school attendance and engagement in learning and improved test scores and grades. For example, a meta-analysis of thirty-five after-school programs (Lauer et al., 2003) shows that after-school activities have positive and significant effects among students at risk of failure in achieving positive results on reading and math test scores. An evaluation of eighty-four

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

after-school programs in Texas (Harvard Family Research Project, n.d.; Witt & King, 2009) shows a significant positive relationship between the number of days students attended the after-school program and the instances of passing the math and science portions of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test. Also, results indicate that attending the Fort Worth After School Program had a positive relationship to school attendance in that year (Witt & King, 2009). A 2007 study of thirty-five geographically diverse after-school programs (Vandell, Resiner, & Pierce) finds that regular participation in high-quality after-school activities is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students. Other studies (Evaluations Backgrounder: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of the Academic Impact of Afterschool Programs, 2006) show that after-school programs which do not necessarily focus on academic activities still may result in positive effects on student achievement.

Social and developmental outcomes. In addition to the academic outcomes of participation in after-school activities such as those noted above, many studies show impact of after-school activities on social and developmental outcomes. In a meta-analysis of seventy-three after-school programs, Durlak and Weissburg (2007) found that youth who participate in after-school activities improve significantly on indicators of behavioral adjustment, and school performance. More specifically, participation in after-school activities improved youths' feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, positive feelings and attitudes toward school, positive social behaviors, in addition to school grades and achievement test scores. Problem behaviors (such as aggression,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

noncompliance and conduct problems) and drug use were also reduced as a result of participation in after-school activities.

Further, evaluations of after-school activities including a mentoring component reveal that participation in after-school activities primarily targeted at supporting student academic performance can also significantly impact social and emotional development. For example, an evaluation of the Across Ages Program showed that youth who had participated in a mentoring component of the program reported significantly higher self-control and self-confidence levels than youth who participated in other components but not mentoring (Taylor, Losciuto, Fox, Hilbert, & Sonkowsky, 1999). A 2003 study of over 13,000 adolescents using data from the National Longitudinal Education Study of 1988 found that students who consistently participated in extracurricular activities across their high school years have significantly and substantially more positive outcomes in early adulthood, such as volunteering for community and religious organizations, voting, and attending college (Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003).

Prevention outcomes. After-school activities have also been shown to significantly impact a broad range of prevention outcomes for youth including avoidance of drugs and alcohol, decreases in delinquency, knowledge about safe sex and preventing unhealthy lifestyles. For example, a longitudinal study using a comparison group tracked students over nine years. These students participated in a multi-site after-school program focusing on juvenile crime. Results indicate that participation in this after-school program was significantly related to lower incidences of juvenile crime among participating students (Goldschmidt, Huang & Chinen, 2007).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Health and wellness outcomes such as better food choices, increased physical activity, and improved physical and social well-being can also be achieved through participation in after-school activities. A 2005 longitudinal study of over 400 economically disadvantaged urban youth from three after-school programs found after accounting for a variety of differences between participants and nonparticipants, that youth who participated in after-school activities were more likely than nonparticipants to experience reductions in obesity. This was true even after controlling for youth's initial body mass index status at the beginning of the study, as well as demographic factors like poverty, race, and ethnicity. Participants also showed significant increases in peer acceptance, over time in the program (Mahoney, Lord & Carryl, 2005). In short, research shows that participation in after-school activities does result in improvements in a variety of academic, developmental and social outcomes, and that they can make a difference for youth.

Four Models to Consider for Students Affected by the Achievement Gap

In the next section, we look closely at four program models (one national and three local), each with the goal of closing the achievement gap, which all incorporate after-school components. These models were selected because they provide a base for understanding how after-school activities engage with schools and to what end. The national program supports the “creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 2003) and is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to after-

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

school activities. The scope of the program makes it an important one to review. The local activities are particularly relevant for this case study because practitioners and scholars from the same community can clearly understand the contexts in which they take place.

21st Century Community Learning Centers – a national program. Looking more closely at existing extracurricular resources and how they serve disadvantaged students, the national landscape and the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program can offer us a starting place. Specifically, in the seminal 1994 report “Prisoners of Time,” which resulted from 1991 federal legislation that created the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, we hear the plea that:

. . . time must be unlocked and unfettered to achieve the successes we seek.

Learning opportunities – in, after and out of school – must be available to all, and linkages among these domains constructed to assure maximum student development (Kane, 1994, p. 3).

The report calls “not only for more learning time, but for all time to be used in new and better ways” (Kane, 1994, p. 2). It also cites the development of out of school and after-school programs and activities as “a bright spot in the creative use of time” and suggests that we have much to learn from these kinds of resources that “expand and enhance the ways in which students are taught when they are in school” (Kane, 1994, p.2). So, in response to the outcry of the “Prisoners of Time” report, the CCLC program was born. CCLC is essentially a source of federal funds to help states and local communities establish support systems for after-school and extra learning time activities. CCLC was

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

authorized by Congress in 1994 with the goal of opening schools for broader use by their communities. Four years later, the program was refocused on providing academic, enrichment, and recreational activities in public schools during the after-school hours. A Community Learning Center is an entity that offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and families during non-school hours (before or after school) and periods when school is not in session (including holidays, weekends or summer sessions) (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Specific programmatic components are left to the discretion of program staff in each center; however any center using CCLC funds is required to provide some type of academic enrichment programming. Help with homework is the most common academic activity at CCLC-funded centers, with after-school homework sessions offered at least once a week at all centers (James-Burdumy et al., 2005). Other programming, such as art classes, sports, health and safety awareness and community service is optional for the funded centers.

The national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program includes an elementary school study (James-Burdumy, Dynarski & Deke, 2007) and a middle school study (James-Burdumy et al., 2005). Using an experimental design, the elementary school study randomly assigned students to treatment and control groups. This random assignment was conducted separately for each of 26 centers located in 12 school districts. The evaluation selected 2308 students in the fall of the school year and followed those students for two school years. The middle school study was based on a nationally representative sample of CCLC programs serving middle school participants and a matched-comparison (non-experimental design) group of students who were similar

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

to participants. Student data were collected from 1782 participants in 32 school districts and 61 centers in those districts. As with the elementary school study, the evaluation selected students in the fall of the school year and followed those students for two school years. Neither evaluation (James-Burdumy et al., 2005) found significant student gains in achievement test scores.

According to Mahoney & Zigler (2006) who examined these studies, the findings led some to suggest drastic reductions in the levels of federal financial support for after-school providers. These funding reductions did not ultimately take place; however, researchers continue to discuss many methodological issues that limit the interpretation of these results of the national evaluations of 21 CCLCs (Durlak et al., 2010; Lauer et al., 2006; Mahoney & Zigler, 2006). For example:

Depending on the age group in question, these (methodological issues) include the lack of initial group equivalence, high attrition among respondents, low levels of student attendance, and the possible nonrepresentativeness of evaluated programs. There is also the problem of treating centers as though they provided a uniform approach to academic assistance when they clearly did not. While some 21 CCLCs provided students with intensive small group instruction or individual tutoring, others merely asked students to work independently on homework (Durlak et al., 2010, p. 294).

Durlak et al. (2010) were able to highlight the problems and confirm Mahoney & Zigler's (2006) critique that the 21st CCLC evaluations were quite premature. Most of the sites in the 21st CCLC evaluation had been in operation for only one or two years prior to the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

study and were still in early stages of their development. There was other evidence, such as low student attendance (only about two days per week), that many of the sites were not mature. Additionally, it has been suggested that conclusions about the ineffectiveness of the 21st CCLC program might be due to the aggregation of interventions at each site which had different characteristics in the evaluation study (Lauer et al., 2006). These researchers point to unreliable methodologies which have led to inconclusive findings for the 21st CCLC program which continues to exist.

Studies of Local Activities

Next we look at research on local strategies and efforts. In the Portland Metro community, the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN Schools) program, I Have a Dream (IHAD), and the Multnomah County Cradle to Career initiative are all models which bring, or have the potential to bring expanded opportunities such as after-school activities to disadvantaged populations.

Schools Uniting Neighborhoods. When we were faced in the late 1990s with the triple challenges of a growing achievement gap among students, diminishing public funds for education, and national research pointing to the dangers of high risk behavior by youth in the hours immediately before and after school, we went looking for a new way to provide services to support students and their families (Multnomah County, n.d., p. 7). As noted in the quote above, there was a need to address a community concern. The result was the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) initiative which emerged in a 1998 partnership between the City of Portland and the eight school districts in Multnomah County. This effort to support students and their families began with two initial goals: to

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

support education and school success and to improve the way social services for students and their families were delivered. The SUN initiative pooled city and county resources and attracted new funding to expand student enrichment activities and social services in 8 public schools, using a full-service community school model. “SUN represented a new philosophy of using school-based services to address multiple layers of need” (Multnomah County, n.d., p. 7). A committee of representatives from Multnomah county, city parks and recreation, state, multiple school districts, and local community organizations was convened. The group worked to bring existing assets together in an expanded community school model that bolstered educational programs and social services, and increased the involvement of families, community members, and businesses in schools. Both the county and the city allocated general fund dollars to support the collaborative.

Today, 64 SUN schools share the expanded common goals of:

- Improving student achievement, attendance, behavior, and other skills by increasing the capacity of local schools to provide a safe, supervised, and positive environment for expanded experiences.
- Increasing family, community, and business involvement in the schools and school-based activities.
- Improving the system of collaboration among school districts, government, community-based agencies, families, citizens, and business and corporate leaders.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

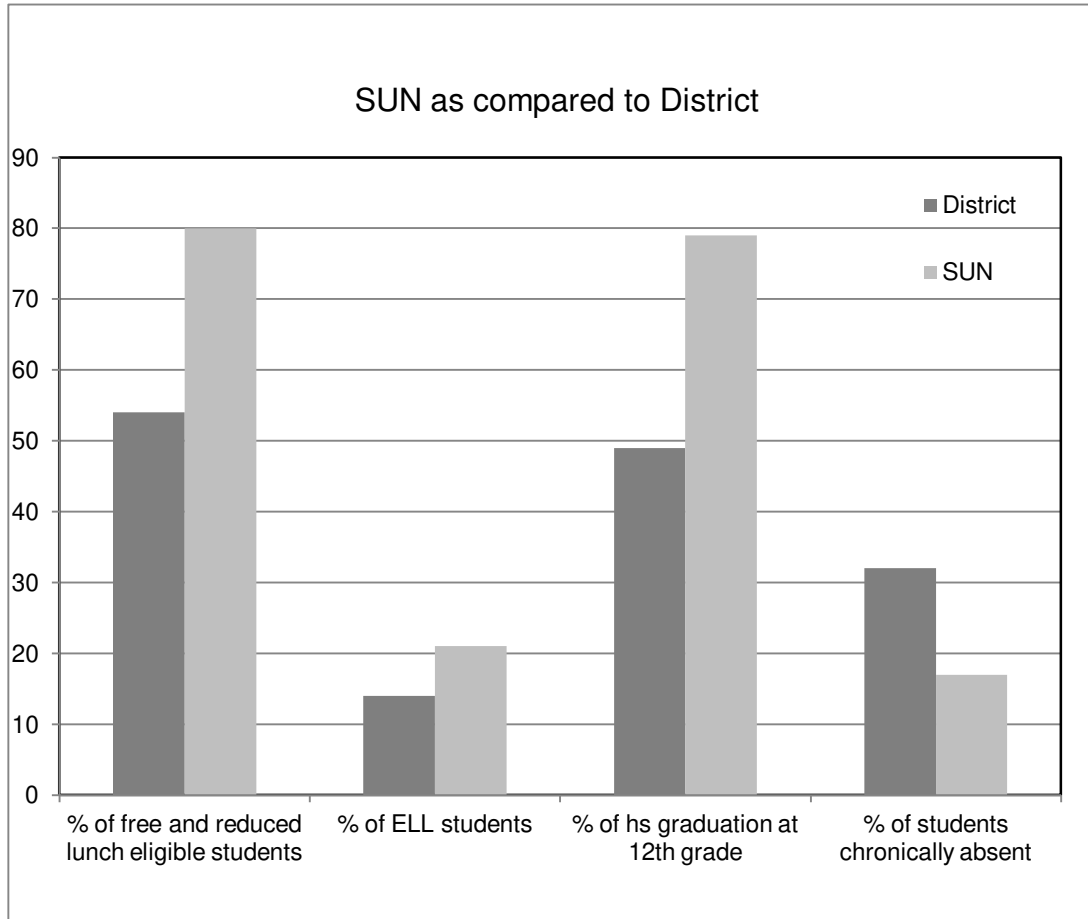
- Improving use of public facilities and services by locating services in the community-based neighborhood schools (Iverson, 2005, p. 83).

To achieve these goals and to ensure that there are common structures and supports across the multiple partners, the SUN model has collaboration and partnership deeply embedded in its systemic infrastructure and management processes (Blank, 2004, p. 5). Evaluation findings from the baseline evaluation report (Harvard Family Research Project, n.d.) show high levels of collaboration throughout the model. For example, 65% of SUN School programs, events and services reviewed share funding, volunteers or other resources with one another. Joint hosting of projects is common in the SUN School model and stakeholders, even in the first year of the program, perceive “a moderately high level of change in collaboration, especially for efforts that involved designing, hosting and implementing activities” (Harvard Family Research Project, n.d., p.6). Further, some activities are provided for every SUN school. Other resources are unique to a single site. Regardless, three essential components of every SUN school are academics, social and health services, and extended-day activities. Site managers are responsible for coordinating extended-day activities to link SUN activities to the academic school day, foster strong relationships with school personnel and community partners, and identify networks of service, activities, and resources that can benefit youth and the larger community. Preliminary evaluation data from the SUN program shows an increase in parent involvement, increased access to a host of social services for families, and upward trends in student achievement (Blank, 2004) as a result of the various

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

supports the program provides, including extended day or after-school activities. The following table displays some of the 2010-2011 program outcomes.

Table 1
SUN Program Outcomes as Compared with School District Outcomes



Adopted from SUN Community Schools: FY 2010-11, 2012

Further, student academic outcomes were positive as evidenced by OAKS reading and math tests:

As a system, we met our target: greater than 75% of students showed improvement in math (81% of participants) and reading (80% of participants) scores. In

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

addition, almost three quarters of students were meeting their benchmarks or on track to meet their benchmark within 3 years in reading (74%) (SUN Community Schools, 2012, p. 3).

The sustained growth of the SUN Schools program, from 8 school sites in 1998 to 64 school sites currently, is a strong indication of the value the Portland Metro community places on this enrichment resource and the gains it makes possible for students and families. While there are multiple program components impacting the results cited above, and isolating the specific activities that produce specific results is not possible with the data provided, we can look to the SUN Schools program as a highly successful model incorporating extended-day activities.

“I Have a Dream” at Alder School. Another local effort to provide resources, both in and beyond the school day, for disadvantaged youth is the I Have a Dream (IHAD) program, which has thrived at schools throughout the Portland area (and throughout the U.S.) for many years. IHAD encourages students in low-income communities to complete high school and go on to college by infusing students’ school and after-school experience with many supports. The program guarantees tuition assistance for higher education after high school graduation. In addition, IHAD provides participants with tutoring, counseling, and a variety of experiential learning opportunities from elementary school through high school. For example, typically, each IHAD program sponsors an entire grade level of students at a low-income public elementary school. The students are tracked over time and encouraged to participate in tutoring, mentoring, counseling, community service, and recreational opportunities. A full-time

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

paid staff member coordinates program activities and serves as a mentor to program participants. A dedicated group of sponsors commits to working with their group of students throughout the life of the program and often provides the program with funding and other resources (I Have A Dream, 2009).

In the fall of 2012, Reynolds School District's Alder Elementary in southeast Portland became the nation's first "Dreamer School." This means that every student in every class at the school will participate in the program. Selected in large part because of the school's demographics, Alder has one of the highest poverty rates in the state, with 94% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch and 20% of students homeless. More than two-thirds of its nearly 600 students speak English as a second language. Fewer than 15 percent currently go on to graduate from high school; many fewer enroll in college. Because of these barriers to education and a strong commitment to the foundation's goals on the part of Alder's teachers and administration, Alder Elementary is seen as a perfect site for the first Dreamer School in the nation. The Reynolds School District agreed to create a new vice principal position in support of the initiative, and the school agreed to start a full-day kindergarten program (Mayer, 2011). The "I Have a Dream" Foundation-Oregon's vision is that if the approach of high expectations and strategic community support can work there, then this is a model that can be applied anywhere in the state.

In an exciting demonstration of commitment and philanthropy on the part of the higher education community, area-colleges have adopted entire grade levels at Alder for sponsorship. For example, Mt. Hood Community College will sponsor every student in

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

the incoming kindergarten class. Other Alder classes have been adopted by Portland Community College, Concordia University, Lewis and Clark College, Linfield College and Portland State University (Cullivan, 2012). In fact, the “I Have a Dream – Oregon” foundation will no longer adopt groups of students as in the traditional IHAD model. While previous commitments to individual school classes will be fulfilled, going forward, IHAD will focus solely on Alder, and will attempt to create a culture of college that begins the day students begin school (House, 2011).

Immediate goals for students at Alder are focused on academic achievement and are consistent with IHAD-Oregon’s long-term mission of helping low-income students achieve academic success in school, college and career: 80% of Alder students will finish a post-secondary degree or certificate, 50% of Alder students will exceed and 90% will meet expectations on 3rd, 5th and 8th grade statewide benchmark tests. In order to accomplish these goals, Alder must work to significantly decrease student and family transience and serve as a hub for community services and stability. These goals will be accomplished using a combination of three core services that support the whole child: long-term relationships with caring adults, academic and personal/social support service and the creation of a “culture of college” within the school and within families (Mayer, 2011). With its longitudinal and financial support model, IHAD goes beyond what a traditional after-school program provides and sees as its role. However, as seen in the strategies noted above, IHAD relies upon collaborations with education and nonprofit partners to provide academic, personal and social support services in much the same fashion that many after-school providers do. The notion of attending to the whole child is

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

also a reference to providing resources for students' out of school time, such as after-school activities.

Results from qualitative research using case studies of two IHAD programs in Chicago which focused primarily on the role of social capital in youth development (Kahne & Bailey, 1999) revealed impact on participants' high school graduation and college enrollment rates, while simultaneously bringing to light questions about programmatic strategies and the program's ability to consistently achieve results. The high school graduation rates of IHAD participants (71% for one case study; 69% for the other) were roughly twice those of the students from control groups (37% and 34% respectively). Because college enrollment rates for the control groups were not available, researchers used findings from a study conducted by the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance (Storey & Qualls, 1991) as an estimate for the comparison group's rates of college attendance. While Kahne & Bailey (1999) believe the Storey & Qualls study may overstate the comparison group's rates of college attendance, the overall college attendance rate for IHAD participants in the two case studies (63% and 67%) was roughly three times that of the estimates for the comparison group (20% and 18%). The study identifies other factors beyond IHAD which may contribute to these outcomes, including the fact that many students transferred from public to parochial schools during their participation with IHAD. Also noted is the fact that other IHAD programs in Chicago were less successful than the two selected for these case studies, and suffered from many of the issues that can constrain implementation, including high rates of staff turnover, insufficient staffing, and inadequate support from schools. These difficulties

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

point to the need for more inclusive studies on IHAD programs beyond these two case studies. Finally, the role of social capital in youth development is cited as the primary focus of this IHAD study. In light of that social capital lens, the two case studies point to success as a result of:

...social networks, norms with effective sanctions, and social trust which all appear to facilitate youth development...When in a trusting context, youth are more likely to seek out and take advantage of various supports and opportunities. They are also more likely to respond positively to teachers and other adults who emphasize prosocial and academic norms (Kahne & Bailey, 1999, p. 340).

High school graduation rates that are approximately doubled in IHAD students speak to the strength of the Chicago IHAD programs in these studies. As with other after-school programs, a myriad of other factors may contribute to the outcomes of participation in IHAD, and study design can rarely support causal relationships. However, the program's long history and development of the new IHAD model indicate the extent to which our community values this investment and, like the SUN School model, believes gains for students merit continued investment.

Multnomah County Cradle to Career initiative. Another initiative designed to bolster student success which incorporates after-school resources, is the cradle to career model currently being developed in Multnomah County. Cradle to career describes frameworks emphasizing the connections between K-12, preschool education, after-school and out-of-school institutions, and post-secondary education and training (Swanson, 2008). This model is taking shape in programs across the United States and is

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

bringing education and community partners together to strengthen linkages between interdependent parts of the education system. For example, Strive is a three-year old cradle to career program out of the University of Cincinnati which is showing that when a community collectively commits to shared accountability for the success of every child, student achievement improves (Strive, 2010). Over half of the fifty-three success indicators that Strive (2010) tracks are showing positive trends, including the number of preschool children prepared for kindergarten, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. The common element that similar cradle to career models share and some say makes large-scale social change possible, is strong, intentional, cross-sector coordination along with a commitment to shared systems of measurement, rather than the more typical isolated interventions of individual organizations (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Using Strive as the model, Portland State University (PSU), All Hands Raised (formerly the Portland Schools Foundation) and multiple community partners are currently developing a cradle to career framework, which they refer to as a P-20 initiative, for the region (Portland State University, 2010). This cradle to career framework, and specifically Portland's initiative, identifies factors that relate to student success beginning much earlier in the life of a student, and ending later than traditionally cited factors such as attendance at a two-year versus a four-year college, college quality, major field of study, academic experience, and interpersonal and extracurricular involvement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Figure 1 below shows the P-20 model as it is envisioned in this creation stage. The potential for impacting student achievement

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

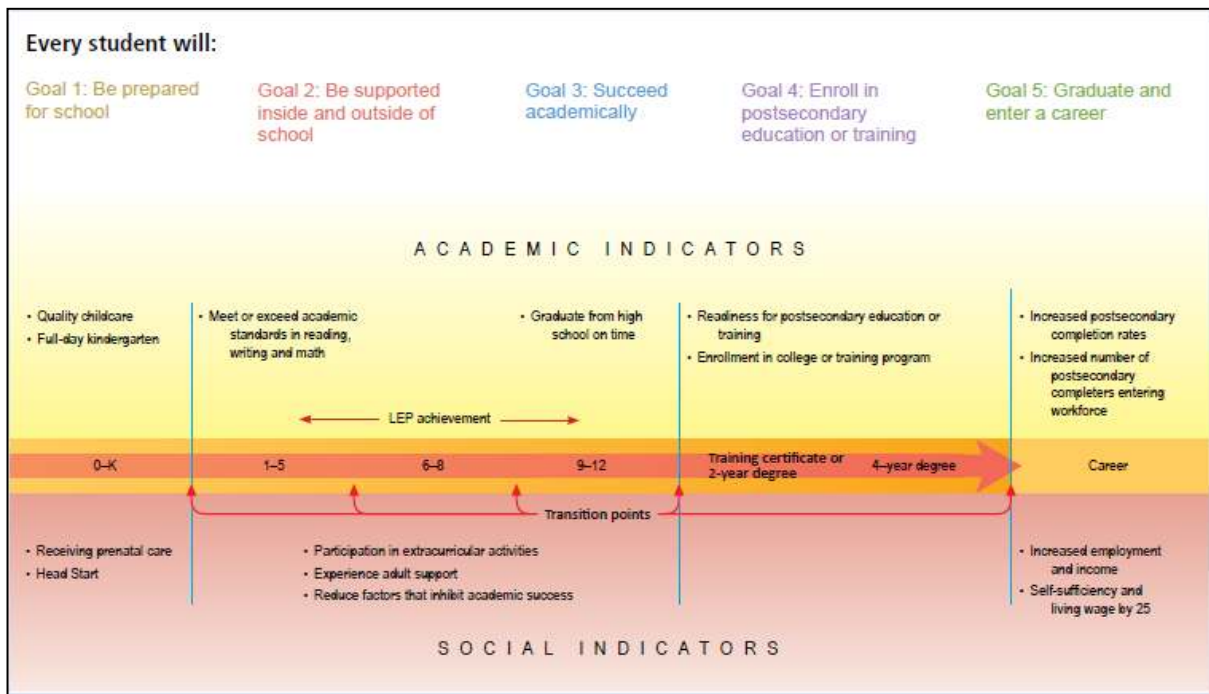


Figure 1. Cradle to Career process.

is certainly highlighted. For this study, however, the piece most aligned is the focus on out of school support and community engagement. As the model is still being developed, it would be beneficial to revisit this initiative in the future. As of yet, other Strive-based models do not have research to confirm their effectiveness. Further, as with IHAD and the SUN School program, after-school activities provide only one part of the equation in Portland's P-20. However these models do provide a context in which to explore the impact of after-school and extracurricular activities on students. In the next section, issues of participation, barriers to, and challenges of access to after-school activities will be explored. Following this exploration, consideration will be given to critical theory,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

social capital theory and organizational theory as a framework that places these issues into perspective for the study.

Challenges in Participation and Potential of After-school Activities

Given the expected, and in many cases documented, positive benefits of participation in after-school activities, questions about participation in and access to these after-school activities are raised. What do we know about the students who don't get these experiences? Who is not participating? What are the barriers to access for disadvantaged populations? To serve disadvantaged populations, are existing activities adequately culturally responsive? Insights about some aspects of access can be found by looking at issues of after-school program funding.

According to the Afterschool Alliance (Afterschool Alliance: 21st Century Community Learning Centers Federal Afterschool Initiative, n.d.), funding for after-school resources does not approach the demand. Their surveys indicate that parents of 18.5 million children in the U.S. would send their children to an after-school program if one were available in their school (Afterschool Alliance, 2004). In 2006, for example, of the 1,247 organizations that applied for 21st CCLC after-school grants, only 325 of them were funded. This is a funding rate of only 26 percent (Stonehill et al., 2009). And, in addition to the challenge of too few providers, almost half of the after-school programs that did receive CCLC funding in 2009 report that their budgets were inadequate to meet the needs of the students and families they served (Uncertain Times: 2009 Key Findings, n.d.). Adding further frustration to this situation, while twenty-nine percent of children in after-school programs meet the federal government's definition of low-income and in

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

need of federal assistance, the federal government contributes only eleven percent of the cost of after-school programming (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). To fill these gaps left by inadequate federal funding, many states devote resources for after-school programming. City and local governments also make up a portion of public funding for after-school activities such as SUN Schools cited earlier. Of course, all of these public funds, as well as support from private agencies, can easily fall victim to economic downturns, as has been seen in the last decade to a dramatic degree. And when revenue from public, private and in-kind contributions falls short of programming costs, participants are asked to make up the difference. Here, because culturally and linguistically diverse families often bear the burden of low socioeconomic status, the culturally responsive literature (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2012) would also highlight the need for equity, which goes beyond equality. Equity “. . . means that all students must be given the real possibility of an equality of outcomes Equal education implies we are giving every student the same thing and an equitable education provides students with what they need to achieve equality” (Nieto & Bode, 2012, p. 9). Financial strain on low-income families is illustrated in a 2003 study (Scharf, Olsen, Shah, & Bhattacharya, 2003) that found that nearly 30% of after-school programs serving primarily low-income youth charged more than nominal participation fees. One way of providing culturally responsive practice in after-school programs and activities is through an economic consideration such as a sliding scale. This is in contrast to many after-school activities serving higher income youth which use fee-based funding structures. In any case, activities serving economically disadvantaged youth are inherently stressed because they must rely on

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

funds from many sources which are unstable at best, are often grant-based and are often time-limited. Thus, economic challenges in funding after-school activities result in fewer disadvantaged students' (who are typically culturally diverse and English language learners) participation in these academic and enrichment activities beyond the school day.

While a 2009 report (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009) concludes that participation rates in after-school programming are relatively low for all children and adolescents, including those from disadvantaged families, another study (James-Burdumy et al., 2005) shows a conflicting view that CCLC-funded programs are reaching larger numbers of low-income and minority students:

Whereas 17 percent of middle schools nationwide are classified as high poverty (based on free and reduced lunch program participation), 66 percent of middle schools operating 21st Century centers are classified as high poverty. Similarly, 37 percent of students in middle schools nationwide are minorities; in middle schools operating 21st Century centers, 57 percent are minorities. ... And, CCLC-funded centers are serving an increasingly diverse group of children. More than 1 in 3 attendees come from a Hispanic/Latino background, while 25 percent of all attendees are African-American (James-Burdumy et al., 2005p. 23).

Nonetheless, barriers to participation are many, including higher costs than can be afforded, lack of access to safe transportation, conflicting obligations (babysitting younger siblings, chores at home, etc.), and others. This means that without significant changes, rates of participation in after-school activities will remain low among the students most at risk for academic failure (Gardner et al., 2009).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The mixed methods Scharf et al. study (2003), which used surveys, case studies and site visits, identified both positive and negative trends regarding issues of equity and diversity vis-à-vis after-school programs. The study noted high levels of interest and concern among providers, communities, policymakers and professionals about access to activities for diverse students. The study (Scharf et al., 2003) also highlighted the desire on the part of program providers for technical assistance and training that addresses diversity challenges. The same study, however, also identified challenges in the realm of diversity and equity around after-school activities. For example, because they may not have access to research about successful instructional strategies and learning conditions for diverse and low-income students, the academic interventions used by many after-school providers are not always as appropriate as they could be for low-income youth, youth of color, immigrant youth, and English language learners (Scharf et al., 2003). While the desire for these services is noted, there is a shortage of technical assistance and trainers who can assist after-school providers in developing the competencies and practices needed for their audiences. Participation challenges in low-income community after-school activities emerge from lack of funding, cultural needs of families and lack of training among providers. These challenges create intense sustainability and operating problems that make it difficult to create and deliver the kind of activities that are needed.

Throughout educational fields, the desire and focus has been to close this achievement gap which is prevalent in K-12 schools throughout the U.S. As stated above, NCLB (2002) was a policy that tried to address this gap. As is well known, many other strategies have been brought forward to bolster student achievement and to close

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

the achievement gap, including participation in after-school activities. While research on the impacts of after-school activities has accumulated in the past decade, this strategy of enrichment has proved challenging to evaluate. Many studies report negative or neutral findings and “rely upon non-experimental designs with varying degrees of validity, adding to the difficulty of synthesizing the literature’s findings (James-Burdumy et al., 2005). On the other hand, many studies have shown that after-school activities do provide positive benefits for students (Lauer et al., 2003):

A decade of research and evaluation studies, as well as large-scale, rigorously conducted syntheses of many research and evaluation studies, confirms that children who participate in after-school activities can reap a host of positive benefits in a number of interrelated outcome areas – academic, social/emotional, prevention, and health and wellness (Little, Wimmer & Weiss, 2008, p. 2).

Children benefit when schools consider the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their community. After-school activities that incorporate these considerations may also better serve the needs of disadvantaged students.

Further, Harvard Family Research Project studies show that the benefits of partnerships such as those resulting in school-based after-school activities extend beyond students to schools and after-school program providers as well (Harris, Deschenes, Westmoreland, Bouffard & Coffman, 2010). For example, schools benefit when after-school activities reinforce key concepts, values and skills taught in the classroom. Schools also benefit when teachers who work in after-school programs obtain additional professional experience that helps them improve teaching skills. Similarly, after-school

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

program quality improves when schools are invested in their success and assist with alignment of after-school education opportunities and classroom learning needs (Harris et al., 2010). Given this element of hope about the many potential impacts of after-school activities amidst conflicting reports, this research study focuses on exploring what takes place in the intersection of a school and its after-school activities.

Theoretical Framework

Several theoretical perspectives may help to understand the complex phenomena we find in the place where schools and community intersect. The studies reviewed in the literature review suggest a framework of perspectives including critical theory, which helps address why certain conditions exist and question issues of access and participation of diverse and poor students; a social capital perspective, which is useful for exploring what individual and collective or systemic investments have been made at schools and what relationships have been built which seem to be working; and intersectionality theory, which helps address questions about how community organizations partner and how parents engage with schools and after-school activities. Next, we explore each of the lenses in this framework.

Critical theoretical lens. The knowledge that there is a persistent and troubling education achievement gap between low-income and English language learner students and more affluent and English speaking students calls for a critical educational theory lens. The first generation of critical theorists rejected rationalism, or the positivist understanding of research to embrace a social theory approach (McLaren, 1998). Instead of just recording information research perceived important, their vision was that social

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

theory should play a significant role in changing the world. During World War II, many members of the Frankfurt School fled Nazi Germany, ultimately reestablishing the School both in Frankfurt and in the United States after the war. They were the first generation of critical theorists. The second generation of critical theorists, including Jurgen Habermas, Peter McLaren and others, has continued their work, influencing multiple disciplines, including educational theory. Critical pedagogy is indebted to U.S. scholars as well, from the work of John Dewey to the teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and others (McLaren, 1998). Raymond Geuss (1981) explains the essential distinguishing feature of critical theory as consisting of three tenets:

1. Critical theories have special standing as guides for human action in that:
 - a) They are aimed at producing enlightenment in the agents who hold them, i.e. at enabling those agents to determine what their true interests are.
 - b) They are inherently emancipatory, i.e., they free agents from a kind of coercion which is at least partly self-imposed, from self-frustration of conscious human action.
2. Critical theories have cognitive content, i.e., they are forms of knowledge.
3. Critical theories differ epistemologically from theories in the natural sciences. Theories in natural science are ‘objectifying’; critical theories are ‘reflective.’ A critical theory then is a reflective theory which gives agents a kind of knowledge inherently productive of enlightenment and emancipation (p. 2).

We can see that critical theory is aligned with some components of culturally responsive practice, such as promoting equity. Further, critical education theory stresses that a

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

commitment to social transformation, with regard to marginalized and oppressed groups, must be central to any genuine pedagogical practice (McLaren, 1998).

So, the importance of critical theory for understanding closing the achievement gap (and ensuring access to the full range of resources which may impact student success) lies in the knowledge that low income and ELL students have lower rates of success than their more advantaged and native English speaking peers along the entire educational pipeline. For example in our own local community, 2009-2010 data collected by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) show that only 8.5% of eligible 0 – 3 year olds in Multnomah County participate in highly effective Early Head Start Programs (Portland State University, 2010). ODE data also show that significant numbers of Multnomah County students of color are enrolling in half-day kindergarten programs even though participation in full-day kindergarten has been shown to maximize student success in school better than participation in half-day programs (Nowak, Nichols, & Coutts, 2009). Looking further along the education spectrum, ODE data from 2009 – 2010 tell us that for high school writing, only 5.7 percent of students with limited English proficiency met the state writing criteria. From a critical theory point of view, these stark realities demand that we provide access to resources for low-income and ELL populations via the most effective mechanisms available to provide ultimately, for a means for social transformation. This study aims to understand if after-school activities may indeed provide some of those highly effective mechanisms.

Social capital lens. A social capital theoretical lens also provides a useful perspective in this exploration of after-school activities and how they intersect with one

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

K-8 public school, as it looks at the individual and collective or systemic investments that have been brought to bear in a particular situation. Social capital has been conceptualized in many ways and has been widely applied in fields ranging from business and economics to sociology and education. The social capital perspective has been used to explain and support a broad range of outcomes and advantages such as managerial performance (Moran, 2005) and reduction in drop-out rates (Croninger & Lee, 2001). The education reform strategies reviewed in the literature review share an emphasis on providing students with extracurricular resources such as after-school activities, which bring about relationship networks resulting in social capital, as a means of closing the achievement gap and furthering the success of students traditionally at risk.

Overview and definitions. Three central scholars working with these ideas about social capital in sociology and education are Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1986, p. 245).

His work with the concept takes on a critical perspective that focuses on the advantages to possessors of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) used social capital to explain social inequality and how relationships help perpetuate systems of power and privilege. Leana refers to James Coleman's seminal work of 1987 which compared students in public and parochial schools and helped launch the application of social capital in the field of sociology. "He found that parochial school students performed better and attributed this to the social links among parents and within neighborhoods, which strengthened student

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

support systems” (Leana, 2011, p. 4). Coleman’s approach incorporates a broader view of social capital (than Bourdieu’s) which is valuable for individuals at all levels of society – not just the powerful upper classes (Gauntlett, 2011). Coleman attributes academic and other outcomes to relationship networks and defined social capital as being:

...defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors –within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible (Coleman, 1988, p. 98).

In this quote we see that the benefits of social capital can be for individuals within a structure. Putnam (1995) builds on this idea with a focus on community. He defines social capital as:

... features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit . . . For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved . . . (1995, p. 65).

Whether focusing on accessing resources available, individuals, groups, or communities,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

these three perspectives (Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman) share the idea of social capital as relationships that make possible the transfer of resources and provide positive benefits. “For individuals, engaged social interaction with other individuals or groups provides resources to which they would not otherwise have access” (Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005, p. 43). Culturally responsive practice literature would support this view. A common core of these perspectives is that access to resources includes relationships which have the potential to provide positive benefits, resolve dilemmas and achieve ends that would not have been possible without exposure to the relationships.

Jarrett, Sullivan and Watkins (2005) conducted a qualitative study about developing social capital through participation in youth activities. They looked at social capital from the student perspective and point to the types of benefits we may see for students who take part in after-school activities. Benefits identified in their study include access to strategic information to complete projects and make informed choices, direct assistance to youth, exposure to adult worlds, support and encouragement via verbal praise, and enthusiastic acknowledgement of and interest in activities. “These types of resources are valuable for youth as they make their way toward adulthood: into college, other preparatory institutions, jobs, and careers” (Jarrett et al., 2005, p.43). Jarrett et al. go on to cite Putnam’s and Coleman’s work and highlight that most youth have few connections with community adults, either individually or as part of collective networks. “They are outsiders to the social structures and networks they will need to join to become functional adults. This isolation can be particularly significant for low-income youth in urban neighborhoods” (2005, p.43). For this research study, understanding low-income

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

youth's social structures is particularly important as we examine the role of after-school activities. So, programs such as I Have a Dream, the SUN Schools program and activities funded by 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, as well as the programs explored in the 2005 Jarrett et al. study provide important opportunities for youth, who may not have them otherwise, to develop social capital by linking them to suitable adults, structuring youth–adult activities around common goals, and coaching youth on these interactions.

Another aspect of social capital that may be at work in this study's case school is that stemming from relationships among teachers and after-school providers. In her mixed methods study of New York City public schools, Leana (2011) points to the importance for students of the intentional development of the social capital that results from relationships among teachers working with high levels of trust and frequent interaction. Different from human capital, which is a characteristic of an individual teacher (such as subject matter knowledge, teacher experience, or pedagogical skills), social capital occurs as a result of the relationships between and among teachers.

Most striking, students showed higher gains in math achievement when their teachers reported frequent conversations with their peers that centered on math, and when there was a feeling of trust or closeness among teachers. In other words, teacher social capital was a significant predictor of student achievement gains above and beyond teacher experience or ability in the classroom. And the effects of teacher social capital on student performance were powerful. If a

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

teacher's social capital was just one standard deviation higher than the average, her students' math scores increased by 5.7 percent (Leana, 2011, p. 5).

This work helps us look beyond improving the competence and skills of individual teachers to places where frequent interaction, high trust and collaboration among teachers lie. When the multiplicity of experiences in after-school activities occur as a result of interaction, trust and collaboration of caring adults, social capital is created. And based on the literature and studies on the benefits of social capital cited above, we can expect the impact of this social capital on students will be powerful in the same ways that teacher-generated social capital is. Put another way, the life and school skills benefits of after-school program social capital, and the academic benefits of teacher social capital come together in powerful ways for students.

Yosso's work on cultural capital, in which she critiques the assumption that students of color come to the classroom with cultural deficiencies, provides another perspective (2005). She challenges Bourdieu, whose work about conventional forms of power and resources which form social capital has been used to assert that students of color are "culturally poor," in contrast with other communities which are "culturally wealthy." Yosso introduces an alternative concept called "community cultural wealth." In it, she identifies:

. . . various indicators of capital that have rarely been acknowledged as cultural and social assets in Communities of Color (i.e., aspirational, social, navigational, linguistic, resistant and familial capital). These forms of capital draw on the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

knowledges Students of Color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom (2005, p. 70).

This lens lends itself to respect for diverse perspectives, and brings an appreciation for under-recognized assets students of color bring. Culturally responsive practice points to the damaging assumptions of deficit theories (Nieto & Bode, 2012) and builds on this idea of cultural wealth. Indeed, in asserting the perspective that “Communities of Color are places with multiple strengths,” Yosso notes the potential of community cultural wealth to transform the process of schooling (2005, p. 81).

Intersectionality theoretical lens. As an outcome of their after-school work in Boston middle schools (Noam, Pucci & Foster, 1999), and to aid in developing additional research strategies around after-school programs, Noam & Tillinger (2004) provide a theory and typology specifically describing the way after-school programs bring partners together to support youth development. Their work on the dynamics of interorganizational collaboration describes after-school programs as a “. . . meeting ground of multiple partnering organizations that combine a set of practices such as recreation, homework, project-based learning, sports, arts, youth leadership, and so on” (Noam & Tillinger, 2004, p. 76). The notion that program content is typically comprised of diverse offerings from collaborating institutions and groups is foundational to their theory, and also what we observe in the models referenced in the literature review (SUN, 21st CCLC, IHAD and Multnomah County Cradle to Career Initiative). To help partnerships reflect on their own development, Noam and Tillinger introduce the concept of the intermediary space, particular to after-school programs, which results in the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

creation of a safe place for the work of the adolescent – that is, learning and mastery, experimenting, forming an identity, solving problems and making choices. Intermediary refers to the fact that after-school environments typically do not belong to a single organization – rather, they require the coordination of multiple stakeholders, new methods of management and represent a new social space that is not the same as school or home. Creating such space depends upon partnership, and when these new entities come together, the positive qualities of each are heightened. A key challenge is to maintain the aspects of the activity which lead to the support of students’ competencies during the school day, making students more successful learners, while not becoming a strict extension of the school. “The intermediary aspect of after-school derives from often connecting to academic work without serving as a school, from taking aspects of family life (comfort, recreation) without serving as a family, etc.” (Noam, 2001, p. 7). While existing partnership frameworks (Barnett, Hall, Berg, & Camarena, 1999; Knapp, 1995) may be applicable to the after-school field in many ways, Noam (2004) explains that a model truly applicable to the field must recognize the unique social space after-school becomes. This new model must also take into account the kinds of challenges after-school partnerships face, including the struggle to commit dedicated staff to engage in in-depth collaborative work, finding and spending the time to engage in thoughtful planning, and recognizing the “inevitable differences in language, culture, status, worldviews, competitive dynamics, incentive and motivational structures, and bottom lines that may exist” amongst partnering organizations (Noam, 2004, p. 90).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Noam's typology. Noam (2004) identifies four types of intersection that apply to after-school partnerships. These are characterized by “1) discovering overlapping interests, or functional partnerships, 2) joining forces, or collaborative partnerships, 3) developing an inclusive system, or interconnected partnerships, and 4) changing all partners, or transformational partnerships” (p. 92). While each type generally builds on the others, Noam explains that programs and activities move within these types and frequently return to earlier levels and use different strategies to handle different tasks. Said in another way, “Crises and opportunities will bring out different types of partnering” (Noam, 2001, p. 10). Therefore, boundaries around the different types of partnership are not strictly drawn. And where partners intersect, they define a new space. This framework is, therefore, more concerned with those new intermediary spaces than each individual system that contributes to the intermediary spaces.

In the functional intersection, partners participate based on their own missions, and come together out of separate needs to implement programming and gain access to audiences (youth and families), funding, and settings (schools and communities). These arrangements typically lead to an intermediary space with separate program elements lacking real integration and a joint mission. Such a shallow connection between partners is prone to misunderstandings and other vulnerabilities; however, this type of partnership may also be ideal for some situations where high expectations among partners are not present.

The collaborative intersection creates a new intermediary space in which all partners have a strong voice, common operating procedures and mechanisms to resolve

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

disagreements are developed, and a new management team is placed into service. More engagement and give-and-take between partners is evident than in the functional intersection, and conflict management focused on making things work is central. This model, which strives for efficiency, does risk the creation of warm environments as well as arrangements which may not adequately represent the power and financial realities of partnering organizations. However, when thoughtful plans are established at the start of the partnership, apparently seamless structures that bridge school and after-school to support children can result.

The inclusive system of partnership goes beyond both the purely functional interest and the simple collaboration to a new level of intimacy amongst partners. These partnerships are characterized by a sense of caretaking that extends beyond the children and families out to the partner organizations themselves. Noam states that “this type, unlike the other two described thus far, truly begins to recognize and support the intermediary nature of the after-school space” (2004, p. 99). Some of the risks with this framework are that in the interest of inclusion and connectedness, staff and leaders may void addressing their differences. A lack of boundaries can also exist in the inclusive system of partnership. However, strong relations and a warm respectful atmosphere can also result, enabling this arrangement to work very effectively with after-school participants. The new entity, or intermediary space, that can result from these partnerships is tied by a shared gestalt that is bigger than each individual member or organization.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The transformational type of intersection is the most complex. It ultimately describes partnering less as a strategy and more as a new way of existing in the world that is concerned with developing together and working toward the common good rather than for the needs of the individual organizations (Noam, 2004). Interestingly, this echoes what culturally responsive practitioners would say about building community (Gay, 2000). Transformational partnerships inspire new ideas and rely on continuous innovation and learning. High levels of trust, strong relationship, and careful development of structures, policies and protocols create momentum and lessen the risks that issues of power may create in the other frameworks. Noam (2004) states that few programs currently reach this level of collaboration, however he predicts more will as the field of after-school matures.

In summary, the framework for this study draws on social capital theory, intersectionality theory, and uses a critical theory lens. And culturally responsive practice, a critical foundation for meeting the needs of today's increasingly diverse schools and classrooms, is called upon as it seems to be embedded in these three theories as well. Four programs (21st Century Community Learning Centers, I Have a Dream, Schools Uniting Neighborhoods, and Multnomah County Cradle to Career), each with a strong after-school component, provide a base for understanding how after-school activities engage with schools and to what end. Research about these programs and many others shows positive impacts for students who participate in after-school activities. However, because there is much that we do not yet know about the interface between schools and after-school activities, this study explores how one school uses resources and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

partners with community agencies to provide after-school activities. The study's theoretical framework serves as an important guide and helps ground the study in order to address the research questions being posed.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter 3 outlines the research methods of this single case study which uses a qualitative approach to explore, understand, and describe what takes place at the intersection of one K-8 school and its after-school activities. While there may or may not be structured linkages for bringing these interactive opportunities to schools, there is little research on how these processes operate in schools. At the core of this study is the search for the essential structures of this phenomenon and the attempt to understand those structures from participants in the intersection, including school leaders, classroom teachers, non-teaching staff, and parents. Exploring in depth examples from one school allowed the researcher to identify both the unique experiences and processes held in common among school personnel and parents vis-à-vis after-school activities. Because of the persistent achievement gap and considerable barriers to participation in extracurricular enrichment activities for disadvantaged students, particular attention was given to issues of access to after-school activities for disadvantaged students. Recognizing the potential benefits to youth of after-school activities, instances where social capital was created as a result of participation were also noted. And with regard to the intermediary space that is particular to after-school programs and activities and which depends upon partnerships for its creation, careful attention was given to the types of intersection that presented themselves in the study.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Research Questions

The research questions that will guide this study explore issues around after school activities and how they function in schools. The questions include a main question and three sub-questions. They are as follows:

Main:

What occurs in the intersection between schools and after-school activities?

Sub-questions:

- 1) a. How are linkages manifested in support of students of poverty and English language learners?
- b. How is social capital realized or not realized in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
- c. How are partnerships structured in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
- 2) What are the perspectives of administrators and key school personnel regarding the benefits of after-school activities?
- 3) What are the perspectives of parents regarding the benefits of after-school activities?

Research Approach

To this inquiry, I bring an epistemological philosophical assumption that emphasizes subjectivity, the importance of personal perspective and interpretation. I also bring a social constructivist worldview in which I accept that the basic generation of meaning is social and arises from interaction with a human community (Crotty, 1998). I

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

expect to learn by looking at participants' views of the phenomena at hand. According to Creswell, the social constructivist perspective dictates that:

The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. The questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons (Creswell, 2009, p. 8).

As the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 describes, there are studies looking at after-school activities from many points of view and with varying degrees of ability to describe outcomes. However, there is a gap in the research around how school personnel and parents experience this intersection with the school and after-school activities, as there is a lack of literature about the common thread or essence of this experience for these key stakeholders. So, as I seek to describe the complexity of the many variables inherent in the intersection of after-school activities and schools, I will use a qualitative case study design to answer my research questions. The method is useful for investigating a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context (Yin, 1994). Using interviews and focus groups conducted in their natural setting (the school), I will attempt to make sense of the phenomenon that occurs at the intersection between after-school activities and the school and understand the meanings people bring to it in their day to day, lived experience. Marshall and Rossman (2011) explain that qualitative methods have unique strengths in supporting research that is exploratory or descriptive, that accepts the value of context and setting, and that searches for a deeper understanding of the participant's lived experience of the phenomenon under study. In this study, a

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

qualitative design was appropriate because it did not seek specific laws of causation or precise predictions. Instead, it offered opportunities to consider and understand what happens in the intersection between a school and its after-school activities from the perspective of school personnel and parents. A qualitative design allowed me to investigate how these individuals made sense of their everyday interactions in their specific roles (Stake, 1995). Empirical methods, including interviews and focus groups, allowed me to describe both routine and novel moments in individuals' lives in an attempt to connect the parts and uncover the meaningful relationships that operate in the environment under study.

Case Study

According to Merriam (1998), case studies are used to “gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p. 19). The researcher engages in a case or multiple cases to draw a detailed picture of the case/s for others to understand. As Duff (2008) describes:

By concentrating on the behavior of one individual or a small number of individuals (or characteristics of sites), it is possible to conduct a very thorough analysis (a thick or rich description) of the case and to include triangulated perspectives from other participants or observers (p. 43).

Yin (1994) explains that case study research supports an investigation including a “‘how’ or ‘why’ question being asked about a set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (p. 9). “The case is an integrated system. The parts don’t have to be working well, the purposes may be irrational, but it is a system” (Stake, 1994, p. 2).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Guba and Lincoln (1981) state six important reasons for selecting the case study approach.

- First, it provides a “thick description” of the bounded system that is being researched.
- Second, the case study is ideal for the presentation of the grounded data that emerges from the context itself.
- Third, the case study is lifelike and holistic and credible to authentic participants in a given setting.
- Fourth, the case study simplifies the data and provides pertinent information in a focused format much like a short story.
- Fifth, case studies focus the reader’s attention and edify meanings with a well-integrated statement that points out the essentials (and their relations) and discards the remainder.
- Sixth, and most important, is that if the purpose of a case study is one of understanding, extension of experience and increase of conviction of that which is known then a case study approach is advantageous (p. 376).

Yin’s sixth point about the purpose of a case study being one of understanding and extension of experience resonates with this study which piloted a way to investigate the interactive space between after-school activities and schools. Ultimately, the hope of this study is to shed light on the understandings of school personnel and parents around after-school activities so that providers and practitioners may ultimately provide more

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

effective outreach resources and offer activities that meet the needs of all students. A case study approach is therefore, advantageous.

Recognition of potential disadvantages and problems in using the case study approach to a research study is important. Regarding case study research, Guba and Lincoln (1981) refer to " . . . unusual problems of ethics. An unethical case writer could so select from among available data that virtually anything he wished could be illustrated" (p. 378). To this end, I continually checked my own biases and maintain perspective by using multiple sources of data to help me understand the perceptions and beliefs of study participants. Guba and Lincoln also point to important questions about the validity and reliability of case studies and state that like other research techniques, they depend on the adequacy of the study components. They remind the researcher to ask: "Were the interviews reliably and validly conducted; was the content of the documents properly analyzed; do the conclusions of the case study rest upon data?" (1981, p. 37).

Case study research situated within the Closing the Achievement Gap study.

To explore my research questions, I performed a secondary analysis of data collected through a larger ongoing study conducted by Portland State University (PSU) Graduate School of Education faculty, Drs. Esperanza De La Vega, Moti Hara, and Patrick Burk, entitled "Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins & Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap" (CTAG). (De La Vega & Hara, 2011). Their study conducted interviews with school personnel (both teaching and non-teaching staff) and focus groups with parents about their perspectives on a wide range of issues. While the CTAG study offers much

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

data and many themes and potential areas of study, I focused specifically on the CTAG interview and focus group data that speak to school personnel and parent perspectives on after-school activities at one school. That is to say that rather than look at all of the CTAG data, much of which would be irrelevant to my topic, I sought out data to help me hone in on issues about after-school activities and community partnerships which were relevant to my topic and three research questions. For example, the CTAG study yielded some preliminary data that clusters into themes and codes such as community partnerships, wrap around services, home/school relations and school staff whose role is to provide a “link” between the school and the home. I analyzed these and other data from the CTAG study to explore, describe, and seek to understand the intersection of after-school activities and schools, from the perspective of the participants.

The role of the researcher. Since the summer of 2011, in partial fulfillment of requirements for my doctoral program, I have had the privilege of working with the CTAG research team on their “Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins & Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap” study. I was drawn to the study for many reasons, especially its exploration of social and community factors, which may impact student success. My own work of many years has been in the realm of out of school learning environments, such as children’s museums, a zoo, and for the last 10 years, in a university office whose mission is in part, to help connect the university to the K-12 education community and make relevant university resources available to students and teachers, whether within a classroom setting or without (such as a student internship, a researcher visiting the classroom, a graduate student helping review science fair projects, etc.). And so I am

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

deeply interested in social indicators such as participation in extracurricular activities. I am also very interested in the ways in which students come into contact with after-school resources and have some degree of concern about the barriers to participation in these activities experienced by disadvantaged students. In my own work, I have observed that parents with financial, education and employment resources often take on the job of connecting their children with opportunities such as participation in after-school activities. In many cases, those students whose parents do not have these resources are not offered the same opportunities to participate. While the CTAG data does not come from my “backyard” per se, I am keenly aware of my bias toward believing in the power of these experiences for students and the importance that all students have access to them. I am also aware of the highly political nature of schools as organizations. In this study, I have made every effort to put these biases aside to learn from school personnel and parents about their own perceptions of how these resources intersect with the school, what the pertinent issues are around these resources, and what the essential themes are in this particular environment. I bring a high level of sensitivity to the complexity of human interaction, consider myself an active, patient and thoughtful listener, and bring a deep respect for the perspectives of others to this work.

Setting. This study focuses on the CTAG data collected about Roby School*, a public K – 8 school in the Mann School District* with a student population of 460 students. Roby serves diverse students and families. “One-fourth (of Roby School students) speak a language other than English at home, and three-quarters have family

*pseudonyms are being used to insure confidentiality

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

incomes that qualify them for free or discounted school meals” (Portland Public Schools, 2011). Ethnicities in the following percentages are identified within the student population: African American 17.2%, Asian 24.6%, Hispanic 17.2%, Native American 2.0%, Pacific Islander 0.9%, White 27.2%, Multiple Races 10.9% (Portland Public Schools, 2012). Roby receives Title I funds, a federal program that provides supplemental funding to meet the needs of at-risk and low-income students. Twenty-five classrooms, with an average class size of 21.7 students, are served by highly qualified teachers (100%) who have an average of 11.9 years of teaching experience. Daily attendance averages 94% and the district has assigned Roby a stability index of 93.8%. Most Roby students (80%) live in the Roby neighborhood; 20% live outside of the Roby area.

Participants. Participants for the CTAG study, the source of the secondary data for this dissertation, include school leaders and administrators, teachers, and parents from 13 schools in Oregon. These participants and their schools were purposefully selected for the CTAG study. They were identified through the rigorous selection process put in place for the Closing the Achievement Gap awards by the Oregon Department of Education, a highly respected education entity. The schools represent 10 districts and include elementary, middle, high and K-8 schools.

Each school, including the case school for this research study, granted access to the PSU research team, which over the course of the past year, successfully built trusting relationships with study participants at these schools. The schools provided contact with a rich mix of people (administrators, teaching and non-teaching personnel and parents)

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

and roles (such as principal, community liaison, instructional coach, equity team member, special education teacher, ESL teacher, classroom teacher). This case study focuses on Roby School, which represents a typical inner-city Portland Public School, with a more in depth look. Data from Roby School include face-to-face interviews (with former principal, current principal, vice principal, instructional coach, ESL teacher, two community outreach specialists, 5th grade teacher, kindergarten teacher and 1st grade teacher) and focus groups (2 focus group conducted in English with English-speaking parents, 1 focus group conducted in Spanish with Spanish-speaking parents).

Table 2
Roby School Participants

Interviews	
(11)	Principal
	Former Principal
	Vice Principal
	Instructional Coach
	ESL Teacher
	Community Liaison
	5 th grade Teacher
	Kindergarten Teacher
	1 st grade Teacher
	Science Teacher
	SUN Coordinator
Focus Groups	
(8)	Spanish Focus Group 1 Father, 3 Mothers, 1 Grandmother (Hispanic)
	English Focus Group 3 Mothers (2 Euro-American & 1 Asian)

Informed consent. Because research has the potential for creating physical and psychological harm, treatment of study participants is the most important and fundamental issue that researchers confront (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). To that end,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

research ethics dictate that the principle of informed consent must be applied with rigor in every research setting. Agreement to participate in a study (only after being informed of the study purpose, procedures, risks, benefits and limits of confidentiality) must be secured before a person can participate in the research study. The CTAG study, from which my own study draws its data, has taken the following measures to insure informed consent is obtained from study participants:

Once phone or email contact has been made, the project will be explained to the participants. They will be invited to participate in the project and informed that their participation is completely voluntary. If they indicate a willingness to participate, a consent form will be emailed (or sent by regular mail if they don't have an email account) to them and a date will be set up to conduct the interview and/or for them to participate in a focus group. For copies of the informed consent forms, see Appendices A and B. At the interview or focus group time, the consent form will be reviewed once again, and signatures will be obtained from participants prior to data collection. For copies of the interview protocol and the focus group script, please see Appendices C and D (De La Vega & Hara, 2011).

Confidentiality. Ethical standards dictate that researchers must protect the confidentiality of study participants and data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). To that end, participants' identity should not be shared with anyone beyond the researcher and project staff. Working within the confines of the CTAG study in the execution of my study, I observed and maintained all aspects of confidentiality and anonymity which were

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

established for that study. For example, all electronic files (audio, documents, pictures) remain in storage on a secure research server at PSU. And, all electronic files are password protected and accessible only to the research team (De La Vega & Hara, 2011). Further, participant's actual names and school names were coded with anonymous identifiers. To maintain confidentiality, the list of those identifiers is kept on the secure research server and is only accessible to the co-principal investigators and the research team. To eliminate the risk of compromising secure information and in recognition of the sensitivity of the material and the situation, as other identifying characteristics surface throughout the research, anonymity will be maintained in a similar manner (De La Vega & Hara, 2011).

Data collection. As previously stated, I used secondary data from the CTAG study about one of the 13 award-winning schools mentioned above for my research. The CTAG data consist of: 1) artifacts (reports, newspaper articles, applications, and other documents), 2) semi-structured interviews, and 3) focus group sessions. All of the interviews and focus group sessions were tape-recorded and later transcribed. All identifying information was removed from the transcripts and participants and schools were given anonymous identifiers. The CTAG research team, which has been trained in these qualitative research methods and procedures, then coded the transcriptions. The quality of the data for the CTAG study, and secondarily for this dissertation, is assured (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) by the systematic adherence to the rigorous procedures in the data collection established by qualitative research experts as well as the ongoing dialogue and discussion among the research team to check consistency.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The CTAG interviews were all recorded using a Live Scribe recording pen, with cassette tape recordings and hand-written notes as back up. Triangulation, a mechanism used when “the researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p.439) can help to increase the trustworthiness of a research finding. To that end, the CTAG researchers conducted focus groups with parents, in addition to the multiple face-to-face interviews with school personnel, to study the phenomenon at hand. Further, to reduce inconsistencies among coders and ensure inter-coder reliability, the CTAG coding process is such that a minimum of two researchers code each transcript.

Artifacts. During the course of the CTAG study, various artifacts, such as reports, newspaper articles, applications, maps and other documents were collected. For example, Figure 1, Cradle to Career Process, is taken from a report providing “a baseline to measure future improvements and a framework for connections to be made along the cradle-to-career continuum” (Portland State University, 2010, p. 4). This figure speaks to in-school and out-of-school supports for students and highlights academic and social indicators of success. Other such artifacts that have relevance to my research questions about after-school activities were used to further describe and understand the phenomenon.

Interviews. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews comprise much of the secondary data that I analyzed for my study. These interviews were held at purposefully selected sites (those Oregon schools awarded the 2011 CTAG award from DOE) where school leaders, teaching personnel, non-teaching personnel and parents all agreed to serve

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

as study participants. Face-to-face interviews (typically one-on-one with one researcher and one school person, or two-on-one or two-on-two with two researchers and one or two school personnel) were held before, during or after the school day. The interviews were scheduled in advance and the interviewer(s) came prepared with a list of open-ended questions. This interview format was advantageous as it allowed participants to be in the comfort of their school/work setting and took place within the confines of the regular working day. This structure allowed the researcher to explore topics to help uncover the participants' views, but also respected the way the participant framed and structured their responses. In keeping with the fundamentals of qualitative research, this method of collecting data provides for the emic perspective; that is, it allows the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest to unfold, as opposed to that of the researcher, or the etic perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The interview also allows for immediate follow-up and clarification if needed. Interviews as a method of data collection also have limitations, however. Per Creswell (2009), "not all people are equally articulate and perceptive" and "the researcher's presence may bias responses" (p. 179). Without excellent listening skills on the part of the interviewer and the trust building on which intimate encounters depend, interview partners may not be comfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore. In the case of the CTAG study, researchers were highly experienced and in all cases, were welcomed at the schools and were able to genuinely convey the attitude that the participants' views were highly valuable.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Focus groups. CTAG focus group interviews took place at the schools, including Roby School, during the fall 2012 and consisted of 6 - 8 parents and one or two interviewers. The focus groups were conducted in English and Spanish or other languages. Strengths of focus group interviews are that they are socially oriented and bring participants into a situation that is more relaxed than a one-on-one interview. The method depends on the assumption that people form their opinions not in a vacuum, but as they learn about others' opinions and understandings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The highly flexible format also allows for exploring unanticipated issues as they arise in the discussion, adding depth to the process. Power dynamics, a lesser degree of control than in a face-to-face interview, lost time due to discussion of off-topic issues, great variability among groups, and various logistical problems can all create challenges to the focus group interview format (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). As with face-to-face interviews, these issues create the need for highly skilled facilitators such as those we find in the CTAG study.

Because this study seeks to explore the interaction between a school and after-school activities, the CTAG focus group data serve as an important source of information. The focus groups bring the voices of parents and community members who may provide extracurricular activity resources at the school to the forefront and provide a different perspective of the issues than the interviews with school personnel. In addition to questions about communication, school climate, closing the achievement gap, and parent involvement, questions focusing on parents' awareness of after-school activities, students' participation in after-school activities and the perceived need around after-

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

school activities were asked. These questions with a specific focus on after-school activities were analyzed for the study to better understand the perspective of parents, family members and the broader school community.

Timeframe for Study

To meet the internship requirement for my program, I joined the CTAG research team in summer 2011. My internship continued through spring 2012 after which I continued working with the project throughout the completion of my dissertation. The following table is a visual representation of the timeframe for the CTAG study which shows how my dissertation work fits within the larger study. “X” represents my participation and dissertation work.

Table 3
Timeframe for CTAG Study and Dissertation

	2011		2012			2013	
	Spring/Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring/Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring
Study design	X						
Initial interviews	X	X	X				
Follow up interviews		X	X	X			
Focus groups					X	X	
Research tasks (transcribing, coding)		X	X	X	X	X	X
Data analysis						X	X
Write up						X	X

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Data analysis. “Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 150). As is appropriate in qualitative studies, I used an interpretive strategy of analysis, especially when reviewing and examining themes and codes from the transcripts. According to Stake (1995), “... the interpretations of the researcher are likely to be emphasized more than the interpretations of those people studied, but the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (p. 12). To aid in this process, in case study research and subsequent analysis, the researcher sets aside all prejudgements by bracketing or suspending any preconceptions or learned feelings that she may have about the phenomenon, relying instead on intuition and universal structures to understand how the people being studied see things. Fischer (2009) explains:

The goals (of bracketing) are to check whether one is imposing meanings on the data and to re-look to see what other meanings might appear. The researcher repeatedly discovers what his or her assumptions and interpretive understandings were and reexamines them against emerging insights (Fischer, 2009, p. 584).

Because our own perspective can never be entirely ruled out, this mechanism of bracketing helps us identify and examine those perspectives and when necessary, we can knowingly shift our point of view.

CTAG coding is based on themes that emerged from a literature review focused on the Effective Schools movement (Mace-Matluck, 1987), and from the interview data itself. The Effective Schools research identifies 7 “correlates” or common traits and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

processes present in schools where high levels of student achievement appear consistently, regardless of the backgrounds of the children. These correlates (Clear School Mission, Frequent Monitoring, High Expectations, Home/School Relations, Instructional Leadership, Opportunities to Learn, and Safe and Orderly Schools), provided the initial “start” codes for the CTAG study. Additional codes were then developed based on issues that emerged from the data, either further elucidating one of the seven correlates, (such as Social Justice - Access [this code stems from the Opportunities to Learn correlate and refers to resources i.e. physical space, parent university, workshops, services]), or adding new themes, such as Policy (budget cuts) and Link (between home/school that is informal or a formal person or position). All of the CTAG study codes may be seen in the CTAG Code Book in Appendix G.

During the summer of 2012, I had the opportunity to learn the NVivo qualitative data analysis computer software program along with the CTAG research team. Then, I used the program to assist with data organization and analysis for this research study. “The particular value of CAQDAS (Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software) programs in qualitative data analysis is considered to be their usefulness for data management and supporting coding processes” (Wickham & Woods, 2005, p.688). These programs can also reduce the time required to analyze data. Disadvantages are that such programs may take a long time to learn, are costly, and can become outdated (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Having learned the NVivo program, however, I appreciated the organizational, searching, graphics and annotation features it offered as the data analysis took place.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In the winter of 2013, using the CTAG data that had been gathered, transcribed and coded for Roby School, I began the process of data organization, theme development and interpretation. Focusing on those aspects of the CTAG data that elucidated my topic and research questions, following commonly used analytic phases, I incorporated the steps of organizing the smaller data set again, immersion in this data, coding the data further, generating categories and themes, offering interpretations through analytic memos, searching for alternative understandings, and writing the report. Within each phase, I worked to reduce the data, bringing them into manageable chunks in an effort to interpret and bring meaning and insight to the words and actions of the study participants.

For this dissertation, several of the CTAG codes (see Appendix G) served as start codes to help me locate data that was relevant to my own topic and research questions. For example, L for “Link” (between home/school that is informal or a formal person/position), CP for “Community Partnership” (Grant funding, After-school activities such as tutoring or enrichment classes, etc.), WAS for “Wrap Around Schools” (Social/Health services), SJ-A for “Social Justice – Access to resources” (physical space, parent university, workshops, services]), SJ-R for “Social Justice – Recognizing your underserved students” and HS for “Home/School Relations” (School events, Parents/family welcomed, existence of parent room) all revealed data relevant to my topic and research questions. These data, derived from the CTAG study, could be considered the “raw data” for my research study.

The analysis progressed as I looked more closely at those data in terms of this study’s literature review and theoretical framework (using a lens of critical theory, social

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

capital theory and intersectionality theory). At this point, I also used content analysis, a qualitative research technique in which researchers avoid using preconceived categories, instead allowing the categories and names for categories to flow from the data (Krippendorff, 2013). Researchers immerse themselves in the data to allow new insights to emerge (Krippendorff, 2013). Informed by and consistent with the literature and theoretical framework, and with the help of content analysis, I derived new, more relevant codes for this case study (see Appendix I) including “Communication,” “Academics,” “Climate,” “Social Relationships,” “Services and Activities” and “Funding.” As the analysis continued, I saw that several of those codes were reoccurring and clustered under three broad themes: “Climate,” “Social Relationships,” and “Services and Activities.” Within these themes, I noticed what appeared to be reoccurring related elements. When I found elements with robust, vivid examples appearing at least three times among various data, I took note. “Sometimes, we will find significant meaning in a single instance, but usually the important meanings will come from reappearance over and over (of concepts or themes)” (Stake, 1995, p. 78). I also gained understanding through the use peer debriefing, or working with knowledgeable colleagues (from the CTAG study), to get reactions to the further coding and analytic memos, and ultimately to validate my interpretations and descriptions.

The themes and related elements provide the structure for this analysis. The results of the analysis will be shared in Chapter 4.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Study Approval Process

I began my internship with the CTAG research project in summer 2011, after the initial Human Subjects application for CTAG had been submitted and approved. My internship continued through spring 2012 after which I continued working with the project throughout the completion of my dissertation. In April 2012, I was added by name to the renewal protocol (De La Vega & Hara, 2012) for the CTAG study, dated 4/14/2012. Per the email exchange between Dr. De La Vega and the PSU Human Subjects office (E. De La Vega, personal communication, February 15, 2012) because I further analyzed questions posed in this IRB-approved study (see Appendix E and F, HSRRC # 111761 and Renewal of HSRRC # 111761) an individual IRB for this dissertation was not required.

In summary, this case study uses qualitative methods to analyze secondary data from the CTAG study. The data, coded first for the CTAG study, were derived from in person interviews with school personnel and parents, focus groups with parents and artifacts. Subsequently, a subset of the data were coded again for this study, and revealed the broad themes of “Climate,” “Social Relationships,” and “Services and Activities.” Concepts clustered under those broad themes, and reveal the details of this study’s findings. Chapter 4 will present those findings using the broad themes and related elements (see Table 3) to answer the study’s research questions.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter Four: Findings

As stated in Chapter 1, on the whole, low income and ELL students do not attain academic success at the same levels as their more advantaged and native English speaking peers. This well-documented disparity gives rise to the achievement gap that has been identified among students in our schools today. Of particular interest to this case study of one K-8 school which is closing the achievement gap is that research shows participation in after-school activities results in improvements in a variety of academic, developmental and social outcomes, and that they can make a difference for youth. Yet while there are many potential benefits to students (and to schools) of school-based after-school activities and the partnerships they create, there is much that we do not yet know about the interface between schools and after-school activities, and about access to these opportunities. This study explores that interface by looking at the perspectives of school personnel and parents on after-school activities and how those activities function in Roby School*.

To answer this study's research questions, we will explore in detail the broad themes and related elements revealed by the study's coding of the data and subsequent analysis and interpretation. Because the codes were derived from secondary data, and because of the intersectional nature of this project, the themes described in this chapter will answer the research questions holistically. The study's research questions are as follows:

*pseudonyms are being used for confidentiality

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Main:

What occurs in the intersection between schools and after-school activities?

Sub-questions:

- 1) a. How are linkages manifested in support of students of poverty and English language learners?
- b. How is social capital realized or not realized in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
- c. How are partnerships structured in the intersection between the school and after-school activities?
- 2) What are the perspectives of administrators and key school personnel regarding the benefits of after-school activities?
- 3) What are the perspectives of parents regarding the benefits of after-school activities?

Coded Data Reveal Themes

As discussed in Chapter 3, the CTAG study yielded multiple types of “raw” data including face to face interviews with school personnel, focus groups with parents, and artifacts. These data were coded with CTAG codes (see Appendix G), some of which led me to a smaller subset of the data which I coded further (see Appendix I) for this study. Through analysis of the coded data, three broad themes surfaced along with related elements which were consistent with the theoretical framework: “Climate,” “Social Relationships” and “Services and Activities.” As described in Table 3, each of those

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

themes revealed elements describing various aspects and characteristics of the larger theme.

Table 3

Coding Revealed Broad Themes and Related Elements

Climate elements are holistic in nature:

- Power of distributive leadership
- Welcoming environment
- Entire school community takes responsibility for students' success
- Our work is never done

Social Relationships elements describe how the people in this arena interact:

- All students are known by name
- Relationships among staff are key
- Parent engagement is key

Services and Activities elements describe specific programmatic characteristics:

- Barriers/access to participation
- Community driven
- Rich variety of inputs
- Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students

Specifically, data that were coded under the term “Climate” revealed holistic concepts including “Power of distributive leadership,” “Welcoming environment,” “Entire school community takes responsibility for students’ success” and “Our work is never done.” The code “Social relationships” refers to social interaction among students, relationships with adults or with peers, and social development in general and revealed the concepts of “All students are known by name,” “Relationships among staff are key” and “Parent engagement is key.” On a more granular level, “Services and Activities” refers to specific out of school services and activities provided to youth and revealed

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

concepts including “Barriers/access to participation,” “Community driven,” “Rich variety of inputs,” and “Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students.” Below, we explore these themes and elements in detail.

Climate

Data that were coded under the term “Climate” are related to the atmosphere or tone of the school. These data function in the affective domain and are expressed here as values or attitudes among school personnel.

Power of distributive leadership. Throughout the interviews with teachers and administrators, participants discussed the notion of a culture at Roby School that provides for, makes way for, or allows development of new opportunities for students. This aspect of school climate is described in the application for the CTAG award (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). Here, Roby School administrators describe a model of distributive leadership in which staff is encouraged and empowered to take on projects for which they see a need:

Our model is one of distributive leadership. Staff is empowered to take on leadership projects and to work alongside administration in the role of partner.

Teachers assume enthusiastic support from their administration, and so feel free to plan family gatherings for their grade level, oversee a school-wide play, or organize a talent show (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

This perspective is borne out by many examples of activities and projects beyond the requirements of the classroom that Roby School staff have taken on in support of their students.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In another quote from the former principal, he describes the importance at Roby School of distributive leadership, especially as it relates to his role as principal. He stated that he was not going to be “the single, like, conduit of all things,” and called this type of thinking “fallacious” thinking. He went on to say that “. . . it’s wrong and it’s unproductive and it causes a problem.” In his explanation of why this type of thinking was not productive, he emphasized that “. . . we’re doing this together . . . and I have a job and you have a job, and they’re not the same job, and I’m gonna teach you and you’re gonna teach me! And we’re gonna figure this out together to move forward.” In his belief about distributive leadership, he explained the process as something he does together with his staff. “And it’s not about me, it’s not! It’s really not. And it’s about everybody feeling like they have the authority and the power to work within the scope, you know, the parameters that are set . . .” As a leader, his role was to figure out how to help them feel good and get their work done in a way that “you know, maximizes their ability to get it done.” In a distributive leadership position, he would facilitate by “setting up systems to help that happen, like PLC’s, and giving people the, the freedom to do what they can do” (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011). Overall, we can see that his role is to facilitate and to create systems which allow others to work to their maximum effectiveness. And he downplays the possibility that as principal, he might deserve credit for the extent to which Roby School students are so fully engaged during their school day.

The notion of the power of distributive leadership was also expressed by staff, as evidenced by these comments from the Roby School community liaison:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

I'm a firm believer in incremental change where everybody has input and everybody's putting something in and it's a big team effort. And I think that's you know, what's happened over the years – we've just fed off each other – both teachers and administrators and non-teaching classified staff – and everybody's kind of fed off this growing success I think that perhaps is how it's come about and how we've had so much success (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This staff member describes his sense that all staff contribute and suggests it is at the heart of the success their students enjoy.

Another example of the power of distributive leadership and the kinds of activities that result is found in the former principal's story about a kindergarten teacher who invited families to work together on a mosaic that hangs in the front lobby of Roby School:

. . . When you look at that it's like . . . it's just such a nice expression of this concept, you know, of allowing people to, of helping people to connect to where their, their feeling is. And so the key people thing, I think, is, we have a lot more of those than we think, maybe. And so what happens is, often, our systems support peoples' ability, or, or, to, to figure out themselves what their, what, you know, what their thing is we have a great, positive relationship, and we, you know, and they feel valued because they are valued. And as a result, those kids, I think you're gonna see them start flying (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

In this case, the large, multi-colored mosaic just inside the front door of the school helps tell the story of how teachers and other staff are empowered to use their talents and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

abilities in such a way that they, as individuals, are highly valued. This in turn supports their students' opportunities for success.



Figure 2. Roby School mosaic (detail)

Further evidence of the power of distributive leadership is seen below in the former principal's description of a family event that Roby's instructional coach and community liaison created together. The staff took leadership in organizing the event and the principal only checked in. He was quite proud about how everyone came and participated – even though the event was “not contracted.” Even the secretary came and made cotton candy for everyone! While the event was a success, the former principal could not be there. He explained:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

. . . And I even couldn't be here [inaudible], which is not good, I'm not proud of that; it's not a good thing! But they, everybody did! You know, and it's not about me! You know, it's about community. And I'm still getting grief for not being there! So back to that whole concept of, like, it's not about me. It's about, you know, the, the community getting involved and feeling the power to do things in a way that's within the parameters of staying productive and fun and useful in some way (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

Here again, the notion that staff, teachers and families have a central role in developing opportunities for students and are empowered by leadership to do so is clearly stated. In this system using distributive leadership, decision-making and work are shared by several individuals rather than the traditional notion of leadership with one person at the head of the group.

The vice-principal speaks about the same event (Write Night) as an example of the initiative staff take to create opportunities for their students, the freedom they are given to do so, and the wonderful results for students and families. She reiterated what the former principal said, that:

. . . it's really about how you setup a system, how you setup a school that can just . . . Freedom you know, to do what they [inaudible]. First grade team did Math Night; they've done a Science Night, they've done all this because Second grade team did math night. Why? Because they wanted to do that and that was, that's the connection they made with families (P02, Interview, June 1, 2011).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Her description of the night included: “. . . it was all completely volunteer-based” and there was a focus on “the family connection,” and themes of “who am I” and “where am I from,” and a process where “everybody . . . went to their grade level classrooms and the teachers read different books.” She went on to describe an example of a book being read about recipes and how families enjoyed sharing cultural and literacy conversations and activities. “. . . The teacher read the book and then gave the example of a recipe that was her family recipe because she's, her mother's Thai. And then they sat around, I mean, and families were just huddled around writing stories and writing out recipes” (P02, Interview, June 1, 2011). This participant’s focus on the family connection as well as the initiative of the staff to implement the event speaks to the richness and depth of the experience for all involved. An event of this nature presents a foundation for both academic success and social development.

To learn specifically about how this notion of distributive leadership impacts after-school opportunities, I posed a question to one participant about whether or not school leadership gave any explicit messages to staff about taking initiative to create or be involved in after-school opportunities. She replied “Absolutely. Sure. Certainly. And when I started teaching the Saturday Academy classes, everybody was pretty darn happy because it is something we haven’t been able to offer before” (P10.04, Interview, January 18, 2013). Saturday Academy is an organization that provides after-school and weekend classes with hands-on, in-depth learning and problem solving opportunities for students and connects them with community experts as instructors and mentors.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Roby School became a SUN School in the fall of 2013, bringing many new after-school opportunities to the students. The participant quoted above has continued to teach Saturday Academy classes, incorporating them into the SUN model. However, even before it was a SUN School, Roby teachers were supported in their interest and encouraged to take on extra projects, including offering after-school opportunities.

On the other hand, one participant said that teachers can't realistically make more time to have a role in after-school opportunities. At the time of this interview, the school did not have a SUN program, but she explained that developing community-based opportunities would happen sometime in the future. Her belief was that it would be a next step once the school had its "ducks in a row academically" (P03, Interview, December 14, 2011). I asked if after-school activities would fit into that. She responded:

Mhmm. Yes. I mean right now there's just really not much (in the way of community activities). I think there's like a basketball team, there's a little bit going on and there's after-school care. But yeah there . . . we haven't blown that wide open. And that's a tricky one because that requires staffing and, you know, it's really not realistic that us teachers are going to provide that. So it would require bringing in, like becoming a SUN school or something like that (P03, Interview, December 14, 2011).

This participant was working in a half-time position, which may have influenced her perspective about teachers not having time to participate in after-school activities; nonetheless, her view is that teachers cannot provide the range of after-school activities

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

desired or needed at Roby School when they are focused on the academic aspects of services.

Welcoming environment is key. Another aspect of the Climate theme which surfaced over and over again was the notion of Roby School as a warm and welcoming environment for all students and families. Examples of this concept follow below. A parent who spoke during the Spanish Focus Group described the Roby School environment and pointed to the school secretary who was the first face she encountered at the school and was always smiling. For parents, this created a comfortable climate for approaching and interacting with the secretary and others, which led to good communication and the potential to develop relationships. The researcher also observed a welcoming climate at Roby School, as seen in this Field Note written just after the Grandparents and Special Friends Day celebration:

The principal got up and thanked the friends and family members present saying that ‘you are what helps us stay in school. Your presence here is special to the little people here!’ She invited the families to come and visit the new garden on their way to the classrooms after the children were dismissed. I left as the families disbursed into their children’s classrooms for the rest of the school day. Overall, the feeling was one of pride and admiration (for the children), a sense of community (with so many non-parents there) and a warm and welcoming climate” (Field Note, October 17, 2012).

The principal sets the tone for interactions on many levels and is directly responsible, in concert with her staff, for the welcoming climate described above.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

An interview with the Roby School community liaison yielded much relevant data addressing the importance of creating trust with, and a welcoming environment for, parents. For example, he spoke about how the ESL program has been “. . . very effective – very active in reaching out to parents.” He felt that it was important for the families to “. . . feel that their kids are really being taken care of . . . because you are creating a lot of trust with these people.” He went on to talk about how the school provides translations and that the marquee outside the school building reflects the community. He explained:

. . . we have such a diverse school community - people on staff and students and families – it’s just so important that everybody’s made to feel like this can be a home for them, or this can be a comfortable safe place for them – so I think that’s you know, kind of a – there are little things we are doing along the way, but I think that kind of bigger picture of making people feel welcome has been a big thing (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This participant mentions the rich diversity of Roby School and several concrete ways in which the school and ESL program work to welcome and include all families. For example, translating materials and providing translation services go a long way in creating an environment of safety and comfort for English language learning families.

Several Spanish-speaking parents who participated in a Focus Group also pointed out the welcoming environment at Roby School. About the secretary who is usually the “first face” she encounters at the school, one parent said:

The secretary here is always smiling. She doesn’t have time for bad . . . It is the people that work here that make the difference. Even if they can’t speak Spanish,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

they find a way to communicate. And, if you see someone trying, it is going to make a difference . . . Yes, I very much believe in secretaries! (M01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

In agreement, a grandparent went on to say that every morning, when she drops her granddaughter off at school, the music teacher is always there, “right in the middle of it all,” talking with students and greeting parents. “Yes, that makes one feel like they are family. Or, that they aren’t looked at as being weird . . . for those that can’t really speak English very well” (G01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012). Another parent concurred:

They make you feel like are a part of it all, right? Part of the learning of the children. Not like . . . I am the teacher and I know everything, and you are the parent and know nothing at all, right? So, it is about equality for all (M01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

These comments point to the special effort Roby School staff make to help Spanish speaking families feel welcome, especially in light of the fact that there are relatively few Spanish speaking staff members at the school.

The grandmother spoke again about how attentive the teachers at Roby School are and what that means to her:

I feel that every teacher that my granddaughter has had is very friendly and attentive if we need something. And that means a lot! I mean, it creates a great environment for the whole community: the students, the parents, and personnel (G01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Another participant appreciated the opportunity to volunteer at the school whenever her schedule permits. When asked what makes her feel welcome at the school, she replied: “That we are able to be with the students anytime. They tell us that we are welcome at whatever time we are available. We can come and be volunteers” (M03, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012). Similarly, another participant said: “The key is showing a welcome attitude, telling you that you are welcome whenever you want, and if you can’t come on a regular basis, then you are welcome to come two - one - or even half an hour, right?” (M01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012). It is meaningful to these parents that Roby School appreciates their busy lives and is highly flexible in terms of when they can participate in school activities as volunteers.

The former principal at Roby mentioned a PTA-sponsored carnival which was one of best attended events ever in the school’s history:

. . . we just had a PTA carnival, you know, the PTA now has twenty people, you know, regularly participating. Um, and it was one of the, I think it was the biggest event that we’ve ever had in this building. It was, it was amazing. And that’s not academic-focused. But the community threw it. And this is now a place where they feel like this is their thing; you know . . . (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

These statements point to the degree to which the Roby community does feel welcome and comfortable in the school and reflect the principal’s philosophy that indeed, Roby School belongs to the community.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

While the school is moving toward creating a welcoming environment, there is still work to be done. For example, during an interview with the Roby School instructional facilitator, there was a conversation about the degree of parent help in the classroom. The Instructional Facilitator explained that in the lower grades, even without a designated volunteer coordinator, teachers are very receptive to having parent help and indeed, many parents help out regularly, though “not in the way that you would see in a high-income school” (P03, Interview, December 14, 2011). She then commented that about one half of all parents in the Roby community are unemployed, and therefore ostensibly available to participate during the school day. As if to explain why those parents are not helping out in the classroom, she went on to identify an aspect of creating a welcoming environment for parents that has not taken place at Roby. “I think we just haven’t broken down that barrier. There’s language barriers, and there’s cultural barriers that influence that, and we have not rolled out the red carpet” (P03, Interview, December 14, 2011). Participants in the Spanish Focus Group agreed that for Latino families, the barriers they experience at Roby School are around limited Spanish language resources, such as the fact that most staff and teachers there do not speak Spanish (M03 & D01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012). From these individuals’ perspectives, there is clearly work to be done in terms of breaking down language and cultural barriers which may impede increased parent participation in school activities.

Entire school community takes responsibility for students’ success.

Throughout the CTAG interviews and focus groups, participants stated the belief that the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

entire school community shares responsibility for students' success. In this quote from a classroom teacher, that notion is eloquently stated:

. . . there are not just a few people here who want to see students succeed. It's everyone, and everyone you come into contact at this school is genuine.

Genuine about really wanting to help students be successful. And that's not just some students but everyone who is part of our community, our family . . . people feel strongly about that; they work really hard and that is . . . kinda contagious.

That's something I really notice . . . I think we have a group of people here who are willing to do whatever it takes to make sure our kids are happy and successful (P10.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This statement gives us a window into the "psyche" of the staff and highlights the extent to which they collectively accept responsibility for their students' success and goes on to broaden the notion of supporting student success to that of supporting the success of the school community.

There are many ways in which this philosophy is shared with the school community. One of the primary ways is the Family Bulletin, a school-produced document created by the Roby School principal, PTA, and others. The Family Bulletin includes announcements for the school community, a calendar of upcoming events, news from the school nurse, school counselor and PTA as well as announcements about SUN School activities. In it, the principal communicates the same notion of shared responsibility for the success of the students and their families in her appreciation for contributions to recent canned food drive: "Thank you to all who donated to our Food

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Drive. This will help countless families in our school” (Roby School Family Bulletin, December/January 2012, p. 1). This sentiment is echoed in the “PTA News” section of the Family Bulletin:

Together, we collected 1,404 items for the canned food drive. Mr. G.’s class won the competition for the K-3rd grade hall with 199 items and Mrs. W.’s class won for the 4th – 8th grade hall, with 189 items. These items will be given to the Sunshine Division, where they will be given to under privileged families (Roby School Family Bulletin, December/January 2012, p. 4).

Finally, in the “Monthly Coffee Connections” segment of the Family Bulletin, this brief description of the Coffee Connections program expresses the underlying belief that parents, by being engaged and informed about school issues, can also support the success of their children: “Monthly Coffee Connections are a great time for parents to get together and share ideas or concerns about how to best support our students” (Roby School Family Bulletin, December/January 2012, p. 4). This program that brings parents to the school every month will be described in more detail in the discussion about “Services and Activities” segment of this paper.

In the Field Note created after a visit to Roby School to recruit parents for the Focus Groups, researchers describe the principal expressing her appreciation for the generosity of the school, reinforcing what we read above in the Family Bulletin and the apparently deeply held view that all share responsibility for the health and success of the Roby community:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

P01.01 came out to greet us and chat with us. She mentioned that the donations were amazing and that they also gave money to the Sunshine Fund. The money was then turned into \$50 gift cards which are then given to needy families in their community. She seemed pleased and very proud about the generosity (Field Note, December 6, 2012, p.1).

This is a good example of how everyone in the Roby community comes together to support each other, and for the betterment of kids. Similarly, a Spanish speaking parent spoke about how the education of children is a team effort, with parents, teachers and students. She notes that “But it is all about team effort – including the parents that are aware (of how their children are doing in school), right? At least that is the case with most of the parents I know . . . ,” indicating how parents share in the responsibility, along with the school, for students’ success (M01, Spanish speaking Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

At Grandparents and Special Friends Day, a woman who described herself as a neighbor (but not a parent) told a story about a time when she felt compelled to contact Roby School with a safety concern. This is of particular note because this person who did not have children in the school felt a responsibility toward the Roby School students nonetheless, and reached out to the principal with her concerns:

The neighbor explained that she had a concern about the place where the bus stopped to pick up kids for school. She felt that the street was kind of dark and not well lit. She mentioned that it was kind of narrow and there wasn’t a lot of space for the bus on this road. She was concerned about the safety of

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

the kids. So, she called up the office of transportation and she was told that they could not do anything about it. So, she decided to call the school and said that she spoke with the principal. She told the principal that there was a better place to stop around the corner. That street was well lit and had more traffic, which meant that it wasn't isolated and could be safer for the kids. Then the neighbor asked me "and do you know what happened next?" She went on to tell me about how amazed she was that the principal actually got in her car, drove down to where she lived. By looking out her window she could see that the principal parked her car and walked up and down the street. She even went around the corner to the place the neighbor recommended as a better spot. The principal got back in her car and drove back to the school and called the transportation office. The neighbor explained to me that the principal then called her back and they spoke on the phone for about ½ hour! She said she had never seen anyone so responsive as this principal. She was happy that the principal was able to change the bus stop, based on the suggestion that she made and that now, she feels it is better for the kids in her neighborhood. She felt that this showed that they really cared (Field Note, October 17, 2012).

This story illustrates the extent to which the Roby School community expands beyond the school itself. Clearly this neighbor identified with and felt a part of the community enough to engage with the school at this level. She experienced a sense of belonging and

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

felt responsible for Roby students. And, she was received by school administrators very positively, and was valued for her interest and care.

In Roby School's CTAG application, within the discussion about distributive leadership, we learn about many ways in which students are responsible for important aspects of daily life at Roby School:

This model of distributive leadership extends to our students. Our middle school leadership team arranges events, helps plan field trips, helps with school-wide events, and organizes community service for other students. Safety patrol oversees the crossing of our students across our busy street and walks kindergarteners to the bus. Junior Coaches oversee playground games and facilitate conflict resolution on the yard. Our eighth graders do required community service in conjunction with the PTA. All these leadership opportunities more firmly invest our students in their school, and demonstrate to them their effectiveness. This confidence drives their success (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

Clearly assigning responsibility for these important aspects of school life to Roby School students is yet another way in which administrators and teachers communicate the widely shared belief that the entire community must be invested in and share the responsibility for students' success.

Our work is never done. In this last section focusing on aspects of climate, we see many expressions throughout the data of the belief that no matter what successes the school may achieve, there will always be more and important work to do. This can be

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

seen in the principal's metaphorical story about a road trip and the work that always lies ahead:

...I mean we're not even close to being there, you know? This is kinda like we've gotten out the map, we've looked, we said this is where we want to go, we gassed up the car, okay, we packed our bags, and yes, we remembered our toothbrush. But we, I mean it's almost like we haven't even necessarily started the car yet, and that's how it feels. I guess the validation is, okay! We picked the right car, we picked the right road, now we've got to move . . . (P01.01, Interview, November 28, 2011).

This image helps us understand the principal's notion of the extent to which Roby School is poised to achieve success for all students. She states that much of the groundwork has been laid; the team has chosen the proper vehicle(s) for the journey ahead and has put the necessary systems in place. Indeed the correct preparatory steps have been taken, but the bold step of launching the endeavor has not yet taken place. I believe that the tone of this comment is not a negative one; rather it describes the excitement and anticipation of knowing the school is headed in the right direction, but has not yet arrived at their "destination."

A classroom teacher echoes this sentiment quite clearly in her statement below:

... And something that is good too is that we are the first and P01.01 is first and the teachers are the first to say 'This is great!' But we feel we still have so much work to do, because we are not near where we want to be. I think that makes the school different because when the school receives . . . any accolades or . . . praise

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

from anyone, the first thing that comes out of most people's mouth is, 'Yes, but we still have a long way to go.' I think it is motivating (P10.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This comment helps us to see that the entire Roby community, including administrators, staff and teachers are of one mind about the work that lies ahead. Again, there is anticipation as the teacher commented it is "motivating." The perspective appears to be a very positive outlook.

Although the community liaison is in a unique position at the school, he also shares the belief with the principal and classroom teacher that to insure success for all students, and thereby close the achievement gap, the school's work is never done. He states:

. . . Going back full circle to really closing the achievement gap, you have to be intentional in looking at some of these issues and it's ongoing, you know. There's never just a fix. I mean, it's always ongoing, and I think that's what you've heard too – there is always more work we can be doing with students coming in and with staff and it's just a constant We can't just say that we've won this award, we've closed the achievement gap, we're done – we've engaged the community and our PTA is successful and our parents are engaged – that chapter is over. You know, it's never over. I mean it doesn't work that way (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

He then elaborates on a specific aspect of the work that lies ahead; that is the effort to be more inclusive of all of the Roby community:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

I think that we've made an effort to celebrate more of the holidays, to be more inclusive – just to bring people in – and then there is a still immense amount of work to be done – kind of one thing that we're always reminded of is that we've made huge strides but gosh, the better you do, the more you realize there is a lot more – that much more – that needs to be done (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

As might be expected from the community liaison perspective, these statements show his belief and expectation that parents, community and the school are equally involved in the work of closing the achievement gap. His views, along with the other participants' provide a holistic picture of how Roby School is not remaining stagnant but will continue to improve.

Social Relationships

Data that were coded under the term “Social Relationships” revealed three related elements including “All students are known by name,” “Relationships among staff are key” and “Parent engagement is key.”

All students are known by name. Roby School has high expectations for the success of all students which emerge from the foundational relationships that are built, in part, as a result of staff knowing their students' names. The CTAG application for Roby School states the critical importance of staff knowing each student by name.

At Roby School we are one in our vision. We expect each student to succeed.

This belief is fundamental to everything that we do. It drives our instruction, our discipline policies, our community building, and our relationships with our

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

students and one another. We can identify reasons why our students may struggle, but we have agreed as a staff that these reasons are not excuses. We never give up on a child. To make this vision a reality we must know our students well. This intention is clearly evidenced by Roby School's atmosphere and expectations. Our school is a safe, loving, and personal place where a high moral code is maintained, all students are known by name, and homes are visited and called regularly by teachers and administrators We know . . . that success at Roby does not guarantee future success, the best teaching in the world falls on deaf ears if the teacher and student do not have a partnership in their learning. Our teachers throw their hearts into their teaching, connecting with each student, and understanding that it is our school's culture and expectation that each child can and will learn (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

This powerful summary proclaims the critical importance of a close relationship between school administrators and teachers and their students. Describing the environment as a "personal place" where "teachers connect with each student" and stating that administrators and teachers literally know each student by name and make the time to visit homes paints the picture of a highly integrated and deeply harmonious, and even intimate setting.

About her appreciation for the opportunity the K-8 structure provides for teachers to know a student over many years, one participant said:

Roby School has been really good about taking full advantage of communication between upper and lower for example, Mrs. S. (a primary teacher) will have a

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

student, or will have had a student six years ago who is now in sixth grade or seventh grade and is moving up and just having that line of communication about the student's development over time is I think really helpful (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This sentiment is echoed by the Roby School former principal who speaks to the benefit the K-8 structure offers of knowing each student over many years and the extent to which he does know the students and their families, as opposed to his experience at a traditional middle school where he only interacted with students for one year:

. . . This is family. And, . . . as I'm reading off their names for graduation I'm like, I know this kid's family, I know their siblings, I know what's going on, I know who's, you know, having house trouble, or this thing or that thing...and that relationship allows us to tailor to them on an individual basis in a way that you just can't – I, I came out of a big middle school when I started – you just can't offer that. I had a hundred and eighty-six kids one year and you just can't build those relationships when they're there for one year, a hundred and eighty six kids is, you know, I didn't know 'em I wouldn't trade K-8, because what we get is relationship! (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

Juxtaposing the K-8 model with the traditional middle school model again reveals a benefit of K-8; that is the opportunity, according to the former principal, to know all students and their individual family situations very well.

During one interview, the CTAG researcher offered an example of teachers she met in a previous context who tried to get to know most of the students in the school, not

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

just those in their own classrooms. Asking if the interviewee had observed the same phenomenon among teachers at Roby School, the researcher suggested that “they are everyone’s kids, not just theirs.” The participant responded:

I feel like most teachers here do that. I think that is important for us because I might have an insight as a kindergarten teacher that the second grade teacher might want. And I honestly do care. It’s like Something is going on with a kid in second grade. I want to know what is going on. I had them in kindergarten. Is there something I can help you with? I know this family. I mean it is really important to have that relationship with all the kids (P10.02, Interview, January 5, 2012).

This quote from a classroom teacher echoes the administrator’s sentiments expressed in the CTAG application about the value of knowing students well and having a relationship with them, even those beyond the teacher’s immediate classroom. This teacher clearly feels that knowledge of a student over time is invaluable as the student progresses through the system.

Another example of the importance Roby School staff place on having close relationships with each student, and specifically regarding efforts to connect with ESL students and families, the community liaison described the ESL team as “. . . incredibly proactive in reaching out to teachers and me.” He went on to relate a specific case about two recently immigrated boys. The boys wanted to participate in basketball, however, it was “. . . a challenge because of transportation and registration fees.” He appreciated how the staff reached out to him to work on eliminating barriers. “. . . If we didn’t have

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

someone to make that connection, then you know, nothing would have happened. Or they just wouldn't have been given that opportunity. So I think of staff kind of making the extra, putting in the extra effort to make those connections . . . ” (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). In this case, the extra efforts of the ESL team and community liaison to connect with these two boys prevented the newcomers from missing an opportunity to participate in team sports. As recent immigrants, it is likely that the benefits of participation in this activity may have been valuable for them as they connected with others and were welcomed as a part of a school community.

Relationships among staff are key. Warm and caring relationships have many benefits and impact human behavior in positive ways. Participants spoke about both close relationships among Roby School personnel and the benefits those relationships have for the school community. For example, the former principal recalls a well-attended retirement event at Roby which reminded him of the deep connections among staff and teachers at the school:

I think that the staff is really, really well-connected and like, you know, we had this retirement thing last night that was so telling, you know. It was, it was packed! . . . Everybody's there! The EA's are there, the secretaries are there, the teachers are there and they're all friends and connected and they know about each other's families and . . . that kind of history . . .” (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

Given that school personnel spend lots of time at work, he believes that positive relationships “ . . . make the day-to-day kind of job tensions quieter and more relaxed in,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

in context it makes, puts them where they belong which is, you know, we can work through this and it's going to be fine, you know" (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011). In these comments, the former principal observes that positive relationships among school personnel make it possible for them to work through anything that may arise in the complex system that is their school. Indeed there are always crises of one sort or another when working with humans and complicated lives.

Within a conversation about the concept of distributive leadership, the former principal explained the importance of administrators and teachers earning each other's mutual trust:

. . . you earn that trust together! You know, they trust you, and you trust them.

And, and, but if you don't have that trust, you're back to this model which is, it's impossible to achieve complex things if you're standing at the door with a checkb-, you know, checklist, waiting for people to come in on time and, you know . . . They're professionals! Most of 'em have Masters degrees and are brilliant, wonderful people (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

This statement helps illustrate the importance for the former principal of strong relationships among staff whose shared goal is to be there for kids and to solve complex issues as they arise. It also points to the alternative, which he says forces leadership into the role of drill sergeant, monitoring for tardiness and checking attendance, instead of doing the real work.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The former principal also spoke about flexibility that results from the very respectful relationships he enjoys with staff and the ways in which he accommodates their various needs for altered schedules. For example:

. . . giving people the freedom to do what they can do. You know, we have several people here on slightly altered schedules, for example, with childcare or whatever. But the thing is, they're getting their work done, and their kids are learning. And, um, we're able to, you know, that's a respectful relationship. That's saying, yeah, you have a thing, and how are we going to get this done together (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

This statement suggests that without strong relationships among staff (and administration) and a shared vision of the work to be accomplished, the degree of flexibility the former principal describes above may not have been possible.

The community liaison speaks about the value of having consistent relationships among teachers, especially in the context of a K-8 school in which the same students will be present for many years. He stated:

. . . establishing relationships with other teachers and everyone involved in the school should be first and foremost – one of the most important things – you know I get back to this team . . . we've got to know who each other are, you know! So, personally I've always viewed that as incredibly important . . . I just want to know who people are and who I'll be working with – because something may come up – I just think when you're in a school, especially in the case when you're ideally going to have the same student for such a long time, you want to

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

have those connections with teachers who are both in the middle school and the grade school – I think that’s a huge advantage to a K-8 (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

Later in the same interview, the community liaison further emphasizes this point by highlighting the importance of working with different styles in order to be collaborative. He believes that strong relationships among all staff are a critical component for student success. His comment that “something may come up” suggests he sees a highly collaborative and connected staff as a safety net for young students who may experience any number of challenges along their K-8 education path.

A classroom teacher who speaks about the importance to her of close working relationships with fellow teachers mentions a Roby School teacher book club as one mechanism that supports the development of professional and respectful relationships with her colleagues:

This staff is great, works great . . . the book club is a good (way to develop) relationships. We always respect each other professionally. I worked with three different teachers while working first grade and I have enjoyed every partner that I worked with and it is a team I wanted to teach at this school because of the community of teachers and how they treated their staff and I think this is successful because of that . . . (P10.03, Interview, January 27, 2012).

This teacher was drawn to Roby School and clearly sees it as having a strong community of teachers who work collaboratively and respect each other. She considers that of great

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

value and appreciates some of the formal mechanisms that are in place to cultivate this aspect.

Parent engagement is key. One of the functions of the community liaison is to be a link between parents, community and schools. He shared about research on the impacts of parent engagement on student success: “. . . we can look at ‘Beyond the Bake Sale’ (Henderson, Johnson, Mapp & Davies, 2006) and different books and studies that look at how much parent engagement really does effect students at their schools . . . It’s about being – not just involving, but engaging people in the school community so they take ownership and they feel like it is theirs – so there is a real connection made between the parents, the students and the school. So – I’ve tried to do that in the years that I’ve been here at Roby” (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). He went on to describe how he does this in his role as community liaison. His relationships with parents and the community have direct and open communication so that often, he is asked “how the school is faring and how the students are succeeding?” His belief is that relationships are key. “. . . We have so much success, it’s because there is that connection among teachers and parents . . .” (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). In these statements, the community liaison draws the conclusion that Roby’s success with closing the achievement gap is directly related to the strong connection among teachers and parents. He also distinguishes between involvement and engagement, insinuating that of the two, engagement is the more powerful tool.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The community liaison's perspective about engagement, as an indicator of a deeper, more impactful relationship than involvement, reminds me of Ferlazzo's (2011) work in this area:

To create the kinds of school-family partnerships that raise student achievement, improve local communities, and increase public support, we need to understand the difference between family involvement and family engagement. One of the dictionary definitions of involve is to enfold or envelope, whereas one of the meanings of engage is to come together and interlock. Thus, involvement implies doing to; in contrast, engagement implies doing with (Ferlazzo, 2011, p. 10).

I believe from the community liaison's perspective, engagement is indicative of a deeper, more impactful relationship than involvement.

The community liaison makes a case for all members of the school community to reach out to parents. In the interview, he stated several times that ". . . it can't just be me." Much like the principal's perspective on shared leadership, the community liaison believes that ". . . it's not just a program where I'm coming in and you know, reaching out to parents solo. It has to be everybody" (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). He sees his role at the school as both the formal connection between parents, community and school, and as the "cheerleader" whose job is to remind staff and teachers of the importance of engaging parents and supporting community events.

A first grade teacher talked about monthly special events that she and her team developed as a means to engage families. She explained:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

I think that (parent engagement) is the hard part. Last year, the first grade team tried really hard to build a relationship with the families. I can't speak much to the other teachers - I am not familiar with that We had three first grade teachers last year and we promised to dedicated one night a month to Family Nights. We had a December Polar Express Night and had 70% of our kids and families. This year we did it again and combined with the kindergarten as we are trying to build a relationship with young families and have them stay in the community. 'Cause hopefully they will build relationships with the (other) families. And we did a Reading Night, a Math Night, a Science Night. So we have five nights here that we . . . one night a month. It was really successful. I think our lowest number was 30% of our population. The kids look forward to it. I remember the Math Night, one of the parents that I rarely saw who was not really connected came up to me after and said, 'I really had fun and it really made a lot of help to see how you showed my daughter to play this game' (P10.03, January 27, 2012).

While she describes parent engagement as the "hardest part," this teacher and her colleagues have developed a mechanism that seems to work. Drawing up to 70% of families each month, Family Nights are both fun for the students and helpful for the parents in terms of demonstrating ways to play and enjoy academic activities. The teacher also suggests that providing these opportunities for parent engagement when students are very young may be a way to keep families in the Roby School community.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The community liaison observed that there is a “high level of visibility of parents in the school – not just those who are picking up their students before or after school, but who are involved in the classrooms, they are helping out teachers, are just active in the school . . . ” and stated that “We have really established that parents can find their place here” (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). This perspective is echoed by a fifth grade teacher who spoke about not having seen the level of parent engagement that she sees at Roby School in other schools:

I know this is the first school that I have been at . . . let me step back and think about this . . . This might be the first school I have been at, if it happened before it was rare. That I have parents in the building very often and it is not a bad thing it is a very very good thing. This is the first year where I have parents working in my classroom. I know in other places that is not uncommon but I think at Title I schools that . . . there are so many things going on that it doesn’t happen very often so when I see my parents a lot . . . this is a good . . . and I know that (P10.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

She also added that kindergarten home visits contribute to the relationship building between teachers and parents in the Roby School community. In other schools with large populations of high poverty students, participants noticed parents in the building when things were not going well with their children. In contrast, at Roby School, parents are in the school building regularly, helping and working in the classroom. The same fifth grade teacher summed up her thinking about the importance of family engagement when she said that “. . . it is waaay too challenging of a job for one person and it takes everyone

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

in that child's life to help them . . . ” (P10.01, Interview, January 5, 2012). This statement indicates the teacher's appreciation for parents in the school, and acknowledges her belief that the entire community is needed to support a child's success.

When exploring how parent engagement at Roby School is encouraged, we can look at the ways in which the school communicates with families as an indicator. Strong communications result in strong relationships, which facilitate interaction. Field (2003) explained that:

Interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric. A sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks (and the relationships of trust and tolerance that can be involved) can, it is argued, bring great benefits to people (p. 1-2).

The marquee in the front of the school building is one way Roby School reaches out to the community and communicates with them. A parent spoke during a Focus Group session about how effective this means of communication is for her:

I have to say . . . I watch marquees and there is always something (posted on the Roby School marquee) and it seems like I noticed that even before (my daughter started school here). When I would drive by and think 'prison yard school' but then look at all that stuff on their board! Even that . . . it seemed like they were on the higher end of things (Focus Group, December 6, 2012).

Initially, this participant expressed concern that the appearance of the school from the outside, in comparison to other schools her daughter may have attended, reminded her of a "prison yard school." Roby is an older school, dating from the 1960's. The building is

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

a low, square structure, unadorned and with minimal landscaping. Perhaps these elements contributed to the participant's impression of a "prison yard school." Realizing, in fact, how positive and strong (and unlike a "prison yard school") Roby School has turned out to be, she went on to remark about the many school activities noted on the marquee, and how that indicated to her that Roby School was "on the higher end of things."

Services and Activities

Data that were coded under the term "Services and Activities" revealed related elements including "Barriers/access to participation," "Community driven is key," "Rich variety of inputs," and "Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students."

Barriers/access to participation. In a focus group conversation, a parent explains that she expected to encounter barriers around receiving accommodations for her special needs son, which ultimately did not occur. When asked about barriers they might have experienced, she reflected on others first: ". . . because of the diversity, they come across language and cultural barriers." She shared about her own experience:

I am trying to think what we did. I am thinking of the process with my son and getting in and getting diagnosed and waiting to be screwed if not diagnosed . . . and it was the opposite and they made the accommodations that he needed and they didn't have the diagnosis. There were times that I thought there would be barriers and there hasn't . . ." (Parent, Focus group, December 6, 2012, 2:30).

While she believes that families of diversity do experience language and cultural barriers she seems surprised that her family did not experience barriers when her son required

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

accommodations. Thinking back, she is unable to recall a time when there were barriers for her family at Roby School.

On the other hand, a 7th grade teacher describes a barrier for older students to participation in after-school activities that she has observed. That is, the necessity of caring for younger siblings after school:

. . . And the other piece is a lot of these kids have a responsibility to younger siblings. Like there's a girl in 7th grade who I was trying to connect with and um it's clear to all of us that she is really a primary caretaker for her younger sister and it's a problematic role with the parents. She argues a lot, and I was thinking 'I really want her to get into some stuff' – I grew up taking care of younger sibs, so I asked her about it and she said, 'I just don't have a lot of free time.' And I asked her, 'You have a lot of responsibility, don't you?' She said 'Yeah.' I said 'Let's try to figure out how you can – let's work with the SUN coordinator so that by spring, there's something you can do (after school)' . . . (Interview, P10.04, January 18, 2013).

In another example, she describes:

. . . we had a little corner in the Lego class where a boy came for about 6 weeks – he had 2 little brothers – we had Lego in the corner with the brothers – and his mom would be texting him and he walks them home– it just got to be too much for him. To have to juggle. So that's a real barrier (Interview, P10.04, January 18, 2013).

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The teacher refers to the importance for students of “doing fun stuff” and her responsibility to help students access those opportunities. She suggests working with the SUN School coordinator, to figure out a way to accommodate the younger siblings so that the older sibling (the 7th grade girl) can participate. The teacher empathetically recalls her own experience as a young person, when she had responsibility for younger siblings. Her understanding and compassion yields her belief that a balance is needed for these older students.

When asked about program costs, the SUN School coordinator explained that all SUN activities are free. This financial arrangement assures that the activities are affordable, and therefore financially accessible, for all families. When asked about the program’s capacity to serve all families however, the SUN coordinator described a barrier to participation. She explained: “156 students signed up total; um I think 10 were on waitlist. So 166 signed up – for 156, I managed to find at least one day that they could participate and that was a bear of a process. I’m still putting my systems in place” (P08.02, January 11, 2013). The program had just launched its first full session and the coordinator expressed her hope that capacity will grow.

Community driven is key. The notion that community input is of great value to Roby School came up in many aspects of the data. For example, in the field note below, the researcher describes the current principal’s comments at Grandparents and Special Friends Day about the new school garden, which was funded by and created by an outside agency:

P01.01 started the program by sharing about the vision they’ve had for a while to

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

have a school garden. She then told about the process of getting some volunteers, some donated material, and how the project became a reality very quickly. It seemed that the school was ‘chosen’ to be the recipient of the materials and labor for the garden by an outside agency and that Leslie was surprised by how quickly it came together. As she was talking about the garden project you could tell that she was emotionally touched because of her voice and way she paused in her speaking. She explained that this was only the beginning and that they hope to build a covered area where they would have a small shed and space for outdoor classes – even in the rain! The next area she wants to focus on is the playground. She said that they want to ‘expand our playground because we’re expanding’ She went to explain what children do on the playground is a ‘part of growing and learning too! (Field note, October 17, 2012).

The principal’s comments show that she values the opportunities for growing and learning that the garden and the playground provide for students. The contributions of the community to bring and improve these resources to Roby School are indeed important.

In an interview with the former principal, he describes the tremendous extent of community involvement and input at Roby School:

And honestly, we’re at a place now where . . . there are major events happening all the time. I mean, we have Friday night movie night; I haven’t been to one of those in ages. We do Second Saturdays where, every second Saturday of the month – we’ve actually ended up doing it quarterly – but every second Saturday

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

of the month volunteers come, and they work on a clean-up project around the school, so they'll weed, or paint, or this . . . and they, they painted the entire building. Um, we, you know, we [inaudible] . . . the tree, the ceramic that's out front was done on a Second Saturday. There were screens on every window in the building and they were the old, metal, you know, specially made metal ones, and we took 'em down and cleaned all the windows. And it was like amazing! So, all of that stuff is just community-driven. You know, people feeling like the work that they're doing is, actually matters, and is important, and that they have the ability to actually do it (Interview, P01.02, June 15, 2011).

The former principal expresses his amazement and appreciation for the multitude of activities community volunteers do on behalf of Roby School, and understands that this process of giving back is mutually beneficial to the volunteers as well as the school.

While the school has Vietnamese and Spanish speaking staff that help with translation on a day-to-day basis, there are also bilingual parent volunteers who come forward to help out in meetings. This support from the community is invaluable:

. . . Usually what ends up happening is we'll have some bilingual parents who will help us do that and it's kind of a double-edged sword. You know, I feel like it's my responsibility and obligation to offer it; but the flip side is if the parent is connecting with another parent, there's a real power and positive thing there . . . (Interview, P01.02, June 15, 2011).

In this statement from the former principal, we see that he does not feel the school provides the level of translation services they should. However, in acknowledging that

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

some bilingual parents help translate at school events, he also understands the power of parents helping each other and connecting with each other.

A classroom teacher describes yet another way that community members lend their support for Roby School:

The day before we had Martin Luther King Day and a parent from the community was really concerned about how we handle Martin Luther King so he came in and wanted to try something. So he came in and did three separate assemblies. And every student did their own dream and the whole school was covered in clouds of dreams celebrating Martin Luther King. I think those kinds of things are important (Interview, P10.03, January 27, 2012).

Here, the teacher, and clearly the school, valued and welcomed the initiative of this parent to host assemblies in honor of Martin Luther King Day. And the beautiful image of the school covered in clouds of dreams from every student is poignant for this classroom teacher.

Rich variety of inputs. While the literature (McCord & Ellerson, 2009) points to reducing extracurricular activities as a common response to tight budgets, we see evidence that Roby School has gone to great lengths not to do so. For example, the principal spoke about her decision to fund the community liaison position with limited dollars when AmeriCorps funding went away: “. . . I could have put the money somewhere else, but it was such an important role” (P01.01, Interview, November 28, 2011). Clearly, she sees that the opportunity to offer these after-school experiences is critical for her students who are almost all eligible for free and reduced lunch and live in

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

poverty, and will make sacrifices in other areas to be able to provide the resources for the liaison to continue working with his students and families. Further, we know that there are some costs incurred by schools to participate in the SUN School program, however, Roby School administrators felt the benefits of bringing these extracurricular resources and wrap around services to their school outweighed any financial challenges those added costs would create.

Deferred building maintenance is also cited (McCord & Ellerson, 2009) as an inevitable result of financial challenges and is seen as a deterrent to delivering essential services. However, in the case of Roby School, this perspective was never expressed. In fact, the opposite seemed to be the norm. For example, while an updated gymnasium would certainly benefit students in many ways, there was not one mention in all of the Roby School data about their older facility hampering activities. On the contrary, there are many athletic offerings including gym class for all students and several extracurricular sports leagues resulting from partnerships with the parks and recreation department and volunteer parent coaches (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013). To this point, researchers observed a well-attended basketball game being played in the gym one evening after hosting focus group sessions. Furthermore, the school library has a “lovely Mac lab – with very updated computers” (Field Note, December 6, 2012) and the school enjoys its new garden which adds a dynamic new curriculum component - developed, built, and paid for by community volunteers.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



Figure 3. Roby School garden.

So while the literature says that tight funding and these sorts of stresses typically negatively impact student success, especially for more vulnerable populations such as low income and ELL students (Rouse & Fantuzzo, 2009), they have not prevented Roby School from continuing to build dynamic new resources and provide services which support student success.

In his description of another community partnership with a non-profit organization called Play Works, the former principal explains the value of physical activity enrichment for bolstering academics. Formerly, some of the funding for this partnership was provided by the district's central office. Even though that support is now gone, Roby School leadership are committed to finding other funds to pay for these

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

services. Play Works provides movement and activity components, such as coordinated activities at recess and after-school sports opportunities, through a much-appreciated athletic instructor named Coach Dunn:

But Coach Dunn comes for the, every day, all day. And he does classroom, uh, Game Time is what they call it. And I ask every teacher to have at least three movement breaks scheduled during their day. And we did Yoga my first year here. Um, and Coach Dunn does, when I say Yoga, you know, it'll be like...this is four minutes, you know. This is not a, a big thing. But the data's clear on the instruction. You need to move 'em. And so they'll do like the Volcano Grab and they'll stand up and they'll do something. He's hilarious, funny, wonderful guy. They all love him. So when he comes, everybody's like really excited. And he schedules that for every teacher. And then, um, they do lunch, uh, recess he coordinates, and they run a series of games. And he teaches kids how to participate and how to, you know, do this stuff. And most of it's optional, but as a result, things like referrals and fussing around at lunch and kids standing around not doing anything at the recess totally change. And he runs an after-school exercise thing (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011).

This passage illustrates again the commitment to finding enrichment resources for Roby students, in spite of the difficult budget climate and lack of financial resources that permeate the school system. It also highlights how the intersection of community partnerships with schools can impact the educational experience of students.

In the Roby School CTAG application, which was written before Roby became a

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

SUN School, we see again the value placed on activities which enhance the curriculum:

. . . we have expanded and solidified the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) college readiness program for our 6th – 8th grades. Last year, 100% of the AVID students at our feeder high school went on to college, nearly all of them funded by scholarships. Other programs that greatly enhance our community and curriculum are Playworks, a structured play and study program, a homework club run by staff and volunteers, classes in music, dance, and art, and sports as well as hobby clubs. This effort is notable as we are not a Sun School – these offerings are a product of our strong staff and our community’s determination to engage our students in many kinds of learning (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

This statement is a clear indication of the importance Roby leadership places on providing a rich variety of inputs for their students and the willingness of the community to partner with the school.

To the delight of the school community, in fall 2012, Roby School became a SUN School. With that designation, an even richer variety of opportunities became available to the Roby community than ever before. The new Sun School coordinator describes some of the initial enrichment pieces she is putting in place as well as the importance of having positive relationships and communication with parents. “A big piece of it is, one of our focuses is getting more community involvement. Parent classes, even just like being able to interact more with parents when they’re off of work, um, so really being able to connect with families in this community more than we’ve been able to, also

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

offering those enrichment classes after school . . . ” She went on to explain that they are offering “four different science classes that are really hands on – interesting science classes, every SUN class offers 30 minutes of homework and reading support, so they’ll do some afterschool reading every time they meet.” For the older students, the SUN program offers an intensive tutoring service specialized for kids who are “referred.” The SUN program also reaches out and offers “. . . a safety community class that will meet here 3 times – I think it is Safer Communities for Kids, um, just talking about safety, anti-bullying and then what parents can do to prevent child abuse. And I’m offering a yoga class for the community” (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013). Roby’s new SUN School coordinator is funded by a community agency called IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization). She describes how the SUN program connects families with social services:

. . . we also do connect families with social services too – so like we have someone who works at IRCO who does utilities assistance, can connect the families with them, getting the dental care, vision, rental assistance, all of those things would be another part of what we offer. And also then there’s the youth health insurance, how to sign up kids for that. One of our strengths there is that from talking to the nurse here, I guess most of our kids are already insured, but the one population they have a hard time insuring is usually the Vietnamese population for some reason, and she said the reason for that is that many of them are small business owners and the paperwork is just so insane – um, plus there’s the added language barrier there, so one of the ways IRCO helps is we have

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

people working in that program who speak practically every language in existence – I mean we have some of the African languages and then we have Vietnamese, and you know, Cantonese and Mandarin, and so...it's my job to help families know what is out there and help connect them (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013).

This highly engaged partnership takes many aspects of families' lives into consideration and provides resources to support them. Access to the array of support services such as those described above impacts kids and families very directly, providing for their basic needs and helping them navigate multiple complex systems. These wrap-around supports may also help students overcome barriers to learning and improve their academic or educational experience.

A 7th grade science teacher offers an exciting variety of science classes after school, through a partnership with an organization called Saturday Academy. Partnering with this organization allows Roby School to widen the scope of the classes they can offer:

Saturday Academy had been working on a planning grant from NASA and they contacted me and said, 'Well, what we got was this afterschool partnership grant – would you like to do that here (at Roby)?' So, we're in our 5th term and most of the classes have been focused at 6-8. Last term we did a 5-6 'cause I had the 7-8 do Robotics and ... the Saturday Academy piece is after school – one free Saturday Academy Class, free to the school and the kids, and so I helped select

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

the course, recruit, we had starting this fall an Aerodynamics, then in the winter a Marine Biology, spring a Microbiology, all 6-8, then the Lego Robotics, and we just started a Web Design class this week. And so now that there's SUN, that just folds into the SUN school offerings. And then there's one more class in the spring – I'm hoping Gamemaker, 'cause they really want to do that – so that's a piece I helped with (P10.04, Interview, January 18, 2013).

These examples describe a very rich environment for Roby School students, and illustrate ways in which school leadership, teachers and staff all take pride in helping to broaden the experiences available to their students. When the researcher observed that Roby teachers are highly responsive to their students' academic needs, one classroom teacher noted that many teachers stay late to offer homework help after school. She said, "That's right. And my colleagues do as well. And it's good, 'cause – I'd say we serve, even before SUN, I'd say at least anywhere between 10 and 20 kids a week, who are taking advantage of having teacher contact time after school" (P10.04, Interview, January 18, 2013). Opportunities for partnership are also welcomed and the community surrounding Roby School is engaged in supporting the success of their students.

Roby School has an important partnership with the Big Apple Family Life Center* to provide services for families needing before-school and after-school day care.

*pseudonyms are being used to insure confidentiality

Their fee-based program takes place in the school cafeteria and serves primarily students in grades K-5. The Big Apple's program components are not connected to those of the school, and the two organizations do not share true integration or a joint mission. The

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

collaboration is of a functional nature only, making programming possible for families who need child care, gaining access to paying families for the Big Apple, and gaining access to the Roby School facility during hours it is not in use. This partnership serves an important function for the Roby community, but does not engage with the school beyond this point. It requires relatively low expectations among the partners yet serves them effectively. As an illustration, a participant in the Spanish Focus Group spoke specifically about how the Big Apple program served her need for reliable and consistent after-school care:

I was waiting for the SUN program for a long time, but it wasn't available, right? . . . That is why I have always had her enrolled at Big Apple, because I am not able to pick her up right after school . . . I then heard about the (free) SUN program, but at the same time, I realized I wasn't able to pull my daughter out from Big Apple, because the SUN program is not a childcare. It is more like a program to assist students (M01, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

In this case, the parent opted for the fee-based program because it met her need for consistent after-school care. She went on to explain that she was still able to help her third grade daughter with homework because the material is relatively simple. However, she implied that in future years, due to language barriers, she may not be able to help her daughter with homework, and that at that time, she would consider enrolling her in the SUN program. But for the present, reliable childcare, like that provided by Roby' School's collaborative partner, Big Apple, was the most important need, and she was willing to pay for it.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The partnership with Playworks, a national non-profit organization, and Roby School, is an example of a collaborative partnership. As such, the two entities have designed structures that bridge the school day and after-school to support students seamlessly:

Playworks' full-time, direct service model integrates the physical, social, and emotional aspects of play into the school day . . . Adult 'coaches' become part of the school community, providing organized play and physical activity through the five components of the Playworks program: they organize games and activities during recess, provide individual class game times and run a leadership development program during school hours. They also provide homework support and physical activity activities as well as developmental sports leagues during non-school hours (Playworks, n.d.).

In this relationship, the two organizations come together to support students, developing far-reaching and innovative goals to bridge the social and physical development and academic achievement of children.

Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students. The community liaison speaks very directly to making an extra effort to engage students who are new to this country or to the school. He emphasizes the need to establish relationships and insure those students are comfortable with and plugged into after-school and other opportunities.

. . . You really do have to put in extra effort to make sure that those kids who are recently immigrated, or even are just new to the school, you know the students

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

who have moved across town to a new school – I think about that as kind of a culture shock, or a localized immigration – new students, a whole new set of teachers, I think the schools that are really reaching out and flagging those kids for everybody – so we know – we need to establish relationships, we know to get them involved with community activities, extended day stuff so that when a person comes in, we try to make sure that they're up to date on what's going on in the school so it's not all you know, so overwhelming – and the benefit is that we have a lot going on, you know, and so we have a lot to share. It's just, you know, again, we have to be on top of it and make sure we're communicating . . .

(P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

He emphasizes the critical role of communication and suggests that it may avert the tendency for these populations to feel overwhelmed with information in a school setting.

In these quotes from the new SUN School coordinator, we see further evidence in the after-school activities of many efforts to support students and families learning English:

. . . one of the para-educators speaks Vietnamese fluently so she does the homework help. She's in the ESL room during the day, so she has been great about getting those kids plugged into that extra homework help (after school) and also invaluable for communicating with the Vietnamese community and getting those families to feel comfortable with the after-school. . . . at this time, like for our registration session, I'll have our community liaisons for the Hispanic and Vietnamese communities, and on the flyers, made sure to say 'Interpreters will

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

be available, at registration to help with paperwork' . . . So they were here and that was really helpful, cause they were able to explain and answer a lot of the questions that parents and families had . . . (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013).

This quote also reminds us of the strong emphasis Roby School places on insuring that all families feel comfortable in the school and that students who may be struggling with English or whose parents may not speak English are bolstered with homework and tutoring help in their native languages. I also believe the new SUN school coordinator's willingness to sit in on the first CTAG focus group session and to "hear" what parents might want in the way of programming, was another example of putting extra effort into the ESL community's needs.

A classroom teacher describes another example of outreach to linguistically diverse students in her remarks about a former Roby student who has come back to work with students after-school:

Mr. K. is a young Vietnamese man in his 20's. He went to Roby School, got his BA at PSU, might have been in the TRIO program, now does a weekly college readiness afterschool program at Roby. This is his second year – somebody else did it before, so there's been a long standing relationship with TRIO - and the kids really like it, in fact – he had so many 6 -7 - 8 graders, he had to split it into 3 groups – fantastic! (P10.04, Interview, January 18, 2013).

The federally funded TRIO programs serve low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs (U.S. Department of Education). In this case, Roby welcomes a returning alumni student who is Vietnamese to work with ESL middle schoolers on college readiness skills. The opportunity to spend time and learn important skills with this successful role model from their own community is especially valuable, and clearly enjoyable, for Roby's Vietnamese middle schoolers.

The former principal speaks about the benefits of two programs that support potentially struggling Roby School students – the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) college-readiness program and Caldera, a program serving underserved youth through art and environmental activities. He suggests that students are gaining skills from these activities that they may not get at home, such as: “. . . Socratic seminars, and digging deeper into ideas and figuring out how to approach them in a more theoretical way, and . . . yes, there's a ton of organizational stuff. They have a planner, and they go through their planner every day . . .” Regarding Caldera, he states: “. . . they take about fifteen kids, um, that we select based on . . . do we think that art would be a thing for them? And for whatever reason they're not quite engaged, you know . . . And they follow 'em and they have a summer program that they do and, um, they take 'em all the way through college!” (P01.02, Interview, June 15, 2011). His enthusiasm for these activities and what they offer Roby School students is very clear. These quotes illustrate the desire of Roby School administrators to partner with organizations and activities that have something to offer the particular population of

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

students at the school and that will augment what teachers are able to provide in the classroom.

Though maintaining a focus on student learning, gains in student achievement, progress in narrowing the achievement gap and the capacity of schools to deliver essential services are all threatened in many school environments today (Morris, 2011), Roby School data speak in a compelling way to a very different outlook and climate. The school and its surrounding community seem to rise above their challenges to create an environment full of opportunities and a climate characterized by abundance and high expectations for what can be provided for all students. These examples point to Roby School students' successes and why the school was recognized for its work in closing the achievement gap.

Voices from Home and School: Research Questions 2 and 3

While this study's coding answered the research questions overall, to answer Research Questions 2 and 3, I also looked specifically for data addressing perspectives of school personnel and parents regarding the benefits of after school activities. This section directly captures responses to those questions.

When asked if these activities make a difference for kids, and if so, in what ways, the SUN coordinator related a story a parent shared with her about students who were not accessing after-school activities:

Yes, definitely . . . some of the kids . . . they just stay here. Even if they're not supposed to be in the building, they'll just sit out in front of the school until 8 pm, and you know, it's cold. And you have to think they're probably hungry,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

and not doing homework. So you know, just giving those kids a place to be (is important). I had one really sweet parent come up to me and say kind of tearfully, she had driven past a neighborhood park and she saw kids out there and there was a horrific girl fight and she was just thinking . . . all the kids who would have been there but they weren't, because they were here. So, it's so nice to hear stories like that. So, you know, I'm just basically keeping them safe, they're getting another meal, and then also giving them extra connections with adults. With the boys group, I'm excited because I have a couple of really great male staff who can really bond with these boys, which is really needed too. So, um, connections with adults, learning appropriate ways to interact with each other – just all of those things (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013).

This story illustrates the power of after-school activities to keep children who may otherwise be home alone after school safe and off the streets, to provide opportunities for positive youth development, and to develop independent social relationships. The SUN coordinator also spoke to the benefits of after-school activities specifically for ELL students:

I mean one of the benefits of the after-school model is that it's so hands on that I think it can be really helpful for ELL students . . . I think that can be a very valuable way for students to learn. And a lot of Spanish speaking parents; they want their students here because of the English, but also because maybe they are not so able to help them with their homework. I've heard from a lot of parents

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

who are really glad that they are going to get reading and other homework help here, 'cause they can't do that at home (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013).

In the Spanish Focus Group, this sentiment was confirmed when a mother quietly shared that she did not understand, and therefore could not help her fifth grade daughter with her homework. It was courageous that she admitted this, and it was of note that she was glad her daughter could get that help from the after-school program (M03, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012). In the highly diverse setting of Roby School, the after-school program provides English language development opportunities for students and at the same time, supports parents who are not able to assist their children with homework because of language barriers.

A teacher shared her perspective about an after-school Lego Robotics class and the positive experiences it provided for students to “fit in,” to work together as a team, and to develop social skills:

. . . a number of these kids really haven't had a place to fit in in this school . . . don't use the word 'misfits,' but they just didn't quite fit in, or are newer here or whatever. And they really had an odd experience at the (Lego Robotics) competition where they really didn't do particularly well on the technical side, but at the presentation, they did great. They gelled as a team and learned what it was like to be a part of a team. They all want to be on it next year . . . The other piece is there's the exposure and enrichment and the development and also just that social aspect and a chance for kids to interact with each other not in the classroom, mix it up with kids both grade level and socially that they might not,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

based on what their alliances are, and I think that's really important . . . I think being able to interact with each other on a focused project or doing something their interested in that's not class work with a teacher – you know – it gives the kids a chance socially to develop more (P10.04, Interview, January 18, 2013).

She speaks to the value for students of shared experiences outside of the classroom and the opportunities after-school activities provide for socializing with students in different grades and social circles.

School leadership described social and developmental benefits of various school programs and activities, including the Playworks program:

Playworks provides leadership in active games at every recess, after school, and in classrooms once a week. Playworks structures an opportunity for safe and healthy recreation with facilitated games and cooperative play in addition to regularly offered P.E. We also credit it with diminishing our discipline issues at recess by 24% (Oregon Department of Education, 2011).

Clearly, this program is seen as beneficial for students as school personnel credit it with leadership development opportunities both throughout the school day and after school, the teamwork and bonding that come from cooperative play, and a quantifiable decrease in discipline issues at recess.

On a more individual level, a participant (parent) in the Spanish Focus Group expressed her desire to help a friend connect with the SUN School program to teach a dance class at Roby School. “I would like to ask a question. Can you help me? My friend was waiting for this program (SUN) and shared that she would be willing to come

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

and help children through dancing” (M03, Spanish Focus Group, November 28, 2012).

The community liaison, also in attendance, was thrilled to learn about this unforeseen, but opportune development: “Oh, that’s amazing!” She went on to comment that she needed someone to help with SUN activities who speaks Spanish. The participant went on to respond that her friend was also bilingual. Again, both individuals were very pleased to have made these connections. This example points to the power of after-school activities to link the school with community resources, to help community members who wish to connect with and be a resource for the school, and to provide culturally and socially enriching experiences for students.

Finally, regarding the impact of after-school opportunities on students’ academic success, the community liaison speaks about two kinds of support - bolstering coursework with homework clubs and mentoring, and providing an incentive to do well in class:

The way I see the extended day piece . . . contributing to student success is . . . they are involved in extracurricular stuff – sometimes there is directly a correlate with their school work, homework clubs and things like that, or they have mentors or high school students who can be there to support them . . . any kind of extra support the students could have during the day, the better. I think that is going to enhance their school experience and enhance their success in the classroom . . . They feel like ‘Hey, school is this great place where it’s not just being in a classroom.’ . . . it’s more of what I feel is a holistic approach to education and I think that really that arrow points back toward the classroom, even if it’s just the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

sports...knowing that if they're not doing well in class, they're not going to be able to participate on the team. I mean, that's incentive to do better. So, I think that is a way in which extended day plays a big role (P08.01, Interview, January 5, 2012).

Similar observations are reflected in a comment by the SUN coordinator. Here, she speaks about program impact on student achievement: "There's a lot of data that the county collects on SUN Schools as relates to test scores and achievement, showing a positive correlation if they are involved in after-school activities, and it helps with their school work too" (P08.02, Interview, January 11, 2013).

To summarize, school personnel and parent participants identified a wide range of benefits that they see for their children of participation in after-school activities. Further, data describing Roby School's climate, the nature of social relationships as they are enacted at the school, and specific after-school services and activities yielded much to answer the study's research questions and to investigate the phenomenon of one K-8 school and its after-school activities in its real life context. There, in the intersection of the school and its after-school activities, we saw evidence of many efforts in support of students of poverty and English language learners. We also observed the creation of relationships and networks yielding social capital to benefit students and teachers alike, and we learned about a variety of partnership structures in place. Data exemplifying the school climate reveal the critical importance of leadership, as well as shared beliefs among school personnel about establishing and maintaining a welcoming environment, collective responsibility for student success, and a philosophy of perseverance that

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

permeates the school. Data describing social relationships at Roby School are characterized by the value placed on knowledge of and familiarity with all students, close relationships among staff, and the perceptible emphasis placed on parent engagement. Finally, data about specific activities and services provided to youth at Roby School describe a highly accessible and varied slate of opportunities which are in large part driven by partnerships with community and which go to great lengths to serve low income and linguistically diverse students and their families.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Chapter Five: Discussion

At the end of a study, researchers are often left asking “So what?” about their findings and “What next?” in regard to continued exploration on the issues raised. In this final chapter, I look at what the data means and how the study’s themes provide direction for practice and research. I also take the opportunity to look more broadly and suggest future directions using the theoretical framework as a guide. I will suggest a theoretical model which I believe is in play at Roby School now, and which may have benefit to other practitioners seeking to close the achievement gap.

As an aid to the reader, the chapter begins by restating the research problem, recapping the literature review, and revisiting the methods used in the study. The review of the study’s themes and the direction they provide follows next. Then, a discussion about how the study’s theoretical framework illuminates the data follows, along with the introduction of a model that may help frame what is happening at Roby School. Next, implications for both practice and research are presented, and the chapter ends with the limitations of the study.

As stated in Chapter 1, this study is organized around the problem that on the whole, low income and ELL students do not attain academic success at the same levels as their more advantaged and native English speaking peers. This disparity gives rise to the achievement gap that has been identified among students in our schools today. Of particular interest to this case study of one K-8 school which is, in fact, closing this achievement gap more successfully than other schools, is that research shows participation in after-school activities results in improvements in a variety of academic,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

developmental and social outcomes, and that they can make a positive difference for youth. While there are many potential benefits to students (and to schools) of after-school activities and the partnerships they create, there are, however, many unanswered questions about the interface between schools and after-school activities, and about access to these opportunities for low income and ELL students. It is clear that in order to build upon existing opportunities and to improve the relationships and partnerships involved, an understanding of how the interaction between schools and after-school activities gets enacted is needed. This study explores that interface by looking at the perspectives of school personnel and parents about after-school activities at Roby School.

As the literature on after-school activities reviewed in Chapter 2 describes, this strategy of enrichment has proved challenging to evaluate. Multiple studies over the past decade have looked at after-school activities from varying perspectives and with varying degrees of ability to describe outcomes. Adding to the difficulty of synthesizing the literature's findings, some studies report negative or neutral findings and "rely upon non-experimental designs with varying degrees of validity," (James-Burdumy et al., 2005). Conversely, other studies show that participation in after-school activities does provide positive impacts for students in terms of academic and social development. Regardless of their findings however, there is a gap in the research around how school personnel and parents experience the intersection with the school and after-school activities. There is also a lack of research about the common thread or essence of this experience for these key stakeholders. Given this gap in the literature and the potential positive impacts of after-school activities amidst conflicting reports, this research study contributes to the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

literature on after-school activities in schools with populations of students living in poverty and who are English language learners.

As explained in Chapter 3, the study reported here is a case study of one K-8 school which was recognized by the State Department of Education for its work in closing the achievement gap. Using secondary data from a larger study, this research used a qualitative approach to describe the complexity inherent in the intersection of after-school activities and schools. Using interviews and focus groups conducted in both English and Spanish in their natural setting (the school), as well as artifacts gathered throughout the study period, this research does not seek specific laws of causation or precise predictions; rather, the study offers opportunities to consider and understand what happens in the intersection between a school and its after-school activities from the perspective of school personnel and parents.

The study's findings, reported in Chapter 4, revealed data clustered around three broad themes: "Climate," "Social Relationships," and "Services and Activities." The climate-related findings were holistic in nature and pointed to the power of distributive leadership, the importance of a welcoming environment, the understanding that the entire school community is responsible for students' success, and the knowledge that regardless of successes, the school's work is never done. Findings about social relationships centered around the importance of all students being known by name, the awareness that strong relationships among staff are essential, and that parent engagement is key. The findings about services and activities describe specific programmatic characteristics such

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

as barriers to participation, community involvement in programming, a rich and diverse array of offerings, and specific efforts for linguistically diverse students.

Revisiting the Theoretical Framework

Returning now to the study's theoretical framework helps us make sense of the findings, understand how they fit together and provide direction for future practice and further research. Three theoretical perspectives informed the analysis: critical theory, addressing issues of access and participation of diverse and poor students; a social capital perspective, exploring what individual and collective or systemic investments have been made at schools and what relationships have been built which seem to be working; and intersectionality theory, addressing questions about how community organizations partner and how parents engage with schools and after-school activities.

Critical theoretical lens illuminates the data. The commitment to social transformation that informs the critical theoretical perspective (McLaren, 1998) and to making a difference in people's lives by providing access to resources was apparent throughout the interviews and focus groups. Specifically, several segments of the data which were coded for "Climate," such as the pride with which the Roby School community gathered food and gift cards for needy families during the winter holidays, the extra care the community liaison took to hear the perspectives of the Spanish-speaking families when the CTAG researchers hosted a Spanish focus group, and the high degree of effort the seventh grade science teacher made to include an older student in after-school activities who was responsible for younger siblings in the afternoons (coded as "Barriers/access to participation") all speak to the commitment to doing things

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

differently and transforming the school environment to one of inclusion and sensitivity with regard to low income and English language learner students and families. And while the literature pointed to challenges of participation in low income community after-school programs resulting from lack of funding, cultural needs of families and lack of training among providers (Scharf et al., 2003), in the case of Roby School, we actually saw the inverse. That is to say that there was evidence of growing support for free after-school activities in the form of the new partnership with the SUN System beginning in the fall of 2012. Seen under the “Climate” code, and further under “Welcoming environment,” there was also consistent translation of materials and events for non-English speaking families and students. Regularly, there were offerings of culturally inclusive programming at the school, such as Martin Luther King Day celebrations hosted by a community member of color and the encouragement of sharing cultural recipes at Write Night. The need for increased provider training referenced in the Scharf et al. study (2003) did not come up in the Roby School CTAG conversations.

Further, and still with regard to the critical theory perspective, social transformation and making a difference in people’s lives, we can think of the SUN model essentially functioning as an enormous access network, providing families with social and wrap around services such as utilities assistance, dental care, vision care, and assistance with rental issues and challenges. As we saw in Chapter 4, data describing these services was coded under “Services and Activities,” and further under “Barriers/Access to participation” and “Extra efforts for linguistically diverse students.” Additional examples of these services which make a difference in people’s lives are the

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

nutritious afternoon meals provided to all SUN participants and the entire slate of SUN offerings, such as adult ESL and parent classes, as well as events for the entire family. All of these resources are offered at no charge at Roby School and they support the school, students and families in tangible ways. It may be too soon to know precisely how these activities are making a difference in the lives of the Roby community, however, the critical theoretical lens helps us see the SUN school partnership as social transformation in the making. This lens also helps to highlight the reality that equity is not achieved without intentionality and special effort. This is supported by the literature (Blank, 2004), which shows many positive results of the program, including an increase in parent involvement, increased access to and use of a host of social services for families, and upward trends in student achievement.

Social capital lens illuminates the data. Next, we return to the social capital lens and ways in which it helps us understand the data and look closely at the various ways it is seen at Roby School. At both the student and teacher levels, relationships are a part of the day to day life of a school. And through relationships, social capital is created.

The social capital literature suggests that low income youth are frequently poorly connected with adults (Jarrett et al., 2005). “They (youth) are outsiders to the social structures and networks they will need to join to become functional adults. This isolation can be particularly significant for low-income youth in urban neighborhoods” (2005, p.43). So, we ask, what is taking place at Roby School that works to change this phenomenon? Several participants spoke about opportunities to bring students into contact with experiences they will need to be familiar with to become “functional

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

adults.” Coded under “Services and Activities” and further as “Rich variety of inputs,” the 7th grade science teacher spoke about her desire to expose middle school students to the world. She mentioned developing a class with 8th graders to get them exploring in Portland and documenting their experience. She was eager to provide opportunities to help students begin developing a sense of what really interests them. In her, we see evidence of a teacher who is determined not to allow Roby School students to be isolated from their community and the social structures they need to experience in order to become fully functioning successful adults who can interact and build relationships outside their immediate environment. The social capital lens helps us understand these examples in that they direct us to ways in which after-school opportunities act as vehicles for valuable experiences and relationship building.

The social capital perspective also helps us understand the benefits of student involvement in leadership opportunities. As we saw in Chapter 4, coded as “Climate,” and then further as “Power of distributive leadership,” is the example of the a middle school leadership team which is responsible for arranging events, helping to plan field trips, and organizing community service opportunities for other students. The former principal suggests that such leadership opportunities help to firmly invest students in their school and demonstrate to them their effectiveness. He suggests that the confidence they derive from these experiences drives their success. This observation is consistent with the social capital literature (Jarrett, Sullivan & Watkins, 2005) which found that “engaged social interaction with other individuals or groups provides resources to which they would not otherwise have access” (p. 43). By inviting and welcoming the middle school

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

students into leadership positions such as Junior Coach, a position with responsibility for conflict resolution on the playground, the former principal demonstrates his commitment to providing students with the opportunities and resources that result from engaged social interaction. This is evidence of a school culture with a high degree of intentionality around how students are socialized and are guided into interacting with their peers and with adults. Here again, the social capital lens raises our awareness about how schools provide opportunities for social interaction, problem solving, and leadership skill development.

Throughout the data, we see examples of how relationships are enacted that give rise to the development of social capital. “Relationships among staff are key” was a very strong element in this study and affirms what the literature (Fullan, 2010; Leana, 2011) says about the importance of teachers working together, not only in pedagogical practice, but also in terms of interpersonal relationships with high levels of trust and frequent interaction. This theme also pertains to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) who help us to see how social capital is related to professional capital, which they believe is realized through continuous improvement, high levels of education and training, and technical sophistication, among teachers. They understand professional capital as a collective accomplishment made up of human capital (the inputs that insure all teachers have high levels of skill and are well prepared, qualified and supported), social capital (abilities resulting from taking the time to plan and problem solve together, collaboration, from valuing collective responsibility for students, and from high levels of trust), and decisional capital (the ability and authority, which come with experience, practice,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

reflection, and mentoring, to make decisions in complex situations) (Hargreaves lecture, February 4, 2013). Coded under “Social Relationships,” the community liaison spoke repeatedly about his sense that strong relationships among all staff are a critical component for student success. He also stated that he sees a highly collaborative and connected staff as a safety net for young students who may experience challenges along their education path. Throughout the data, classroom teachers and administrators alike echo the community liaison and the high value he placed on having a strong community of teachers who work collaboratively but are also personally connected and respect each other enormously.

Relationships with community partners result in the creation of social capital as well (Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless, 2001) and are seen throughout the Roby School data coded in Chapter 4 under “Services and Activities” and under “Interactions.” For example, in the CTAG application, Roby School leadership give a snapshot of many of the partnerships enacted at the school. He spoke about the partnership with the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) college readiness program and the great success Roby School graduates who participated in AVID have had completing high school and receiving scholarships for college. We also saw numerous business and organizational partnerships coded as “Rich variety of inputs,” such as Playworks, a homework club run by staff and volunteers, classes in music, dance, and art, and sports and hobby clubs taught by community members which have had a strong impact on Roby students. A partnership with Oregon State University about health, wellness and nutrition, professional development support by Nike, and a host of academic supports for

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

students with tutors and career guidance (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). The social capital literature supports the notion that relationships, such as those provided by these partnerships, generate access to resources that can be beneficial to students. Like other programs (Hooker & Brand, 2009; Jarrett et al., 2005), Roby School's after-school activities and other community programs provide students with a host of benefits, including "information, assistance, exposure to adult worlds, support and encouragement" (Jarrett et al., 2005, p. 50). Data about these activities are coded as "Service and Activities," "Community driven," and "Rich variety of inputs." Specifically, through the activities enacted at Roby School, students have access to information such as how to improve their study skills, time management and oral presentation skills, how to stay on track to graduate from high school, and how to prepare a college application (Yosso, 2005). They have many opportunities to get to know adults and develop personal bonds with people who may have careers of interest and can help them gain insights on the "adult world". As a result of these activities, Roby students also experience the sincere interest by adults in their activities, challenges and accomplishments and receive encouragement for their growing skills and development.

Indeed, examples of within-school and community-school relationship networks resulting in social capital, which may help to close the achievement gap and further the success of students traditionally at risk, were numerous and evident throughout the interviews with Roby School personnel and administrators and were coded in various ways. For example, as we saw in Chapter 4 coded under "Climate," multiple participants expressed the belief that the entire school community shares responsibility for students'

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

success. Israel, Beaulieu & Hartless (2001) help us understand the role of community in developing social capital to promote educational achievement in their description of workforce readiness programs which provide young people with:

... a sense of integration into the community because they can establish ties with a number of organizations and people whose purpose is to offer support and assistance. And . . . these programs reduce disaffection by offering organizations and individuals an opportunity for collective action to improve educational and employment opportunities for local at-risk youths (p. 63).

This is important because it draws our attention to the significance of the greater community and describes a pervasive philosophy that everyone who is part of the Roby community has a role in student success. The example also points the way toward relationships, which are the foundation through which social capital is realized.

Noam's theory of intersectionality illuminates the data. Noam's theory of intersectionality provides a structure for considering the various models and examples of after-school activities in play at Roby School. Here, I review Noam's typology of partnerships (2004) briefly for the reader. In it, Noam describes connections between partners that exist along a continuum, from organizations that collaborate simply to share access to audiences or facilities (these are functional partnerships) to truly transformational partnerships that ultimately create new entities, working toward a common good, but in brand new ways. Noam (2004) identifies four types of intersection that apply to after-school partnerships. These are characterized by "1) discovering overlapping interests, or functional partnerships, 2) joining forces, or collaborative

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

partnerships, 3) developing an inclusive system, or interconnected partnerships, and 4) changing all partners, or transformational partnerships” (p. 92). And where partners intersect, they define a new intermediary space. This notion of the intermediary space that is created addresses this study’s central research question: What occurs in the intersection between schools and after-school activities? The following discussion describes some of those intersections as observed at Roby School.

When the CTAG study began, Roby School was home to functional and collaborative partnerships. For example, as we saw in Chapter 4 coded under “Functional Interaction,” the Big Apple Family Life Center has a functional collaboration with Roby School, to provide fee-based before- and after-school day care for students attending Roby School. And, the partnership with Playworks and Roby School is an example of a collaborative partnership. Going further, during the course of this study, with the launch of Roby School’s new partnership with the SUN School program in fall 2012, the school gained a more highly interconnected, and at times, transformational partnership. Data describing this partnership were coded under “Transformational Interaction,” “Communication Provider-Home/Provider-School,” “Social Relationships,” and “Services and Activities.” Characteristics of the interconnected partnership which appear to be in place with the Roby SUN School include an environment with high levels of communication (Roby administrators, teachers and staff were all observed problem-solving and communicating with the SUN coordinator), joint decision making, a sense of intimacy among the partner staffs (the SUN School coordinator’s office is located inside the main school office, just across from the principal’s office) and a strong focus on

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

relationships and on meeting the developmental needs of youth. This interconnected partnership is also characterized by a significant sense of welcoming the community into the partnership (Noam, 2004). The co-construction of a new framework in which partners are less preoccupied with their own organizations than they are with the common good characterizes the transformational partnership (Noam, 2004).

In some ways, the new partnership between the SUN School program and the Roby School community reflects a transformational partnership because it is designed to connect families with an extensive array of services that improve people's lives. For example, as noted above, in addition to the after-school homework help and classes for students, adult classes and events for the entire family, SUN provides access for all school families to extensive social services, such as medical, dental and vision care, youth health insurance, housing assistance, financial literacy, parenting classes, communication skills workshops, etc. (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, n.d.). As such, this innovative partnership aligns with the critical theoretical approach and its focus on making a difference in people's lives by providing access to resources. This partnership also gives rise to the new intermediary space mentioned above as it offers opportunities to bridge multiple aspects of a student's (and their family's) life and provides a safe developmental space with access to community resources, mentors, coaches, and experts.

A new model. Given the critical, social capital and intersectionality framework described above, the Roby School findings make sense and support research and practice in several ways. For example, the framework compels us to question our assumptions

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

about equity of access and opportunity, and the potential of experiences to empower individuals and transform lives. The framework also supports our understanding of how social capital is built and what characteristics are necessary for that growth and development to occur. It also helps us explore how systems intersect (such as in this case, of a school and its after-school activities, or a school and community or business partners, or school personnel and parent groups, etc.) and what the resulting partnerships may make possible for participants. Then, the three theoretical perspectives help lead to what we know from the literature is important – that is the foundational principal of culturally responsive practice.

Figure 4 illustrates the way the three perspectives intersect in this study. In the figure, each circle points to one of the study’s theoretical perspectives and calls out the primary theme or themes (revealed by the study’s coding and analysis process) that the particular theory helps to inform. Then, key related elements which were seen in the data and are illuminated by the theory are also listed. The box representing “Culturally Responsive Practice” is centered among the three circles and indicates that all of the study’s themes (“Climate,” “Social Relationships,” and “Services and Activities”) are informed by this foundational practice. Key related elements informed by culturally responsive practice are also listed. Double-ended arrows point back and forth between the individual theoretical perspectives and culturally responsive practice. In this framework, that practice both informs the three theoretical perspectives, and those perspectives inform it. That is to say that the three perspectives all contribute and focus in to culturally responsive practice and at the same time, culturally responsive

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

practice flows out into the characteristics of the three perspectives. The framework has a dynamic quality characterized by movement both in and out from the center. While it is impossible to generalize from this case study, I believe that the Roby School data illustrate the interplay of three theoretical perspectives contributing to culturally responsive practice, which in turn contributes back to them in an interactive and powerful way.

In this study, rich data were found supporting this framework, especially in the realm of a climate at Roby School which encouraged development of relationships on many levels yielding social capital for students, teachers and families. Concerns about access to opportunities and giving a voice to marginalized groups such as English language learner families were also evident in the data. And, many partnership structures were brought to light which allowed for an array of intermediary spaces resulting from the coming together, to varying degrees, of organizations. Where the three theoretical perspectives meet and overlap, is evidence of culturally responsive practice. These components, which have a strong give-and-take quality, come together in Figure 4. Over and over again, participants in this study described a welcoming environment which promotes trust and positive relationships, is culturally validating and affirming, and builds bridges between home and school experiences (Gay, 2000). These culturally responsive practices were seen throughout the data and appear to be at the heart of the success that Roby School students enjoy.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

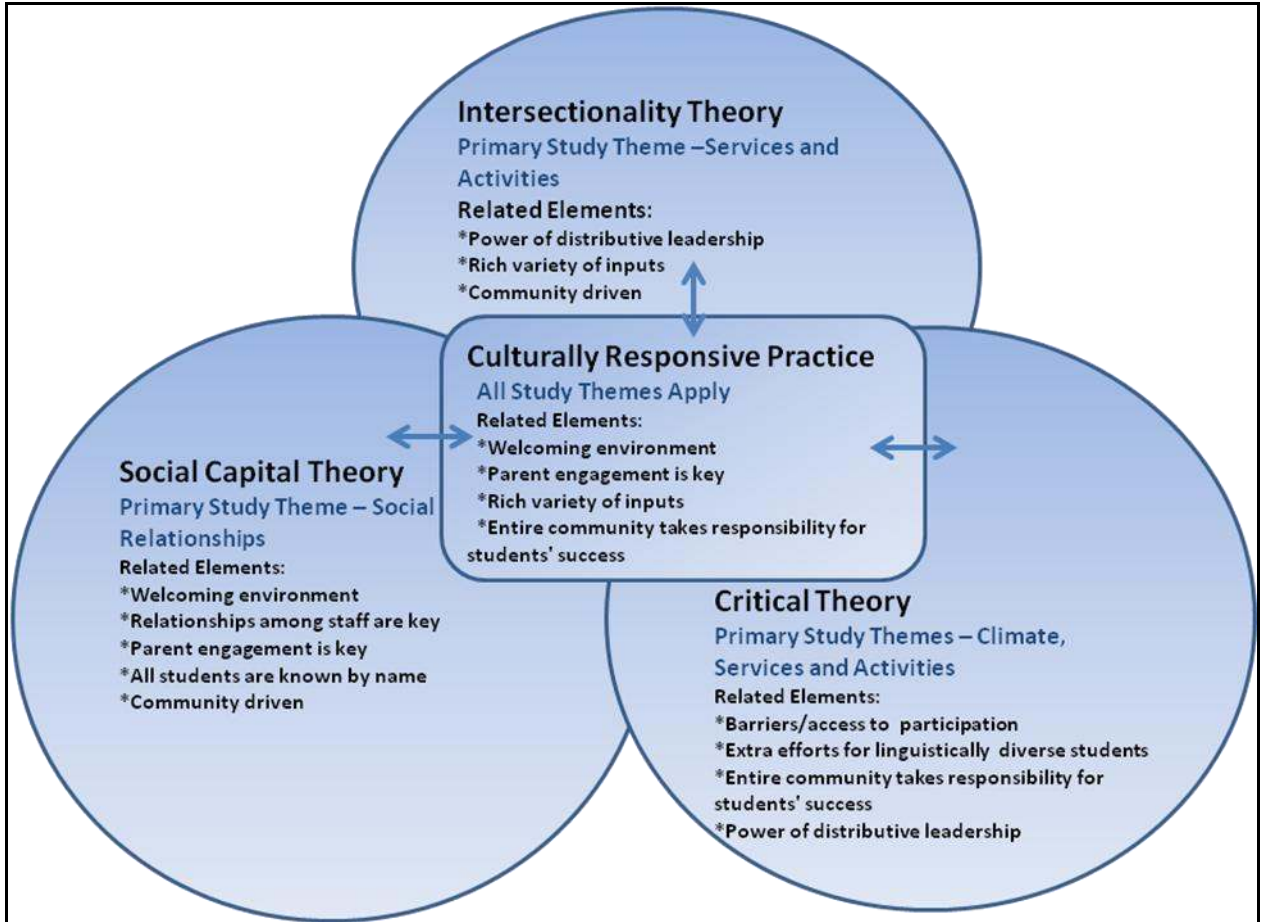


Figure 4. Culturally responsive practice: The heart of the matter.

Implications: A Holistic View

The proposed model (see Figure 4) and broad themes identified in this study (“Climate,” “Social Relationships,” “Service and Activities”) suggest yet another way to consider implications for practice with the goal of directing transformational change in schools. The themes provide concrete examples of ways that schools and partners can work in a culturally responsive way. For example, fostering a welcoming environment for students and families, such as that observed by so many participants at Roby School,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

is clearly foundational to any successful endeavor. This would then necessitate that school leaders set the tone and reinforce the vision of a welcoming environment by building the infrastructure needed to support the culture, recognizing and acknowledging all families, inviting parents to take leadership roles, maintaining flexibility around administrative issues so that all are accommodated, and listening to and responding to concerns with respect and immediacy. Once the welcoming environment is in place, taking steps to insure that strong relationships are developed among stakeholders, as we saw taking place throughout Roby School, is also a foundational element. To that end, making every effort to engage parents and community in school activities, offering parents and community multiple opportunities and avenues for connection, empowering teachers to engage with families and community on many levels, providing teachers mechanisms to support collaboration and working together, and stressing the importance of strong working relationships with providers coming into the school who will reach out to parents and students are all essential. And, providing a rich menu of services and activities to support, stimulate and engage students and families is a critical component. Encouraging teachers and staff to listen to families and be responsive to their suggestions for particular opportunities and experiences that will support their students, making it known in the community that the school is a willing and responsive partner, and utilizing the after-school arena to connect families with an array of social services all send a message of caring and show families and community that the school is a supportive partner in their lives. All of these efforts should be built upon and responsive to the cultures of families.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What Schools Can Do

As I listened to the voices of school personnel and parents, I was fortunate to observe school and after-school partnerships in action. From these voices and observations, and through the study's theoretical framework, I draw the following implications for practice. Participants believe (and much research agrees) that there are many benefits to students of after-school activities. Therefore, schools and districts should ensure that supports are built into the system to allow all students to participate in after-school activities. Taking the direct findings from this study, for example, because creating a welcoming environment is so critical to the successful interaction between schools and families in after-school activities, schools should ensure that communication with families about opportunities for their children is consistent, utilizes multiple communication mechanisms, and takes place in multiple languages. Administrators could create mechanisms (forums, surveys, focus groups) to learn from families about any barriers to participation in existing activities that they experience, giving careful attention to linguistically diverse families so that eliciting their observations and concerns is fruitful and they feel comfortable sharing their perspectives. They should also explore the kinds of activities and services families want for their children and work to build toward those with providers. Administrators could regularly engage community groups and local businesses in dialogue about potential partnerships, perhaps with a goal of providing childcare for pre-school aged siblings or increasing program capacity so that waiting lists for after-school opportunities are not necessary. Administrators could also encourage support for expanded after-school activities beyond the individual school

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

level, participating in dialogues with district, political, community and after-school leaders, to build city-wide attention, secure funding and other resources and shape policies about after-school activities.

The study also suggests that creating a positive work environment in which teachers want to take part in after-school activities has many benefits. Teachers' knowledge of their students is invaluable and their passion for providing their students with the experiences they will need to enter the adult world is strong. Teachers who help with after-school activities are well-positioned to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom. To encourage teacher participation, school leaders should develop mechanisms and create on-going opportunities for teachers and after-school providers to foster relationships with each other. They should also provide incentives, or better yet, recognition, which is a reward in and of itself, for teachers who participate in after-school activities.

Looking more closely at the implications for practice around partnerships, it is important to realize that partnerships evolve and must be sustained through multiple stages (Noam, 2004). Frequent leadership and staff turnover present challenges, especially in light of the knowledge that successful partnerships are generally dependent on specific individuals and relationships. Incorporating parent involvement in after-school partnerships and building a strong pool of parent volunteers to sustain activities may be very helpful in this regard. Working with new families to develop their interest in leadership roles, providing peer mentoring with parents, and asking seasoned volunteers to step in and train new volunteers may insure that knowledge and duties are

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

shared among many and one individual is not responsible for an entire body of knowledge about a program or set of activities. Involving youth in programming design and implementation is also essential. Administrators should create mechanisms to bring students together to learn from them about what they consider valuable regarding after-school activities. They might also consider including willing alumni who have more perspective to return to the school for this sort of dialogue. Alternatively, administrators might take the entire model proposed in Figure 4 as a frame for developing their practice. For example, the four parts of the model (see pg. 165) could be used to structure a strategic planning exercise for a school, looking at each, to consider how to elevate culturally responsive practice in the building.

Recommendations for Additional Research

Now at the end of this study, I am left with some questions that could lead to new studies. For example, because the partnership between Roby School and the SUN School program began during the course of this study and is still being established, I wonder what impacts of the fully enacted partnership will be realized for students and the Roby community at large. In light of the fact that Roby leadership changed during the course of this study, I wonder how a new principal will change the Roby community and if distributive leadership will remain such an important factor in the school's dynamic. Because twelve other schools in the state were also recognized for their progress in closing the achievement gap, what might a larger study with additional schools bring to light? With these questions in mind, some next steps for research related to this study might include a longitudinal study of Roby School to investigate the impacts of its

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

partnership with the SUN School program more fully, a closer look at issues around leadership at Roby School, a study looking at where the motivation originates to provide such rich resources at Roby School, and a multiple case study to explore the experiences and processes held in common among school personnel and parents vis-à-vis after-school activities at other schools which are closing the achievement gap. Research investigating the usefulness of the model identified in Figure 4 as a framework for future research may also be of interest, as well as studies exploring how the three themes identified in this study (“Climate,” “Social Relationships,” “Services and Activities”) and related elements are enacted in other schools. Using mixed methods to explore other kinds of community partnerships and their impacts on culturally and linguistically diverse students would be interesting and complementary to this study as well.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this exploration was manageable while providing ample data to tell a story with rich descriptive detail. However, as is widely known, with a deep study of a limited case, it is not possible to generalize to other settings. Herein lie the limitations of this study. While I used triangulation in the form of many different data sources (interviews, focus groups, field notes, and artifacts) and peer checking throughout the study process to insure trustworthiness, accuracy, and rigor, the single case study design does not allow the researcher to establish reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). In other words, the study captured the perspectives of a particular group of individuals, but in so doing, does not allow for replication. Further, while I openly explain my own connection with after-school activities and describe plainly for the reader the work that I have done

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

in this field, I understand the analysis of the data and results are influenced by my personal lens. That said, I made every effort to check for my biases and remove them from this writing by first seeking multiple perspectives (from administrators, teachers, staff, community members and parents) (Stake, 1995), and then by the practice of bracketing, or reflecting on my own views and experiences related to issues in the study, and setting them aside in the analysis process (Fischer, 2009).

Another limitation of this study lies in the fact that to answer this study's research questions, I used secondary data which were obtained in response to a different set of research questions. As a result, I was not able to specifically reach the intersection between the school and its after school activities. Instead, I had to take a step back for a broader view of the phenomena and allow the study's three themes ("Climate," "Social Relationships," and "Services and Activities") to answer the research questions holistically rather than specifically.

Conclusion

In this study, which explores the intersection of one K-8 school and its after-school activities, I found patterns and themes that elucidate participants' meanings, and may provide usefulness for others who are navigating and developing after-school mechanisms. I have seen ways in which the literature and theoretical framework for this study led to and support those findings. Within the findings, I have identified what many participants understand to be the impacts of after-school activities for their children. Those themes reveal the central understanding I gained from this study as observed in four primary areas. First is the awareness that at the heart of Roby School lies a solid

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

foundation of culturally responsive pedagogy. From this foundation emerges the warm and welcoming environment voiced by so many participants. This study affirms what the literature says about the importance of cultural responsiveness in schools (Gay, 2000; Lindsey et al, 2005; Hanley & Noblit, 2005). Indeed, Roby School practices provide a powerful example of what Gay describes as “the power of caring”, especially as it relates to students of color:

...Caring is one of the major pillars of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for ethnically diverse students. It is manifested in the form of teacher attitudes, expectations, and behaviors about students’ human value, intellectual capacity, and performance responsibilities. Teachers demonstrate caring for children as students and as people (Gay, p. 45).

These demonstrations of caring for children are seen over and over again in the Roby School data, not only from teachers, but from school leadership and staff as well. They go well beyond students, and extend to demonstrations of caring for families and community. Again, I posit that what we see at Roby School is a highly culturally responsive environment, replete with culturally responsive leadership, management and pedagogy. In contrast with many schools which view the diversity of their students as an obstacle to success and from a deficit perspective (Nieto, 2012), at Roby School, diversity is viewed from an asset perspective. Diversity is the schools’ richness. It is to be celebrated and affirmed.

Second, underlying the many successes of Roby School students is an environment in which distributive leadership is flourishing. Much like decisional capital,

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

distributive leadership requires a deep knowledge of the students, extensive experience in the environment, and the willingness to be challenged. There is a clear understanding among teachers, staff and leadership that all of their skills and ideas are needed to make Roby School work. This understanding is plainly communicated and as a result, the entire community takes responsibility for providing the best experience possible for their students.

Third, in the close relationships among teachers at Roby School, there is evidence of abundant social capital. Students thrive in the environment which is enriched by the high levels of trust and respect teachers have for one another and the palpable sense of collective responsibility they, along with staff and leadership, share for their students. Administrators set the tone for the creation of social capital as seen in these remarks from the current principal. She describes a worldview that embraces each child and lays the foundation for a highly adaptable environment of flexibility and connectedness:

...you have to have systems that work for kids. You have to have personal connections and personal relationships and then you have to have those systems be flexible enough to adapt to each kid. And so how do you keep that moving? And so that's really when you talk about like that giant picture of what is Roby School, that's really what it's about, systems that work for kids and those personal relationships (P02, Interview, June 1, 2011).

And from that same administrator, another expression of the highly inclusive and responsive environment that is Roby School:

...there's no 'these are your kids and these are my kids,' 'this is your

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

responsibility and this is my responsibility' ... Whether it's in the cafeteria or whether it's with the custodian, it's like, this is us. Everybody is connecting with kids and so, yes, the ESL department absolutely knows what's going on with their students and are working with the teachers ... again, all of us are fighting for each and every kid (P02, Interview, June 1, 2011).

This statement and many others throughout the data describe the strong sense of collective responsibility shared by school personnel and parents alike and that is evidence of valuable social capital.

Fourth, the concept of the "first face," eloquently named by a parent in the Spanish Focus Group, describes the first encounter with another individual and captures the essence of that experience. In a given situation, the "first face" may or may not be a welcoming one. In the case of Roby School, however, it is indeed a welcoming face. And as we have seen throughout the study, once that welcome is established, the benefits of interaction such as relationships and social capital, and the pathways to access and social justice, are available and can be yielded. For the neighbor (who doesn't even have children at Roby School) who felt welcomed to engage and offer her concerns about safety, which ultimately led to safer bus drop off practices, for the parent coming from a privileged background who grew to deeply appreciate the opportunities to engage with diverse families at Roby School, and for the Spanish speaking families who face communication challenges every day – each one of these individuals experienced that welcoming, positive and foundational "first face."

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Finally, my findings shed light on the understandings of school personnel and parents about after-school activities with the hope that providers and practitioners may ultimately provide increasingly effective after-school resources and offer activities that meet the needs of all students. I repeat my statement from Chapter 1 of this study: I believe that understanding what is working, so that others may bring successful strategies to bear for their disadvantaged students, is an opportunity we cannot afford to dismiss. Roby School has created a school culture where all students, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background, are welcomed and supported. There, we see that administration, teachers and staff have collectively accepted the challenge, not to further the status quo, but to make a difference that will impact not only the achievement of, but also the lives of their students.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

References

- Afterschool Alliance. (2004). *America after 3 PM: A household survey on afterschool in America*. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org>
- Afterschool Alliance. (2006). *Evaluations backgrounder: A summary of formal evaluations of the academic impact of afterschool activities*. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Evaluations_Academic_0906.pdf
- Afterschool Alliance. (2009). *New "Roadmap to Afterschool for All" charts course to expand quality afterschool activities*. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/press_archives/Roadmap_NR_042709.pdf
- Afterschool Alliance. (2012). *Evaluations backgrounder: A summary of formal evaluations of afterschool activities' impact on academics, behavior, safety and family life*. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/EvaluationsBackgrounder2012.pdf>
- Afterschool Alliance. (2012) *Oregon Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/states_docs/pdfs/2012/Oregon_Fact_Sheet.pdf
- Afterschool Alliance. (n.d.) *21st Century Community Learning Centers federal afterschool initiative*. Retrieved from <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policy21stccclc.cfm>
- Afterschool Alliance. (n.d.) *Uncertain times: 2009 key findings*. Retrieved from http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Uncertain_Times/UncertainTimes2009KeyFindings%5B1%5D.pdf
- Barnett, B., Hall, G., Berg, J., & Camarena, M. (1999). A typology of partnerships for promoting innovation. *Journal of School Leadership, 9*(6), 484–510. Retrieved from <https://ill.lib.pdx.edu/PDF/339836.pdf>
- Barton, P. (2003). *Parsing the achievement gap: Baselines for tracking progress*. (Report). Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED482932.pdf>
- Blanco, C., Crowe, E., Lingenfelter, P., Longanecker, D, L'Orange, H., Rainwater, T., Somerville, J., et al. (2003). *Student success: Statewide P-16 systems*. (Report). Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED478023>
- Blank, M. (2004). *Educators and community sharing responsibility for student learning*. Retrieved from <http://sparkaction.org/node/26370>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Blank, M., & Berg, A. (2006). *All together now: Sharing responsibility for the whole child*. Retrieved from <http://www.csun.edu/~SB4310/601%20files/sharingresponsibility.pdf>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital in J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, (pp. 241 - 258) New York, NY: Greenwood Press.
- Borman, G., Hewes, G., Overman, L. & Brown, S. (2003). Comprehensive school reform and achievement: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 73 (2), 125-230. Retrieved from <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/73/2/125.full.pdf>
- Coleman, J. & Hoffer, T. (1987). *Public and private high schools: The impact of community*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital, *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, Supplement: Organizations and Institutions: Sociological and Economic Approaches to the Analysis of Social Structure, S95-S120. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-9602%281988%2994%3CS95%3ASCITCO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>
- Comer, J. (2001). Schools that develop children. Retrieved from <http://prospect.org/article/schools-develop-children>
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Croninger, R. & Lee, V. (2001). Social capital and dropping out of high school: Benefits to at-risk students of teachers' support and guidance, *Teachers College Record*, 103 (4), 548-581, retrieved from <http://www.tcrecord.org.proxy.lib.pdx.edu>
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications.
- Cullivan, R. (2012, February 29). Community college students “adopt” kindergarten at Alder Elementary. *The Gresham Outlook*. Retrieved March 29, 2012, from http://www.theoutlookonline.com/features/story_2nd.php?story_id=133054006075048100
- Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color. (2010). *Communities of color in Multnomah County: An unsettling profile* (Report). Retrieved from <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/docs/AN%20UNSETTLING%20PROFILE.pdf>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2007). The flat earth and education: How America's commitment to equity will determine our future. *Educational Researcher*, 36(6), 318–334. doi 10.3102/0013189X07308253
- De La Vega, E., & Hara, M. (2011). *Exploring contextual factors: The ins and outs of closing the achievement gap* (Human Subjects Research Review Committee Application # 111761). Portland, OR: Portland State University.
- De La Vega, E., & Hara, M. (2012). *Exploring contextual factors: The ins and outs of closing the achievement gap* (Human Subjects Research Review Committee Continuation Report). Portland, OR: Portland State University.
- Delpit, L. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Dryfoos, J. (n.d.). *Evaluation of community schools: findings to date*. Retrieved from http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/assetmanager/evaluation%20of%20community%20schools_joy_dryfoos.pdf
- Duff, P. (2008). *Case study research in applied linguistics*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Durlak, J., & Weissberg, R. (2007). *The impact of after-school activities that promote personal and social skills*. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED505368.pdf>
- Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., & Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of after-school activities that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45(3), 294–309. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9300-6
- Education Alliance. (n.d.). English language learner definition. Retrieved from <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/>
- Ferlazzo, L. (2011). Involvement or engagement? *Schools, Families, Communities*, 68(8), 10-14. Retrieved from http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url?hl=en&q=http://www.wisconsinpbisnetwork.org/assets/files/2012%2520Conference/Session%2520Material/Summer_Leadership_Conference_Handouts1.docx&sa=X&scisig=AAGBfm3KbGk3eLG7JBhbqi uF2BiH2fWvyQ&oi=scholarr
- Field, J. (2003). *Social capital*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Fischer, C. (2009). Bracketing in qualitative research: Conceptual and practical matters. *Psychotherapy Research, 19*(4), 583–590.
- Firestone, W., & Herriott, R. (1982). Two images of schools as organizations: An explication and illustrative empirical test. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(39), 22.
- Fullan, M. (2010). *All systems go: The change imperative for whole system reform*. Ontario, CA: Corwin Press.
- Gardner, M., Roth, J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2009). *Can after-school activities help level the playing field for disadvantaged youth?* (Research Review). Equity Matters. Retrieved February 22, 2012 from http://cms.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/11242_After-school_report_10-7-09_web.pdf
- Gauntlett, D. (2011). *Making is connecting: The social meaning of creativity, from DIY and knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0*. London: Polity Press. Retrieved from www.makingisconnecting.org
- Gaye, G. (2009). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research & practice*, New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2005). English language learners in U.S. schools: An overview of research findings. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 10*(4), 363–385.
- Geuss, R. (1981). *The idea of a critical theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.
- Goldschmidt, P., Huang, D., & Chinen, M. (2007). *The long-term effects of after-school programming on educational adjustment and juvenile crime: A study of the LA's BEST after-school program*. Los Angeles: UCLA/CRESST. Retrieved from http://4h.uwex.edu/afterschool/partnerships/documents/LASBEST_DOJ_Study_Brief.pdf
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1981). *Effective evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Halpern, R. (2002). A different kind of child development institution: The history of after-school activities for low income children, *Teachers College Record, 104* (2), 178 – 211. Retrieved from <http://www.temescalassociates.com/documents/resources/general/HxAfter-school.pdf>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Halpern, R. (2003). *Making play work: The promise of after-school activities for low income children*. New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.
- Hanley, M. & Noblit, G. (2009). *Cultural responsiveness, racial identity and academic success: A review of literature*. [Report] Retrieved from http://www.heinz.org/UserFiles/Library/Culture-Report_FINAL.pdf
- Hargreaves, A. (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* [Forward] New York, NY: Teachers College Press. Retrieved from <http://store.tcpres.com/0807752576.shtml>
- Hargreaves, A. (2013, February). Education Reform. *An Evening with Andy Hargreaves*. Lecture conducted from Portland State University, Portland.
- Harris, E., Deschenes, S., Westmoreland, H., Bouffard, S. & Coffman, J. (2010). *Partnerships for learning: Promising practices in integrating school and out-of-school time program supports*. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/partnerships-for-learning-promising-practices-in-integrating-school-and-out-of-school-time-program-supports>
- Harvard Family Research Project. (n.d.). *A profile of the evaluation of Fort Worth After School Program*. Cambridge, MA: Witt, P., King, T., Lee, J., Montadoni, K., Justice, L., Oh, J., & Brown, B. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/fort-worth-after-school-program>
- Harvard Family Research Project. (n.d.). *A profile of the evaluation of Schools Uniting Neighborhoods Initiative*. Cambridge, MA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/database/schools-uniting-neighborhoods-initiative/evaluation-1999-2000-baseline-report>
- Haycock, K., Barth, P., Mitchell, R., & Wilkins, A. (1999). Ticket to nowhere: The gap between leaving high school and entering college and high-performance jobs. *Thinking K-16*, 3(2), 34.
- Haycock, K. (2001). Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Leadership*, 58(6), 6.
- Henderson, A., Johnson, K., Mapp, V., & Davies, D. (2006). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Herriott, R. E., & Firestone, W. A. (1984). Two images of schools as organizations: A refinement and elaboration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 20(4), 41–57. doi:10.1177/0013161X84020004004

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Hodgkinson, H. (1985). *All One System* (Report). Retrieved from http://www.highereducation.org/reports/reports_iel.shtml#Hodgkinson
- Honig, M. & McDonald, M. (2005). *From promise to participation: Afterschool activities through the lens of socio-cultural learning theory*. [Afterschool Matters: Occasional Paper Series]. Retrieved from <http://www.niost.org/Publications/afterschool-matters-journal>
- Hooker, S. & Brand, B. (2009). *Success at every step: How 23 activities support youth on the path to college and beyond*. [Report]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://www.aypf.org/publications/SuccessAtEveryStep.pdf>
- House, K. (2011, June 3). Forest Grove says farewell to “I Have a Dream” program as final Dreamers graduate. *The Oregonian*. Retrieved from http://www.oregonlive.com/forest-grove/index.ssf/2011/06/forest_grove_says_farewell_to_i_have_a_dream_program_as_final_dreamers_graduate.html
- Humes, K., Jones, N., Ramirez, R. (2011). Census briefs. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>
- Husserl, E. (1958). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- I Have A Dream - Effectiveness and Program Description. (2009). *Institute of Education Sciences: What Works Clearinghouse*. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/dream/index.asp#go1>
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.irco.org/>
- Israel, G., Beaulieu, L., Hartless, G. (2001). The influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. *Rural Sociology*, 66(1), 43–68. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/doi/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2001.tb00054.x/pdf>
- Iverson, D. (2005). Schools uniting neighborhoods: The SUN initiative in Portland, Oregon. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 107, 81–87. doi:10.1002/yd.132
- Jacobs, H. H. (1999). The integrated curriculum. *Instructor 101*, 2(22), 8–13.
- James-Burdumy, S., Dynarski, M., Moore, M., Deke, J., Mansfield, W., & Pistorino, C. (2005). *When schools stay open late: The national evaluation of the 21st Century*

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Community Learning Centers Program final report [Report]. Retrieved March 2, 2012 from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/cclcfinalreport/cclcfinal.pdf>

James-Burdumy, S, Dynarski, M., & Deke, J. (2007). When elementary schools stay open late: Results from the national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 29(4), 296–318. doi:10.3102/0162373707309077

Jarrett, R., Sullivan, P., & Watkins, N. (2005). Developing social capital through participation in organized youth activities: Qualitative insights from three activities. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33, 41 - 55. Retrieved from DOI: 10.1002/jcop.20038

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Retrieved from <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book233390?prodId=Book233390>

Kahne, J., & Bailey, K. (1999). The role of social capital in youth development: The case of “I Have a Dream” activities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 21(3), 321–343. doi:10.3102/01623737021003321

Kane, C. (1994). *Prisoners of time research: What we know and what we need to know*. Washington, DC: National Education Commission on Time and Learning.

Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 7. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

Knapp, M. (1995). How shall we study comprehensive, collaborative services for children and families? *Educational Researcher*, 24(4), 5–16. Retrieved from <http://edr.sagepub.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/content/24/4/5.full.pdf+html>

Krippendorff, K. (2013). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. 3rd edition. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Krueger, C. (2006). *The progress of P-16 collaboration in the states* (Policy Brief). Retrieved from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/68/71/6871.pdf>

Lauer, P., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S., Apthorp, H., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. (2003). The effectiveness of out-of-school-time strategies in assisting low-achieving students in reading and mathematics: Retrieved from <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/sspw/pdf/ostfullsum.pdf>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Lauer, P., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S., Apthorp, H., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. (2006). Out-of-school-time activities: A meta-analysis of effects for at-risk students. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 275–313.
- Leana, C. (2011). The missing link in school reform. *Stanford Social Innovation Review, 19*. 1-10. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/the_missing_link_in_school_reform
- Lee, J. (2002). Racial and ethnic achievement gap trends: Reversing the progress toward equity? *Educational Researcher, 31*(1), 3–12.
- Lindsey, R., Roberts, L. & Campbell Jones, F. (2005). *The culturally proficient school: An implementation guide for school leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Little, P., Wimmer, C., & Weiss, H. (2008). *After school activities in the 21st century: Their potential and what it takes to achieve it*. Harvard Family Research Project. Retrieved from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/issues-and-opportunities-in-out-of-school-time-evaluation/after-school-activities-in-the-21st-century-their-potential-and-what-it-takes-to-achieve-it>
- Mace-Matluck, B. (1987). *The effective schools movement: Its history and context* [Descriptive No. 141]. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED304781.pdf>
- Mahoney, J., Lord, H., & Carryl, E. (2005). Afterschool program participation and the development of child obesity and peer acceptance. *Applied Developmental Science, 9*(4), 202–215. doi:10.1207/s1532480xads0904_3
- Mahoney, J., & Zigler, E. F. (2006). Translating science to policy under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Lessons from the national evaluation of the 21st-Century Community Learning Centers. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 27*(4), 282–294. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2006.04.001
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mayer, J. (2011, September 2). Alder Elementary in east Portland poised to launch “I Have a Dream” School. *The Oregonian*. Retrieved from http://www.oregonlive.com/gresham/index.ssf/2011/09/alder_elementary_poised_to_lau.html

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- McCord, R. & Ellerson, N. (2009). *Looking back, looking forward: How the economic downturn continues to impact school districts* (Report). Retrieved from <http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Resources/files/LookingBackLookingForward.pdf>
- McLaren, P. (1998). *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. Retrieved from <http://bama.ua.edu/~jpetrovi/BEF534/readings/McLaren.pdf>
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Milner, R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 388–400.
- Moran, P. (2005). Structural vs. relational embeddedness: social capital and managerial performance. *Strategic Management*, 26, 1129–1151. doi:10.1002/smj.486
- Morris, N. (n.d.) An A for effort. *Parenting OC*. Retrieved from <http://www.parentingoc.com/july-2011-featured-articles/3282-an-a-for-effort.html>
- Multnomah County. (n.d.). *Schools Uniting Neighborhoods: Successful collaboration in an environment of constant change*. Retrieved February 22, 2012 from http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/sun/documents/casey_report.pdf
- National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2001). *Principals and after-school activities: A survey of preK-8 principals*. Retrieved from <http://www.naesp.org/>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2009). *Fast Facts*. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98>
- Nieto, S. & Bode, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Boston, MA. Pearson
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, § 115, Stat. 1425 (2002).
- Noam, G. (May, 2001). *Afterschool time: Toward a theory of collaborations*. Paper presented at the Urban Seminar Series on Children's Mental Health and Safety: After-School Time, Kennedy School of Government, Boston, MA. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/A_New_Day_for_Learning_Resources/Making_the_Case/Afterschool_Time_Toward_a_Theory_of_Collaborations.pdf

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Noam, G., Pucci, K. & Foster, E. (1999). Prevention practice in school settings: The Harvard RALLY Project as applied developmental approach to intervention with at-risk youth. In D. Cicchetti & S. Toth (Eds.), *Developmental Psychopathology: Developmental Approaches to Prevention and Intervention* (pp. 55-109). Rochester: University of Rochester Press.
- Noam, G. & Tillinger, J. (2004). After-school as intermediary space: Theory and typology of partnerships. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 101, 75 - 113. Retrieved from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=d1d10751-b775-40f5-bfdf-7a9c264a28ea%40sessionmgr4&vid=2&hid=15>
- Nowak, J., Nichols, J., & Coutts, D. (2009). The impact of full-day vs. half-day kindergarten on student achievement of low socioeconomic status minority students. *Scholarlypartnersedu*. 4, 34-47. Retrieved from <http://opus.ipfw.edu/spe/vol4/iss1/4>
- Oregon Department of Education. (2011). *Celebrating student success*. [Application]. Retrieved from <http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/jason-lee-ctag-application.pdf>
- Oregon Department of Education. (n.d.). *Closing the achievement gap*. Retrieved from <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=187>
- Oregon's Pathway to Success. (n.d.). *Take action to improve public education*. Retrieved from <http://pathtosuccessoregon.org/>
- Orfield, G., Losen, D., Wald, J., & Swanson. C. (2004). *Losing our future: How minority youth are being left behind by the graduation rate crisis* [Research Report]. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410936_LosingOurFuture.pdf
- Ortiz, N. (2008). *Guiding P-20 education alignment: A reference for Colorado's education community* (Report #PAD 5361). Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/downloads/ColoradoP-20Guidebook.pdf>
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Payton, J., Weissberg, R., Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., Schellinger, K., & Pachan, M. (2008). *The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews* (Report). Retrieved from <http://www.lpfch.org/sel/PackardES-REV.pdf>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Playworks. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.playworks.org/about>
- Portland Public Schools. (March 20, 2011). Retrieved from <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/news/5510.htm>
- Portland State University Center for Student Success. (2010). *Partnering for student success: The cradle to career framework, Report to the community*. Retrieved from www.cradletocareer.wordpress.com
- Prisoners of time: Report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning. (1994). Retrieved from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED489343.pdf>
- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling alone: American's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, 65 – 78. Retrieved from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/assoc/bowling.html>
- Richards, H., Brown, A., & Forde, T. (2006). *Addressing diversity in schools: Culturally responsive pedagogy* [Practitioner Brief]. Retrieved from http://www.nccrest.org/Briefs/Diversity_Brief.pdf
- Roby School Family Bulletin, *December/January 2012*, 1-4.
- Roby School SUN Registration Packet, *Winter 2013*, 1-4.
- SB 1581/Achievement Compacts. (n.d.). *State of Oregon*. Retrieved from http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/docs/sb1581_educationfactsheet.pdf
- Scharf, A., Olsen, L., Shah, M., & Bhattacharya, J. (2003). *Pursuing the promise: Addressing equity, access, and diversity in after school and youth activities* (Report). Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow. Retrieved from <http://www.californiatomorrow.org/media/ptpexcerpt.pdf>
- Shea, M. (2009). *Oregon's vision for supporting student success through expanded learning opportunities* (Report). Retrieved from http://www.oregonask.org/external_files/ask.S3.Official%20Final..pdf
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stonehill, R., Little, P., Ross, S., Neergaard, L., Harrison, L., Ford, J., Deich, S., et al. (2009). *Enhancing School Reform Through Expanded Learning* [Report]. Retrieved from http://www.njafter3.com/edu/docs/Reports_EnhancingSchoolReformthroughExpandedLearning.pdf

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Storey, S. L., & Qualls, J. (1991). *Follow-up study of high school graduates: Survey of the Chicago Public Schools class of 1989*. Retrieved February 19, 2012 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/detail?accno=ED338742>
- Strive. (2010). *Striving together report card: Student progress on the roadmap to success*. Retrieved from <http://www.strivetogether.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/11/2010StriveReportCard.pdf>
- SUN Community Schools: FY 2010-11. (2012). *Multnomah County*. Retrieved March 25, 2012, from http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/sun/documents/suncsannual_outcomes1011.pdf
- Supporting after-school activities in Oregon: A Guide to potential public and private funding sources*. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.oregon.gov/OCCF/Documents/CommunitySchools/OCCF_Funding_Guide_Complete.pdf?ga=t
- Swanson, C. (2008). Grading the states. *Education Week*, 27(18). Retrieved from www.edweek.org
- Taylor, A., Losciuto, L., Fox, M., Hilbert, S., & Sonkowsky, M. (1999). The mentoring factor: Evaluation of the Across Ages intergenerational approach to drug abuse prevention. *Child and Youth Services*, 20(1), 77–99.
- Tellis, W. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The Qualitative Report*, 3(3). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html>
- Tierney, T. (2006). *How is American higher education measuring up? An outsider's perspective* [Report #06-2]. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED491912.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. *Office of post-secondary education: Federal TRIO activities*. Retrieved February 19, 2013 from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2003). *21st Century community learning centers: Non-regulatory guidance*. [Report]. Retrieved January 22, 2012 from <http://www2.ed.gov/activities/21stcclc/guidance2003.pdf>
- Vandell, D., Resiner, E., & Pierce, K. (2007). *Study of promising after-school activities*. Retrieved March 2, 2012 from <http://www.policystudies.com/studies/?id=32>

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky, Vol. 4: The history of the development of higher mental functions* (R. W. Rieber, Vol. Ed; M. J. Hall, Trans.). New York, NY: Plenum Press. (Original work published 1941)
- Wehling, B. (2007). *Building a 21st century U.S. education system*. Retrieved from http://nctaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Bldg21stCenturyUSEducationSystem_final.pdf
- Wickham, M. & Woods, M. (2005). Reflecting on the strategic use of CAQDAS to manage and report on the qualitative research process. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(1), 687-702. Retrieved from http://go.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/ps/retrieve.do?sgHitCountType=None&sort=RELEVANCE&inPS=true&prodId=AONE&userGroupName=s1185784&tabID=T002&searchId=R2&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&contentSegment=&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=1&contentSet=GALE%7CA172525722&&docId=GALE|A172525722&docType=GALE&role=
- Witt, P., & King, T. (2009). *Fort Worth After School 2008-09 evaluation report*. Retrieved from <http://www.fwisd.org/fwad/Documents/2009%20Fort%20Worth%20Final%20Report%20September.pdf>
- Working Poor Families Project. (n.d.). *Working hard still falling short*. Retrieved from <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/>
- Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital?: A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69–91.
- Zaff, J. F., Moore, K. A., Papillo, A. R., & Williams, S. (2003). Implications of extracurricular activity participation during adolescence on positive outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 18(6), 599–630. doi:10.1177/0743558403254779

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix A

Informed Consent (for interview participants)

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by a research team from the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at Portland State University (PSU). The primary goal of the study is to learn about the factors, inside and outside of school, that contribute to schools' success in closing the achievement gap for students of color, students with limited English proficiency, students who are economically disadvantaged, or students with disabilities. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your school won a 2011 "Closing the Achievement Gap" award from the Oregon Department of Education and/or because you were referred to the research team by your principal, administrator or other key school employee.

Should you decide to participate you will be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute interview. The interview will be audio-taped and only members of the PSU research team will have access to the recordings. The interview can be conducted at your school site or another location at your suggestion. A potential risk of participating in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable when asked about your personal feelings or behavior. Please note, however, **you may refuse to answer any questions or stop participating in the interview at any time.** Another potential risk is breach of confidentiality. It is possible that despite the safeguards built into maintaining confidentiality, a breach of confidentiality is a potential risk for all subjects. To reduce this risk, we will use the following procedures: identifying participants only by an ID number, maintaining records in a locked file cabinet at the Graduate School of Education which is a secured facility, and requiring that all research personnel sign a confidentiality agreement pledging to respect subjects' confidentiality. Risk of breach of confidentiality is minimal.

You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, however by learning from more details about the daily practice that takes place at your school, the PSU research team hopes to gain an enhanced understanding on what specifically is working in schools that are making progress toward closing the achievement gap. The findings from this study could help identify common factors among successful schools. These contextual factors (both inside the school setting as well as outside the school grounds) in turn, can then be shared with other schools as they strive to close their own achievement gap.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We will use many safeguards to protect your confidentiality. The research team members have been trained in protecting your confidentiality. ID numbers will be assigned to each person and the ID numbers will be used for each interview you complete. Your name will **not** appear on any interview forms. The data we keep in our computers will be password-protected and will also only identify you by a unique ID number. To ensure confidentiality, all information will be kept in a locked file, and will be available only to the research staff. Neither your name nor your identity will be used for publication or publicity purposes.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, and decide at some point that you do not feel comfortable with the interview, you may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your status at the school or with the Oregon Department of Education.

If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, Market Center Building, 6th Floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288/1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact any one of the PSU research team members listed below:

Dr. Patrick Burk	503-725-9658 burk@pdx.edu
Dr. Esperanza De La Vega	503-725-9902 delavega@pdx.edu
Dr. Moti Hara	503-725-9901 mhara@pdx.edu

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Signature

Date

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix B

Informed Consent (for focus group participants)

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by a research team from the Graduate School of Education (GSE) at Portland State University (PSU). The primary goal of the study is to learn about the factors, inside and outside of school, that contribute to schools' success in closing the achievement gap. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because your school won a 2011 "Closing the Achievement Gap" award from the Oregon Department of Education and because you were referred to the research team by your principal, administrator, or other key school employee.

Should you decide to participate, you will be asked to be part of a 30-45 minute focus group interview. The focus group will be audio-taped, and only members of the PSU research team will have access to the recordings. Responses will be aggregated for reporting to the public, and no identifying information will be included in public reports. At the beginning of each session, the PSU research team will ask all focus group participants to respect each other's privacy and not share the content of group discussion outside the focus group setting.

The focus group interview will be conducted at your school site. A potential risk of participating in this study is that you may feel uncomfortable when asked about your personal feelings, behavior, experiences, or feelings in front of other focus group participants. You may be concerned that if you say something negative about the school, it will impact your relationship with the school or the services you receive. Please note, however, **you may refuse to answer any questions or stop participating in the focus group at any time.**

You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, however by learning from more details about the daily practice that takes place at your school, the PSU research team hopes to gain an enhanced understanding on what specifically is working in schools that are making progress toward closing the achievement gap. The findings from this study could help identify common factors among successful schools. These contextual factors (both inside the school setting as well as outside the school grounds), in turn, can then be shared with other schools as they strive to close their own achievement gaps.

We will use many safeguards to protect your confidentiality. The research team members have been trained in protecting your confidentiality. ID numbers will be assigned to each person and the ID numbers will be used for the focus group you

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

complete. Your name will **not** appear on any focus group documents. The data we keep in our computers will be password-protected and will only identify you by a unique ID number. To further ensure confidentiality, all information will be kept in a locked file, and will be available only to the research staff. Neither your name nor your identity will be used for publication or publicity purposes.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, and decide at some point that you do not feel comfortable with the focus group, you may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your status at the school or with the Oregon Department of Education.

If you have concerns or problems about your participation in this study, or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, Market Center Building, 6th Floor, Portland State University, (503) 725-4288/1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, contact any one of the PSU research team members listed below:

Dr. Patrick Burk	503-725-9658	burk@pdx.edu
Dr. Esperanza De La Vega	503-725-9902	delavega@pdx.edu
Dr. Moti Hara	503-725-9903	mhara@pdx.edu

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own records.

Signature

Date

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix C

Interview Protocol for Principals and Key School Leadership Personnel, Key School Personnel – Teachers, and Key NON-Teaching School Personnel

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

Questions for Principals and Key School Leadership Personnel: (30 – 45 min interview)

1. Tell us about your role here at your school.
2. Was there a catalyst that triggered the reform or change your school made?
3. Can you explain key initiatives or decisions or practices that lead to this success?
 - a. What data do you use to measure your schools' progress?
 - b. How does federal or state accountability factor into this?
 - c. Would you describe the leadership acts that led to your success?
4. Are there key people on your staff or in the community who advocate for special populations?
 - a. ELL
 - b. Students w/disabilities
 - c. Students in poverty
5. What are indicators of success that were not in the “Closing the Achievement Gap” application?
6. What community resources are available to your students?
 - a. How do you find out about “resources” or activities available for your school?
 - b. What kinds of activities or services would you like to provide if you had the social and financial resources?
 - c. What would be the rationale for such services?

Relationships:

- d. How would you describe the school's relationship w/parents and families?
- e. And with community activities?
- f. Is there a systematic parent/family involvement or engagement program at your school? If yes, can you describe it?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

7. Describe your schools' connection to other schools in your district? (on the continuum from PK-20).
8. Who else do you recommend we speak with at your school?
9. Is there anything I missed that you would like to tell us about?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Questions Key School Personnel - Teachers: (20-30 min interview)

1. Tell me about your role in this school? (Teacher? – what grade? How long at the school? And any other responsibilities at the school?)
2. The research tells us that often school change happens because of an “event” or “incident”, which created the desire for change.... Can you tell me if there was a catalyst that triggered the reform or change your school made and what it was?
3. In your opinion, what are the key initiatives or practices at your school that have led to making gains in closing the achievement gap?
4. What information do you use to monitor your students’ progress?
 - a. How does it influence your day-to-day decisions?
 - a. What role does “data” play in your mindset, as a teacher?
 - b. Can you describe how you share data & with whom?
 - c. Is this the same as data used to measure your school’s progress?

Relationships:

5. In your opinion, what role does leadership have in making gains on closing the achievement gap at your school?
6. How do you, as a staff, build unity and work collaboratively toward your goals?
7. How would you describe the relationship between the school and Parents/Family/Community (Is there a systematic parent/family involvement or engagement program at your school? If yes, can you describe it?)
8. Does your school have “after-school” activities?
 - If yes – how do students learn about them?
 - If yes – do they include wrap-around services, dinner, etc.?
9. In your opinion, does it make a difference for kids?
10. One more question: Can you describe how the school integrates and serves recent immigrant families and/or English learners?
11. Is there anything I missed that you would like to tell us about?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Questions Key NON-Teaching School Personnel (30 – 40 min interview)

1. Tell me about your role in this school? (What do you do? What services do you provide to the school? How is your work/resources connected to the school?, Outside funding/grant \$ for your program?)
2. The research tells us that often school change happens because of an “event” or “incident”, which created the desire for change.... Can you tell me if there was a catalyst that triggered the reform or change this school made and what it was?
3. In your opinion, what are the key initiatives or practices at your school that have led to making gains in closing the achievement gap?
4. Can you please describe how you (your group/organization) see your role/activities contributing to student success?

Relationships:

5. In your opinion, what role does leadership have in making gains on closing the achievement gap at your school?
6. How do you work collaboratively with school personnel?
7. How would you describe the relationship between the school and Parents/Family/Community (Is there a systematic parent/family involvement or engagement program at your school? If yes, can you describe it?)
8. One more question: Can you describe how the school integrates and serves recent immigrant families and/or English learners?
9. Is there anything I missed that you would like to tell us about?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix D

Focus Group with Community Members and Parents

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

Cover letter: when the consent form is delivered prior to the focus group meeting. Note that there will be a chance to ask questions, but they can speak to the researcher privately if they prefer.

Materials: Livescribe recording pen, backup recorder, pre-written ground rules, consent forms, flip chart paper, markers, tape.

Introduction (15 minutes)

Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules today to talk how this school has worked with students, parents, and community members to help kids succeed. My name is _____ and this is my colleague, _____. We're with Portland State University's Graduate School of Education. We're doing a study of schools throughout the state of Oregon that won the "Closing the Achievement Gap" awards to find out more about what the school did to improve student outcomes.

We have invited you here today because we want to hear from parents and community members about your views and experiences with the school. We're especially interested in the ways you work with or connect to the school.

It's really important to us that we include your perspective and insights for this study. A lot of research focuses on the things that happen inside schools, such as teaching methods and testing. We are interested in learning about what kind of relationship the school has with the community, and what happens both inside and outside school that helps students succeed.

Let's talk a little about focus groups. How many of you have been in focus groups? Focus groups are a little different than interviews in that my role is more of a guide and you all talk to each other. There might be times when I remind you to talk with your colleagues rather than directing the conversation to me...I will present a question or a topic and ask you all to share your experiences with each other...sometimes I might ask you to expand, or guide the conversation to a new topic. You might notice that we take notes throughout the group. This is so I can keep myself on track. I want to make sure I hear as much as I can about your experiences and perspectives.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

We are tape recording this conversation because we don't want to miss any of your comments, nor do we want to misconstrue anything said here. We know that you have a lot of experiences and insights about this topic, and we can't write fast enough to get everything down.

Throughout the discussion we will be on a first name basis, but we won't be using names in our report. We will keep all information that we collect confidential, but because this is a group setting, we can't assure that everything said here will be kept confidential by participants. We ask you to please respect each other's privacy.

We are going to ask you to sign consent forms before we begin. Because this focus group is a part of a formal study, we need to make sure you all know your rights and understand that participation is voluntary. Please take a minute to review and sign the consent form if you'd like to participate. Feel free to ask any questions you might have...

Many of you are probably familiar with basic ground rules for groups and whenever I run focus groups, even with professionals, I think it is helpful to have them posted.

Possible Ground Rules (Already written and taped to wall)

- No right or wrong answer, only differing points of view
- Listen respectfully to others
- We want to hear from everyone
- Turn off or silence all cell phones and pagers
- Moderator role is to guide the discussion
- Talk to each other
- Confidentiality: what is said here stays here!

I'd like you all to know that it is important to recognize that we all have different experiences and I want to make sure we hear from everyone. There are no right or wrong answers but rather differing points of view. Please feel free to share your thoughts and opinions even if they are different from what others are saying.

... Keep in mind that we want to hear about what's working and what the successes are as well as discussions about the barriers and challenges that you see.

Also...I'm going to pass out name stickers to help us remember each other's names. You may already know each other, but this just makes it easier.

Interview Guide:

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Experience with the school (general) (10 minutes)

1. Thank you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to help us out today. -Before we jump into talking about the specifics of your experiences with the school, let's have a little introduction. [I am....]. Let's go around the room and say your name...but I'd also like to hear a little about your role in relation to the school – are you a parent? Do you work at an after-school program?
2. **I will now pose questions and ask anyone of you to answer the question and add to what another person has said. You may feel free to pose a question yourself, if you'd like. OK, my first question is:**

Communication:

- a. Who is the person that you communicate most with or have a positive relationship with at this school?
- b. How does communication happen between your home and the school?
 - i. Do you initiate the communication – when/why?
 - ii. Does the school initiate the communication – when/why?

Climate

- c. What was your first impression of the school? Has that changed over time? In what ways?
- d. In what ways does the school make you feel welcomed?
- e. In what ways does the school create barriers for you?

Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG)

- f. What do you know about the school's award from the Oregon Department of Education for CTAG?
- g. What does it mean to be making progress toward CTAG?
- h. Why do you think the school is doing a good job in CTAG?

Before/After-school Activities

- i. Does your child or family participate in after/before school activities or use services provided at the school?
 - NO – was this a choice? Or was it because of a barrier or challenge?
 - Did you have an option to participate?
 - What is the best way to learn about these services?
 - YES - how did you learn about them?
- j. Do you think it makes a difference?
- k. In what ways?
- l. (Hypothetical) What do you feel is needed in after-school activities or services?
- m. (Hypothetical) What would support you and your child best?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Engagement/Involvement

- n. How do you stay involved or engaged in your child's education?
- o. What kinds of activities are important for you – as a parent/family member to do at home? To do at school? To do with your child?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix E

Human Subjects Research Review Committee # 111761 Approval

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Post Office Box 751 503-725-4288 tel
Portland, Oregon 97207- 0751 503-725-8170 fax
hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu

May 4, 2011

To: Esperanza De La Vega

From: Mary Oschwald, HSRRC Chair

Re: HSRRC approval for your project titled, "Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap" (HSRRC Proposal # 111761)

Dear Esperanza,

In accordance with your request, the Human Subjects Research Review Committee has reviewed your proposal referenced above for compliance with DHHS policies and regulations covering the protection of human subjects. The committee is satisfied that your provisions for protecting the rights and welfare of all subjects participating in the research are adequate, and your project is approved. Please note the following requirements:

Changes to Protocol: Any changes in the proposed study, whether to procedures, survey instruments, consent forms or cover letters, must be outlined and submitted to the Chair of the HSRRC immediately. The proposed changes cannot be implemented before they have been reviewed and approved by the Committee.

Continuing Review: *This approval will expire on May 4, 2012.* It is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that a *Continuing Review Report* of the status of the project is submitted to the HSRRC two months before the expiration date, and that approval of the study is kept current. The *Continuing Review Report* is available at www.rsp.pdx.edu/compliance_human.php and in the Research & Strategic Partnerships (RSP) office.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Adverse Reactions: If any adverse reactions occur as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Chair of the HSRRC immediately. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending an investigation by the Committee.

Completion of Study: Please notify the Chair of the Human Subjects Research Review Committee (campus mail code RSP) as soon as your research has been completed. Study records, including protocols and signed consent forms for each participant, must be kept by the investigator in a secure location for three years following completion of the study.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the HSRRC in the Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP) office, 503-725-4288, Market Center Building, 6th Floor, 1600 SW 4th Ave.

cc: Christine Chaille

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix F

Renewal of HSRRC # 111761 Approval

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

Research and Strategic Partnerships

Post Office Box 751 (RSP) 503-725-3423 tel
Portland, Oregon 97207-0751 503-725-8170 fax
rsp@pdx.edu
Portland State University HSRRC Memorandum
Date: April 16, 2012

To: Dr. Esperanza De La Vega & Dr. Moti Hara

From: Mary Oschwald or Todd Bodner, Chair, HSRRC 2012

Re: HSRRC renewal of approval for your project entitled, “Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap” (HSRRC Proposal #111761)

As part of the Committee's continuing review, the Human Subjects Research Review Committee has reviewed your above referenced project for compliance with Department of Health and Human Services policies and regulations on the protection of human subjects.

The Committee is satisfied that your provisions for protecting the rights and welfare of all subjects participating in the research are adequate. **Your project is renewed and this approval will expire on 5/4/2013.** Please note the following policies:

1. If the project continues beyond the expiration date, the investigator needs to submit a *Continuing Review Report* form (available in the Office of Research & Strategic Partnerships) two months before the expiration date.
2. To add this project's continuing review to the HSRRC/IRB meeting agenda, please refer to the HSRRC/IRB meeting schedule. Submit the report, and the required number of copies, by the submission deadline that is approximately two

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

months before the project's expiration date. The HSRRC/IRB needs two months to do a continuing review of the project, so it is extremely important that you meet the committee's submission deadline.

3. If this project finishes before the expiration date, please contact the HSRRC administrator so that the file can be closed and records updated. It is the investigator's responsibility to keep the approval status current. If the project's approval expires while the project is active, the investigator must complete new application and submit it for a new HSRRC review. In addition, any data collected after the expiration date cannot be used in the research. Please don't let this happen!

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the HSRRC in Research and Strategic Partnerships (RSP), (503) 725-2243.

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix G

Code Book, CTAG Study, Version 5

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

Code	Theme/Ideas representing the code
*CSM	Clear School Mission – “We’re all in this together”
*FM	Frequent Monitoring of Student progress (ASSESSMENT)
*HE HE-S HE-T	High Expectations (-S of students) (-T of faculty)
*HS	Home/School Relations (School events, Parents/family welcomed, existence of parent room)
Ld LD *IL	Leadership – in general Leadership Development – Growing their own leaders (teacher leaders, principals, VPs, administrators in district office, etc.) Instructional Leadership – principal, instructional coach, etc
*SJ – R - CR <i>opportunity to learn?</i> - A	Social Justice – Recognizing your underserved students Social Justice – Culturally Responsive – there is a conscious/explicit connection (instruction, native language, and/or understanding context of student/family lives) Social Justice – Access to Resources (physical space, parent university, workshops, services)
*SOS	Safe & Orderly Schools
CO	Collaboration – teaming, working together, meeting together “UNITY” among teachers
CP	Community Partnership – Grant funding, After-school activities such as tutoring, or enrichment classes, etc.
D	Demographics –

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

DE	Data Experts (ASSESSMENT)
DL	Teachers are Data Literate (ASSESSMENT)
FA	Formative Assessment (ASSESSMENT)
L	A Link between home/school that is informal or a formal person/position
P	Policy – Budget cuts, NCLB,
PD	Professional Development implementation, description
PD -Book	Professional Development – reference to a book, an author, or a program that influenced the staff in their reform effort
PE	Parent /Family Engagement – attendance, decision-making, volunteerism
S	Standards – content, meeting AYP
SA	Summative Assessment (i.e. OAKS)
TC	Teachers Care – Beyond the “job”
TECH	Technology – reference to Assessment technology and/or other tech
WAS	Wrap Around Schools – Social/Health services

*Effective Schools Correlates

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix H

Follow-up Questions for SUN Program Coordinator

Exploring Contextual Factors: The Ins and Outs of Closing the Achievement Gap

1. How long have you been with the SUN program? What is your role at Roby School?
2. How was the decision made for Roby School to become a SUN school?
3. What are the offerings of the SUN program? What services are provided?
4. How do families learn about them?
5. How many families participate in SUN activities at Roby School? Is this satisfactory?
6. What costs do families incur to participate in SUN activities?
7. Are there scholarships for families who are unable to pay?
8. How does SUN accommodate English language learner students?
9. Which school facilities does SUN use? Are there issues around the program's use of these facilities?
10. How is SUN at Roby School funded?
11. Who are the SUN staff? Are any Roby School teachers involved?
12. In your opinion, how is the communication between SUN and the school leadership? Between SUN and the school staff (teachers and non-teaching staff)?
13. How do SUN and other activities at Roby School work together? Are there issues with having several activities at the same school?
14. What the goals of SUN for the Roby School community?
15. In your opinion, do these activities make a difference for kids? If so, in what ways?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

16. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about SUN or other after-school activities at Roby School?

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Appendix I

Code Book, Roby School Study

Academics (and Inverse)	AC	Topic of discussion and/or references related to academics, grades, test scores, tutoring specifically related to a content area.
Climate (and Inverse)	CLI	Like CSM, a foundation or culture that provides for, makes way for, allows development of new opportunities or allows resources to thrive, sometimes it is a system.
Communication (and Inverse)	COM	Communication between the various stakeholders (provider, home, school) which happens along a continuum of involvement/participation.
Home-Provider	COM H-P	Communication from home to provider.
Home-School	COM H-S	Communication from home to school.
Provider-Home	COM P-H	Communication from provider to home.
Provider-School	COM P-S	Communication from provider to school.
School-Home	COM S-H	Communication from school to home.
School-Provider	COM S-P	Communication from school to provider.
Facilities (and Inverse)	FAC	Refers to issues of access and/or barriers, and other aspects of facilities where activities take place.
Interactions (and Inverse)	INT	Describes the kind of interactive space created between the school and the provider.
Collaborative Interaction	INT-C	Refers to collaboration in which each organization has its own voice but they are paired for efficiency, lots of give and take, such as C2C initiative. Two paired organizations are working together.
Functional Interaction	INT-F	Refers to collaboration based on individual or separate needs, such as Mt. Vernon Childcare program. The individual activities retain their own autonomy.
Interconnected Interaction	INT-I	Refers to collaborations with a strong sense of caretaking that goes beyond the two groups, creating a new shared gestalt or entity, such as the I Have a Dream program. A new entity is created.
Transformational	INT-TR	Refers to partnering as a new way of working

ROLE OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Interaction		together, developing together for the common good, such as the SUN School program. Common Good is at the heart of these relationships.
Provider (and Inverse)	P	Agency or after-school activity provider.
Funding	P-F	Refers to how activities are supported - grant, district funds, for profit, non-profit, etc.
Structure	P'S	Refers to the structure of the program - before or after-school, length of engagement, what types of services are provided (sports, Lego, child care, homework help, etc.).
Worker	P-W	Who are the adults working with students in after-school activities? Teachers, parents, paid staff, volunteers, other?
Services and Activities (and Inverse)	SA	Refers to specific services and activities provided to youth.
Social Relationships (and Inverse)	SR	Topics related to social interaction among kids, relationships with adults or with peers. May be an indicator of existence of social capital.
CTAG codes WAS, L, H/S, PE, CP		These start codes led me to relevant aspects of the data, which upon closer scrutiny, developed into my own codes.