

The Need for and Effectiveness and of After-School Programs

in

Helping At-Risk Students Academically and Personally

by

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables	i
Abstract	ii
I. Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Operational Definitions	3
II. Literature Review	4
Purpose and Scope of After-School Programs	4
Rationale for and Aspects of After-School Programs	7
The Importance and Effectiveness of After-School Programs	8
Perceptions and Challenges to Assessing the Effectiveness of After-School Programs	11
Summary	15
III. Methods	17
Design	17
Participants	17
Instrument	17
Procedure	18
IV. Results	20
V. Discussion	38
Implications	39

Threats to Validity	40
Comparison with Other Studies	41
Implications for Future Research	42
Conclusion	43
References	45
Appendix A	48

## List of Tables

1. Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Years of Experience
2. Grade Level Taught by Respondents Reporting Teaching at One School Level
3. Incidence of After-School Programs on Campus or Not Broken Down by Title I Status
4. Programs and Frequency Teachers Reported Them Used by Current Students
5. Frequency of Use of Each Method of Correspondence with Programs
6. Ratings of Helpfulness of Communication between Teachers and After-School Programs
7. Tally of Effects of After- School Programs on Student Characteristics
8. Descriptive Statistic of Effects of After-School Programs on Student Characteristics
9. Teacher Reports of Impediments to the Personal and/or Academic Success of "At-Risk" Students
10. Teachers' Familiarity with and Opinions about After-School Programs
11. Reasons Why After-School Programs Are Effective or Not for Intended Issues Addressed
12. Key Elements of an Effective After-School Program
13. The Main Thing Teachers at Their School Could Do to Better Help Children Deal with the Impediment They Have Observed

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to investigate teachers' views of the perceived need for and effectiveness of after-school programs for helping at-risk school students academically and personally. To gather the teachers' views of after-school programs, the researcher created a survey that was completed anonymously by 53 respondents. Although many types of after-school programs are offered, not all address the student needs that teachers identified.

Respondents expressed their views regarding what they believed are the greatest impediments to personal and/or academic success of at-risk school students. Overall, survey results suggested that after-school programs were perceived to be effective and beneficial to at-risk school students. Respondents also expressed that teachers could take some responsibility and ownership in offering support for at-risk students. Findings from this study affirm that there is a wide variety of programs offered for at-risk students, and that the teachers surveyed feel these programs are helpful for student participants. Responses indicated that they associate some improvement in the academic performance and personal growth of their students with these programs. Continued research is needed to determine how after-school programs can address students' academic and personal needs most effectively.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Educators continually seek ways to provide help and support for at-risk students who struggle academically and personally. One such response is to provide after-school programs for students. After-school programs are designed to provide safety and educational opportunities for students, many of whom lack parental supervision for various reasons. After school hours are when youth are least likely to be supervised and most likely to become involved in dangerous behaviors. After-school programs can provide safe environments for these and other students, and offer structured activities to enrich their learning and/or social experiences. By participating in structured activities at quality after-school programs, students can learn new skills ranging from math, science, reading, writing, and computer technology as well as develop good study habits and social skills. Through their involvement in after-school programs, students also can receive one-on-one interaction with mentors and personal attention from tutors to learn or remediate skills. Some after-school programs offer students opportunities to work with mentors, complete internships, or to earn community service hours to foster personal growth and to meet graduation requirements. Research has consistently demonstrated that after-school programs which enable students to experience new and unique experiences through interaction with caring and concerned adults help to mitigate the impact of negative social environments (Freeman, 1993, Katz, 1997; McLaughlin, Irby, & Longman, 1994). Some students participate in after-school programs based on teacher recommendations to the parents or because parents identify the need for an after-school program. After-school programs may be offered at a child's school or in other settings.

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study suggests that after-school programs can benefit students' academic performance in school, prevent and reduce violence, help students develop into responsible adults, and relieve stress on single parent and working family households by providing safe, dependable, and constructive supervision of students at a reasonable cost. A report by the United States Department of Education and the United States Department of Justice indicates that students in after-school programs have fewer behavioral problems and are better able to handle conflicts as well as demonstrating improved self-confidence than students who are not involved in with these programs (NYVPRC, 2001). The Harvard Family Research Project results also suggest that after-school programs help students from low-income families overcome inequities they face in the school system (NYVPRC).

The researcher wished to learn what aspects of after-school programs are perceived as most needed or beneficial for supporting academic and personal growth in at-risk students. The researcher became interested in pursuing this topic in her role as a parent when she observed a need for more after-school programs in her community, the growing decline in students' test scores, and the neighborhood schools receiving low ratings on state-required accountability assessments.

### **Statement of Problem**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived need for and effectiveness of after-school programs for benefiting at-risk students academically and personally. These relationships were assessed by surveying teachers' perceptions based on their experience with such programs and their perceptions of their students' needs. Of particular interest was determining whether the teachers felt as though students who are at-risk can benefit academically and personally from participation in after-school programs.

## **Operational Definitions**

Teacher reports were collected regarding their perceptions of the need for and effects of after-school programs, many of which provide guidance, mentoring, leadership, and tutoring services to at-risk students who are struggling academically and personally.

Teachers' assessments of the effect of these programs on student characteristics, behavior and academic performance were collected and used to determine whether or not they viewed the programs as effective.

After-school programs were defined as those which engage students in a spectrum of activities to promote academic success, foster connections with family and community, and encourage healthy personal development and activities.

A survey titled *Teacher Perceptions of After-School Programs Survey* was developed by the researcher and issued to teachers in a Graduate Program at a Liberal Arts College in Baltimore County to gather their views regarding after-school programs.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This literature review examines the benefits of after-school programs for at-risk students. Section one discusses the history and purpose of after-school programs. Section two presents the rationale for after-school programs and describes various aspects of these programs. Section three examines the importance and the effectiveness of after-school programs, discussing how after-school programs can play an important role in students' academic performance and self-development, along with factors related to the time invested by students and the types of programs that they attend. Section four offers the views of researchers related to the effectiveness of after-school programs.

#### **Purpose and Scope of After-School Programs**

After-school programs have been offered as a means of support for students for many years. A review of the history of these types of programs and the varying purposes for the program offerings provides a helpful context to examine current types and benefits of such programs.

#### History of After-School Programs

In the period between 1920 and 1950, after-school programs and their sponsoring agencies became part of the human service system in the United States and established themselves as a child-rearing institution (Halpern, 2002). However, offering after-school programs for young students began much earlier. The Boys' and Girls' Club of America, one of the oldest and most successful after-school programs in America, was established in 1860 by three women in Hartford, Connecticut. Their purpose for the organization was to offer a positive

and safe place for young boys who were roaming the streets with no purpose and no place to go after school hours. The organization was renamed in 1931 to become the Boy's Club of America and again renamed in 1990 to Boys' and Girls' Club of America, to reflect acceptance of participation of female members in the club. As of 2012, the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of America was a nonprofit organization that ran approximately 4,000 individual, community-based clubs that served more than four million children after-school each day (Springer & Diffily, 2012).

### Purpose of After-School Programs

There are several purposes for after-school programs. Among these purposes are to decrease school absenteeism, increase academic performance, and generate positive relationships that increase students' engagement with and excitement about their school and community.

There are four conditions that should be considered for an after-school program to be effective.

These conditions are the youth's interpersonal history, social competence, and developmental stage, the duration of the mentoring relationship, the program practices that are involved in establishing and supporting the mentoring relationship, and the youth's family and surrounding community context. With today's emphasis on school accountability and student achievement, these out-of-school time programs (OST) can provide meaningful contexts in which to improve student achievement and, perhaps, close the gap between low- and high performing students (Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., & Taylor, J., 2009).

The first after-school programs were developed by individual men and women with the intent of rescuing children from the physical and moral hazards posed by growing up in the immigrant neighborhoods of major cities. These men and women sought to create protected spaces in storefronts, churches, or other buildings where children might relax, play board games, read, and be provided as much instruction as they would tolerate (Halpern, 2002). The

individuals who developed and supported these programs believed that youth who participate in such programs can benefit academically.

The variety of after-school programs offered for students and the extent of volunteers who are willing to help with aspects of the programs tend to be important, especially among younger children who participate in them. After-school programs (ASPs) increasingly are viewed as a means of supporting children's physical, academic, social, and behavioral development (Springer & Diffily, 2012). Thus, while after-school programs can serve a variety of purposes such as providing safety and supervision, enhancing cultural and community identification and appreciation, and developing social skills and increased competency, improving academic achievement is a common focus among many after-school programs serving minority and low-income families.

Though after-school programs likely would benefit all children, disadvantaged neighborhoods contain fewer after-school programs than more affluent neighborhoods. For this reason, attendance rates in after-school programs among children living in poverty are very low. These observations, along with the results of studies such as those reported by Springer and Diffily (2012) call for an increase in the availability of after-school programs with characteristics similar to Boys' and Girls' Clubs for children growing up in poverty (Springer & Diffily, 2012). The more frequently after-school programs are made available to all students, especially students who live in disadvantaged situations, the greater the chance of producing productive citizens of tomorrow.

De Kanter (2001) reported that since 1994, the number of schools offering programs after-school has doubled, but according to the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2003), there are eight million children between the ages of five and 14 who are unsupervised after

school on a regular basis. Advocates for after-school programs (De Kanter, 2001; Fashola, 2002) have cited increasing public support for the development and funding of after-school programs in public schools.

### **Rationale for and Aspects of After-School Programs**

Studying the outcomes of after-school programs is important for learning how to improve the quality of the programs. Federal support of after-school programs increasingly is tied to empirically substantiated benefits. Funding for after-school programs increased in part because of concerns related to growing number of latchkey children and evidence that juvenile crime peaked between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days (Apsler, 2009). Furthermore, studies related to these issues reported that one in four students do not feel safe walking home alone in their neighborhoods, and 84% of middle school students agree on the need and importance of having a safe place to go after school (Nelson, McMahan, & Torres, 2012). Evaluating the efficiency and the effectiveness of after-school programs is essential to improving the programs' quality and contributions to the students who participate in them. If the programs are found to be effective, it is likely that more funding could be given to enhance the programs and possibly expand them to the neighborhoods of students who are in greatest need of such programs.

Middle school (sometimes known as Junior High School) is a time of transition for students who are becoming more independent than they were in elementary school. Middle school students experience external influences that affect their productivity and success in school. Many of the challenges associated with learning and development in middle school/junior high school have been linked to poor school climate, which can be defined broadly as an environment that is not conducive to meeting the psychological and developmental needs of children (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001).

To enable students to avoid risky behaviors and thrive in middle school/junior high school environments, the school climate needs to support the building of positive student-adult relationships, the development of individual creativity, and the offering and support of wide-ranging opportunities and activities that engage students in constructive and personally meaningful ways (Robinson, 2011). For many schools, these elements of climate construction may be difficult to achieve due to factors such as harmful environments surrounding the school, poor leadership, an overemphasis on high-stakes testing, and/or a lack of sustainable resources (Grills & Ollendick, 2002; Nelson et al., 2012).

### **The Importance and Effectiveness of After-school Programs**

After-school programs offer many potential benefits for students and have become increasingly important as school populations have grown more diverse. Additionally, as data regarding their effectiveness have been offered by researchers, those who plan and create after-school programs have additional support for their endeavors. Zief, Lauver, and Maynard (2006) reported that, after-school programs are increasingly recognized by policymakers as a possible means to boost participants' academic outcomes, especially for those students considered more academically at-risk-low-income minority youth in poor-performing urban schools

#### Influence of After-School Programs on Academic Performance and Attendance

After-school programs have become more widespread in response to the need to provide students with academic enrichment, homework assistance, and supervision during out-of-school hours (Huang & Cho, 2009). Participation in after-school programs is associated with academic benefits for students, in addition to benefits associated with completion and understanding of homework, school attendance, self-development, morale and the students' outlook on school and life. Community partnerships, parent involvement and programs can increase student attendance

rates and significantly improve perceptions of school conditions. The phenomenon of engaging community partners, the business community, and parents in junior high school education is not a new concept. Since the 1970s there have been many attempts by educational reformers to devise innovative ways to connect community organizations with young adults. Research has suggested that family and community involvement in adolescent education has a strong link to improvements in academic achievement, better school attendance, and improved school programs (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Nelson et al., 2012). The amount of time invested in-after-school programs is related positively to a student's academic performance. As reflected in the studies cited above, students who have more frequent mentor-mentee contacts experience greater academic performance in school than students that have less frequent mentor-mentee contacts.

#### Influence of After-School Programs Offering Support for Homework Completion

Students who participate in after-school programs that provide them with optimal environments and support to complete their homework generally demonstrate positive gains in academic achievement resulting from increased student self-confidence and changes in school teachers' perceptions of student efforts (Beck, 1999; Huang, & Cho, 2009). Appropriate homework assignments are essential to a students' academic achievement. In a meta-analysis, Cooper, Robinson, and Patall (2006) found that students who complete homework assignments have higher academic grades than students who do not, (Huang & Cho, 2009). Teachers of students in different grades used homework for different reasons. Teachers in the early grades assigned homework to develop students' work habits, while teachers in the higher grades used homework to enrich and prepare students to participate in class lessons. Zimmerson and Kitsantas (2005) further claimed that homework completion improved student self-efficacy, thus leading to improved academic outcomes (Huang & Cho, 2009).

Homework helps students evaluate what they have learned in class and test their knowledge related to what they have retained and understood from the lesson. While homework may benefit student learning (Bempechat, 2004), for many students, especially students from ethnically and linguistically diverse or low-income backgrounds, completing homework can be a difficult task (Huang & Cho, 2009). Many children do not have a home environment that enables them to complete homework or support; such as parental assistance, a computer, a comfortable study space, or a positive environment to help them do so. Some students do not have adults at home who are able to assist them with their homework due to demands these adults must confront such as work schedules, a lack of English proficiency, or insufficient knowledge of the curriculum. Students who experience situations such as these can benefit from after-school programs. Mentors involved in after-school programs can offer the one on one support and additional help that students need after school that they are not able to receive while they are in school or at home. During one-on-one time with the mentor and given the attention provided by the mentor, students can feel comfortable asking questions that they would not feel free to ask in class about things that they did not understand during class sessions.

#### Influence of After-School Programs on Self-Development

Some mentors in after-school programs are considered to be a significant other, an extended family member, or a role model. Having a positive adult figure in their lives can be very motivating to students. A mentor may be the only positive adult a child has in his or her life at a specific time. Mentors can use motivational strategies to help keep students engaged in what they are learning and help students to set and meet short-term as well as long-term goals. Mentoring programs in schools can be an effective way to increase student attendance, boost morale, and improve students' perceptions about their school experience. When the students

have had the support and help of their parents, the school and the after-school programs in their education, researchers have found significant increases in students' attendance, homework completion, and positive sense of self. Shields (1994) argued that schools have no chance of fundamentally changing school environments without the direct support and engagement of the larger community. Epstein (1995) suggested that "with frequent interactions between school, families, and communities, more students are likely to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, working hard, thinking creatively, helping one another, and staying in school" (Nelson et al., 2012, p. 702).

### **Perceptions and Challenges to Assessing the Effectiveness of After-School Programs**

Views about the effectiveness of after-school programs differ among researchers and other educators. Some researchers such as Apsler (2009) assert that the sample size of the group selected to provide feedback regarding the benefits of the after-school programs did not represent the population well. Selection bias in many studies stemmed from the voluntary nature of participation in after-school programming. Since parents had to give permission for their child or children to participate, differences in program outcomes may have existed between children of parents who elected to give permission versus those of parents who did not. There also may have been differences among youth wanting to participate in the programs as compared to those who did not. Gottfredson, Cross, and Soulé (2007) suggest that students motivated to join after-school programs ". . . are also those who are already on track for prosocial development" (p. 290). Furthermore, these differences may manifest themselves in better academic performance and more prosocial behavior. A more subtle form of selection bias occurred in studies that compared participants in one school offering an after-school program with students in another school where no program existed (Apsler, 2009). Though a student chose to participate in the after-school

program, the presence of low levels of attendance and high attrition resulted in increased selection bias. First, a select group of students chose to enroll in an after-school program, and second, a select subgroup of these enrollees chose to participate frequently in the program. Though some researchers such as Lauer (2006), assert that there is limited evidence to support claims of unqualified program effectiveness, there are other researchers such as Apsler (2009) who argue that many programs appear to promote positive growth and development in general but the degree to which specific programs and their individual elements determined by researchers' claim to be effective can vary.

### Positive and Negative Outcomes Related to After-School Programs

Researchers such as Thomson and Zand (2010) have found many positive results associated with student participation in after-school programs, but some negative outcomes have been reported as well. For example, programs serving mentees during the early stages of adolescence were found to be more likely to result in positive outcomes for student participants than programs serving mentees in later adolescence because younger adolescents appear to be likely to be open to bonding and sharing friendship with an adult mentor than are older adolescents. Also, as children grow older, participation in after-school programs declines. Another feature of after-school programs that appears to relate to positive outcomes is that a one-year or longer mentor-mentee relationship is more likely to produce a measurably better outcome than a shorter one (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Additionally, evidence- and sound practice-based programming tends to predict success (DuBois, et al., 2011). An additional example is that communities often provide programs that neutralize risk factors for chronically under-resourced youth (DuBois, et al., 2002; DuBois, et al., 2011) (Biggs, Musewe & Harvey, 2014). An extensive evaluation of after-school programs was conducted to assess the effect of the 21<sup>st</sup>

Century Community Learning Centers programs on student achievement. Evidence from this evaluation yielded both positive and negative results. Positive results included several findings. Among these findings was that elementary school participants, but not middle school participants, felt safer during after-school hours than non-participants and elementary school participants' parents reported greater attendance at school events than parents of non-participating students. Among the negative outcomes reported were that after-school programs failed to reduce the number of unsupervised students during after-school hours, few academic effects surfaced despite the programs' emphasis on academics, and middle school participants exhibited more negative behavior than controls on some measures and the same amount on others. Additional negative outcomes identified were little evidence of developmental improvements, concern that over half of the middle school students who could have attended the programs' second year chose not to do so, and attendance was low. Middle school students attended approximately 30 days during the school year and elementary students attended about 60 (Apsler, 2009).

Despite the mixed results of studies described above, many educators believe that after-school programs and mentoring programs are beneficial for students. For example, the Black Self Information Help website (2014) lists more than 80 mentoring initiatives designed to support and encourage children. The practitioners' on this website express the conviction that their mentoring efforts can enable adolescents to avoid troubling behaviors, establish healthy relationships within and outside of school, and achieve academically. The belief that adult mentoring of youth is effective also is reflected in the growing number of mentoring programs in the United States. In 2002, approximately 1,700 groups were engaged in mentoring activities (DuBois, et al., 2002). By 2010 researchers estimated that the number had grown to 5,000

(DuBois, et al., 2011). (Biggs et al., 2014)

### Duration of After-School Programs as Related to Program Outcomes

The amount of time a mentee spends at participating in an after-school program is very important to his or her progress in school. Students' attendance at a program frequently has been found to be inaccurately and improperly recorded. Some programs recorded students as present when they arrived at the program for the day, but did not monitor their attendance during the duration of that day. Assessing the impact of after-school programs depends on knowing which students are enrolled and how frequently each student participated. Yet the complexity of what it means to participate in a program has not been addressed by many investigators. Most evaluations of after-school programs simply counted the number of days in which students spent any time in the program. Studies suggest that some attendance policies placed no requirements on frequency of participation. Sporadic student attendance and high levels of student attrition were identified by the authors in many of the studies reviewed. Consequently, analyses of after-school programs typically included only students who chose to attend the programs frequently. Students who arrived for attendance purposes but departed immediately afterwards and others who remained without becoming involved have been counted as participating in many studies. However, the after-school program had had little opportunity to influence these particular students who were included in measures of participant performance (Apsler, 2009).

Some researchers' negative view of after-school programs is related to their conclusion that there are after-school programs that are unstructured and un-monitored. In addition, researchers such as Apsler (2009) found it difficult to evaluate in an appropriate manner the progress of a student from the amount of time spent at a program with a mentor. Determining the role of a program's duration as related to student outcomes was complex. Programs that

lasted more than 45 hours had a greater impact on students' academic performance in both reading and mathematics than the effect of shorter programs, but only up to a point. Reading programs of more than 210 hours in duration and mathematics programs of more than 100 hours resulted in no improvement in outcomes (Apsler, 2009)

### **Summary**

In summary, this literature review discussed the history of and rationale for after-school programs and findings and issues related to assessment of how beneficial and effective after-school mentoring programs are for middle school students. After-school programs are critical to children and families today (Afterschool Alliance, 2003). The programs can improve at-risk school students' academic performance, attendance records and morale, and change their outlook on school for the better. After-school programs also can offer students a safe and positive place to be after-school. Though after-school programs generally are considered to be effective in improving student achievement, some researchers cite evidence that evaluations of after-school mentoring programs are biased in their sample selection and that the effect of the programs depends on the time provided and actually spent with the mentees. This literature review indicates that while after-school programs may have positive benefits for children, more rigorous evaluations are necessary to document this potential in a convincing manner. In addition, some researchers have speculated that after-school programs may have different effects on different subgroups of children. This is an important consideration that tends to be ignored in research on these programs (Apsler, 2009). Research such as that reported by Biggs et al. (2014) indicates that students who have more mentor-mentee contact perform significantly better than students who have fewer mentor-mentee contacts. Given the appropriate intensity and nature of engagement in after-school programs, these programs can place students on the path to success.

Further research is warranted to determine what elements within after-school programs benefit students most significantly and in the most cost-effective manner.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

Educators continually seek ways to provide help and support for at-risk students who struggle academically and personally. One such intervention is to provide after-school programs for students. This study was conducted to determine how effective teachers perceived after-school programs to be at meeting the academic and social needs of their at-risk students.

#### **Design**

This study utilized a descriptive design and included a survey to collect feedback from teachers who were taking graduate courses in Education at a Liberal Arts college in Baltimore County. The survey assessed teachers' views of the need for and benefits of after-school programs for enhancing the academic and personal growth of at-risk students. Of interest were the teacher perceptions of the effects of the after-school programs which were intended to provide guidance, mentoring, leadership, and tutoring services to at-risk students who struggle academically and personally.

#### **Participants**

The participants in this study were teachers from different schools in the state of Maryland who were enrolled as students in three classes in a Graduate Program in Education at a Liberal Arts College in Baltimore County. This sample consisted of 53 respondents. Of these respondents, 47 provided their gender, 11 of whom were male and 36 of whom were females.

#### **Instrument**

The data for this study were collected through an anonymous written survey administered to teachers in three graduate classes at a Liberal Arts College. The survey was developed by the researcher. The survey, located in Appendix A, consisted of nine main questions. One question

gathered ratings using a 5-point scale from the teachers on the level of improvement they viewed in their students who participated in after-school programs. The questions on the survey gathered data regarding demographics and work situations of the teachers, whether their schools offered and students participated in after-school programs and what their views were on after-school programs for at-risk students. The questions on the survey were developed based on the researcher's review of literature and her interest in learning more about how after-school programs can be beneficial and appealing to students who are at-risk academically and personally.

No validity or reliability information was available for the survey as the researcher developed it for initial use based on her recent review of related literature. The questions in the survey were based upon the contents of two existing surveys. One of these was the *Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA)* instrument, developed by HighScope Education Research Foundation, 2005, which was used to assess the best practices in settings such as after-school programs, community organizations, schools, and summer programs. The second was the *Determining Needs in Your Ministry Survey*, developed by Benson and Williams (1987), which was used to serve as a guide to youth program operators as they target teenagers' concerns.

The researcher piloted the survey with several individuals to ensure that the survey did not take more than 10 minutes to complete. Additionally, the pilot was conducted to ensure that each item included on the survey was clear.

### **Procedure**

Approval to administer the written survey in their classes was requested of and given by three professors at the Liberal Arts College. The professor(s) agreed to allow the teachers

enrolled in their classes to complete the written survey in class if they were willing to do so. Ten minutes were allocated by the professor(s) to have the teachers complete the written survey. The teachers were given a brief description of the researchers' study and the reason that their participation was requested. Once the surveys were completed by the teachers, the data were collected and the information provided by the teachers was recorded in a database for analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate teachers' views of the need for and effectiveness of after-school programs for helping at-risk school students succeed academically and personally. A review of the literature suggested that after-school programs are viewed as needed and beneficial to many students who struggle academically and personally. Teachers' perceptions based on their experience with such programs and their perceptions of their students' needs were assessed using a survey developed by the researcher.

#### Respondent Characteristics

Fifty-five surveys were returned to the researcher after she attended three graduate classes and asked students enrolled in those classes who were teachers to participate in this brief study. Two of the participants' responded only to anonymous demographic items, so their responses were not included in the analyses. Therefore, the sample consisted of 53 actual respondents. Of those respondents, 25 were enrolled in ED 672 (Assessing Needs and Evaluating Progress), 19 in ED 673 (School Improvement Leadership: Facilitating a Positive School Culture) and nine in ED 680 (Theories of Learning). Of the respondents, 47 reported their gender; 36 of whom were females and 11 of whom were males.

Respondents were asked to report how many years of teaching experience they had. Those data are reported in Table 1 below and revealed a wide range, from 1 to 37 years, with a mean of 7.46 years of experience.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Years of Experience*

<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>SEM</b>
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1-37	7.46	51	7.28	1.02
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The grade levels at which the respondents’ currently teach also were requested. Many respondents reported teaching at multiple levels and possibly at more than one school. The grades taught ranged from Pre K to grade 12. Grade levels for respondents who reported teaching at one school level were sorted by elementary (preK-5), middle (grades 6-8) or high school (grades -12) levels and tallied. Results indicated that of the teachers responding to the survey, most, or 24, reported working in elementary school settings. Results of that tally follow in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Grade Level Taught by Respondents Reporting Teaching at One School Level*

<b>School Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent of respondents tallied (45)</b>	<b>Percent of total respondents (53)</b>
Elementary	24	53.3	45.3
Middle	8	17.8	15.1
High School	13	28.9	24.5

Eight different school districts were represented among the 51 respondents. Two participants did indicate an employer in their responses to the survey. One of the non-respondents reported experience with an after-school program in China. The other simply left the district information blank on the survey. Of the 51 individuals who did respond to this item on

the survey, 38 or 74.5% reported teaching in Baltimore County Public Schools. The next most frequent employer reportedly was Anne Arundel County Public Schools with five or 9.8% of respondents indicating they worked there. The other six districts reported ranged from having one to three teachers each and included Baltimore City, Montgomery, Howard, Fairfax, and Harford County Public Schools and a private school in the city of Baltimore.

**School Characteristics and After-School Programs**

Fifty-one respondents responded to an item indicating whether or not their schools were Title I schools. Of their schools, 24 or 47% were not Title I schools and 27 or 53% were.

Forty-two out of 52 respondents (80.8%) replied to Item Six by reporting that there was an after-school program offered within their school building or campus and 10 (19.2%) said that there was not. To determine whether the presence of after-school programs on campus was similar for schools with or without Title I status, the data were split and the responses for each tallied. Results follow in Table 3 and were similar across Title I designations.

Table 3

*Incidence of After-School Programs on Campus or Not Broken Down by Title I Status*

	N	Percent
<b>Have After-School Program on campus</b>		
<i>Title I</i>	20	76.9
<i>Not Title I</i>	20	83.3
<b>No After-School Program on campus</b>		
<i>Title I</i>	6	23.1
<i>Not Title I</i>	4	16.7

### **After-school Programs: Types and Interaction with Teachers**

Item 7 was presented on the survey as a table which contained a series of questions intended to gather information about the type of after-school programs the teachers' current students attended and the interaction between program staff and teachers. Analyses of the responses follow.

Teachers listed the programs in which their students were currently enrolled. A summary of how many were enrolled in those programs (which included sports, academic interventions and hobby-related clubs) follows in Table 4. Because teachers replied about their students' use of and teacher interaction with up to four programs each, the data were aggregated and tallied by responses rather than by teachers. The types and names of the programs follow, as well as how many times they were cited by teachers as having their students enrolled in them.

Table 4

*Programs and Frequency Teachers Reported Them Used by Current Students*

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Frequency Type of Program was Listed by Respondents</b>
<b>School Sports</b>	10
Athletics	
Fall, Winter, Spring Sports	
Girls Basketball	
Intramurals	

<p>Sports</p> <p>Squash</p> <p>Sussex Singers</p> <p>Track and Field</p> <p>Volleyball</p>	
<p><b>Arts and Crafts/Hobbies</b></p> <p>Band/Music</p> <p>Board Games</p> <p>Buck Band</p> <p>CAD</p> <p>Face to Face guitar</p> <p>GEM</p> <p>Robotics</p> <p>Step Team</p> <p>TV Studio</p>	<p>11</p>
<p><b>Tutoring Interventions</b></p> <p>After-school math program</p> <p>After-school reading</p> <p>Apex-credit recovery</p> <p>BLS (behavior invention program) program</p> <p>Child Care</p>	<p>21</p>

<p>Coach Class</p> <p>Destination Imagination</p> <p>Extended Day</p> <p>Math Academy</p> <p>Math Tutoring</p> <p>Math-dreambox Intervention</p> <p>Open door</p> <p>Play Center</p> <p>Project Steam</p> <p>Read Natural</p> <p>Scholarly Men</p> <p>Scorpion Success</p> <p>Social Skills Group</p> <p>Tuoguan (in China)</p> <p>Twilight</p> <p>Y of Maryland After-school program</p>	
<p><b>Academic Teams or Clubs</b></p> <p>24 Club</p> <p>24 math Club</p> <p>Academic and non-academic Clubs</p> <p>AVID</p> <p>Black Saga</p> <p>Boys in the good</p>	<p>37</p>

Bricks 4 kids	
CAP (Career Awareness Program)	
Chaverim "Friends"	
Chess Club	
Club Sports	
Club	
Dance Club	
Drama Club	
FBLA	
Girls and Boys Group	
Girls on the run	
Good News Club	
Lego Club	
Magnolia Achievers	
Modeling Club	
Mural Club	
Newspaper Club	
Photo Club	
Record Club	
RPG Club	
Science Club	
Study Skill	
Yugioh Club	

Teachers reported that a total of 86 students reportedly attended programs located in their schools and four attended programs outside the school.

In addition to listing them, teachers were asked to report how many of their students attended each after-school program they listed. Responses ranged from 0 to 80, indicating some were very well-attended while others had few attendees from the respondents' classes. (Note that on this item as well as a few others, some teachers made responses that did not correspond exactly with what was asked. For example, this item asked teachers to list programs which their students attended and how many attended them. Hence, "zero" does not fit as a response, yet some respondents did reply with "zero". Some also reported ranges of attendees, i.e., "20-70" as well, which made exact calculations of attendees at each program impossible. Despite these types of responses, the reported frequency of attendees per program was relatively low and similar across all respondents' listed programs.) Ten was the modal response, with seven teachers reporting 10 children attended a program they listed and six teachers reporting that 15 children attended such programs.

Below are tallies of the average frequencies with which and ways teachers reported corresponding each week with after-school program staff about each student who attended them. Frequencies ranged from zero (never), which was the modal response and was reported 35 times, to five times a week, which was reported twice. Once a week was the second most frequently reported average number of correspondences per week, with 25 reports. The distribution of responses to this item was quite positively skewed, peaking at zero to one time per week. Methods of correspondence with after-school programs also were assessed in Item 7. The methods and how often they were reported as used were tallied and are summarized below in

Table 5.

Table 5

*Frequency of Use of Each Method of Correspondence with Programs*

<b>Method of communication</b>	<b>Frequency reported used</b>
Email	47
Conference/conversation	20
Written notes	7
Phone	4
Text messages	1
Don't correspond	1
Behavior/rating charts	1
Total	81

Of the 81 reported methods of correspondence used (some teachers reported using more than one method), e-mail was resoundingly the most commonly used. As seen in Table 5, 47 teachers reported that they communicate with after-school program staff using e-mail.

The last question in the table comprising Item 7 asked respondents to rate how helpful they felt their communication with after-school programs they listed was for “enabling them to support the student’s success at school and in the after-school program.” Some teachers, as noted, listed more than one program, and 59 replies to this item were provided. Ratings focused on the amount of communication and ranged from 1 to 5 using the scale below. The frequency of each response is reported in Table 6 below.

*Table 6*

*Ratings of Helpfulness of Communication between Teachers and After-School Programs*

Ratings	Frequency chosen by respondents for the programs they listed
1=I would like more communication	19
2=The communication level is basically adequate	13
3=The communication level is mutually satisfactory	25
4=The communication is a bit too frequent or time- consuming but helpful	1
5=The communication is too much and beyond what is relevant to help my student	1
Total responses	59

Tallying the responses yielded a positively skewed distribution with most teachers reporting that they were satisfied with or would like more communication with their students' after-school program staff. Only 2 out of 59 responses given indicated that the communication was too much, and one of those chose option 4, which indicated that despite the volume, it still was helpful.

**Teacher Views of After-school Programs' Effects**

Item 8 on the survey assessed teachers' views of the effect of after-school programs on a variety of personal characteristics and behaviors of students that relate to school adjustment and academic performance. The item asked respondents to consider their overall experience with students in their class who have participated in an after-school program(s) in or outside of their school in the past two years and rate their impression of the students' changes in each area listed below after the participation in the after-school program using a five-point Likert type rating

scale. Ratings ranged from 1, “this worsened significantly”, to 5, “this improved significantly”. An option for “don’t know” also was provided. Table 7 summarizes the frequency with which each of these ratings was reported by the 52 responding teachers. Most responses appeared to fall between no changes being seen and significant improvements being observed although not all students appear to have benefited in many categories. It was notable that no reports of worsening in attendance or overall academic growth were made and the vast majority of ratings of the effects of after-school programs on overall personal growth were neutral or positive.

Table 7

*Tally of Effects of After- School Programs on Student Characteristics*

	<b>Frequency of Ratings</b> 0=don’t know 1=this worsened significantly 2=this worsened slightly 3=no notable changes 4=this improved slightly 5=this improved significantly					
<b><i>Ratings</i></b>	<b><i>0</i></b>	<b><i>1</i></b>	<b><i>2</i></b>	<b><i>3</i></b>	<b><i>4</i></b>	<b><i>5</i></b>
<b>Class Participation Level</b>	3	0	1	10	17	4
<b>Grades</b>	1	1	1	8	20	4
<b>Homework Completion Rate</b>	5	2	1	11	12	4
<b>Social Adjustment</b>	3	2	0	7	14	9
<b>Cooperation with teachers/authority</b>	1	1	4	8	16	5
<b>Attendance</b>	3	0	0	20	8	4
<b>Attitude/Mood</b>	1	0	2	7	19	5

<b>Satisfaction with School</b>	3	0	1	10	13	7
<b>Involvement in school activities</b>	2	0	1	7	10	14
<b>Social Skills</b>	0	0	1	10	15	8
<b>Overall Academic Growth</b>	0	0	0	13	17	3
<b>Overall Personal Growth</b>	1	0	1	8	16	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>75</b>

Table 8 contains the means and standard deviations of the ratings given for the effects of the recent after-school programs which teachers recalled in item 8.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of Effects of After-School Programs on Student Characteristics*

	<b>Mean ratings for teachers who chose 1-5</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Class Participation Level</b>	3.43	1.27	35
<b>Grades</b>	3.63	1.03	35
<b>Homework Completion Rate</b>	3.00	1.55	35
<b>Social Adjustment</b>	3.54	1.48	35
<b>Cooperation with teachers/authority</b>	3.49	1.15	35
<b>Attendance</b>	3.20	1.21	35
<b>Attitude/Mood</b>	3.71	1.00	34
<b>Satisfaction with School</b>	3.50	1.35	34
<b>Involvement in school activities</b>	3.91	1.31	34

<b>Social Skills</b>	3.88	.81	34
<b>Overall Academic Growth</b>	3.70	.64	33
<b>Overall Personal Growth</b>	3.82	1.03	34

### **Teacher Views of Students’ Needs for After-School Supports**

Item 9 asked what teachers felt were the greatest impediments to the personal and/or academic success of “at-risk” students at their school and questioned whether they were aware of available after-school programs to address those needs and whether they had ideas about how to meet them. The impediments cited are summarized below in Table 9.

Table 9

#### *Teacher Reports of Impediments to the Personal and/or Academic Success of At-Risk Students*

<b>Impediments</b>	<b>Frequency cited by respondents</b>
Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untrained Staff</li> <li>• Low Staffing</li> <li>• Not enough help to support students</li> </ul>	3
Home Life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty</li> <li>• Homes needs not being met</li> <li>• Unstable home environment</li> </ul>	7
Parental and Family Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent involvement</li> <li>• Lack of support at home</li> <li>• Attendance</li> </ul>	20
Social and Academic Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic deficits behaviors</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Poor social skills</li> </ul>	10
Teachers and Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources and commitment</li> <li>• Lack of high expectations</li> </ul>	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich meaningful and engaging instructions</li> </ul>	
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Item 9 also asked respondents to report about their familiarity with and opinions about after-school programs which might address the greatest impediment they listed. The frequencies with which they replied Yes, No or Don't Know to the following items and their assessment of family interest in such programs if they were available are presented in Table 10. Responses appear to suggest that many teachers did not know of after-school programs that addressed specific needs they see in their students. Further, it appears that if such programs were available, teachers felt more families would be willing to have their students participate in them than not.

Table 10

*Teachers' Familiarity with and Opinions about After-School Programs*

Item	Frequency of response			
	Yes	No	Don't Know	N
Are you familiar with any after-school programs in your school or community that are intended to address this (impediment)	13	23	9	45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you said YES, have you seen evidence that these programs are successful in working to</li> </ul>	9	2	2	13

address the impediment you identified?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you said NO, do you feel an after-school program COULD help address or meet this need?</li> </ul>	20	1	6	27	
<b>Rating</b>	<b>1=none</b>	<b>2=maybe some</b>	<b>3=yes some</b>	<b>4=definitely many</b>	<b>5=nearly all</b>
Do you feel families in your school would be interested in a program that incorporated these elements?  N=34	0	8	15	7	4

Table 11 lists reasons the respondents felt after-school programs are effective and not effective. From the 32 responses received from the teachers, 27 responses were given that after-school programs are effective in comparison to 5 not effective responses.

Table 11

*Reasons Why After-School Programs Are Effective or Not for Intended Issues Addressed*

<b>Reason Programs Effective</b>	<b>Frequency Cited</b>	<b>Reason Programs Not Effective</b>	<b>Frequency Cited</b>
Tutoring/Mentoring	7	Family Support	2
Student Involvement	4	Customization	1

Social Skills	3	Ineffective Teachers	1
Parent Involvement	2	Intensity	1
Staff Support	2		
Transportation	2		
Activities	2		
Safe Environment	1		
Structure	1		
Team Building	1		
Resources for Parents	1		
Community Involvement	1		

In order to assess their ideas directly, teacher respondents were also asked to list up to three elements of an effective after-school program. Their responses are tallied below in Table 12 and suggest that the most common key element teachers identified was academic support.

Table 12

*Key Elements of an Effective After-School Program*

<b>Key Elements</b>	<b>Frequency suggested</b>
Academics	8
Activities/Student "buy in"	4
Communication	4
Consistency/Stability	3
Diverse leadership/Effective Staff	3
Engagement/Structure	9
Meet Parents Needs	5
Mentoring/Tutoring/Role Models	3
Parent/Family Involvement	7
Relationships/Team Building	4

Rewards	1
School/Student Involvement	4
Social Skills	3
Teacher/Student Group	1

Finally, in addition to asking about what after-school programs should do to help at-risk students with the main impediments to success which respondents listed, the researcher also was interested to know what those teachers felt they could do within the schools themselves to help these students. Their responses were tallied and are summarized in Table 13. These responses indicated that teachers and schools can help at-risk students by caring, going the extra mile, listening to the voices of the students, building a relationship with parents and students, and engaging the community more effectively.

Table 13

*The Main Thing Teachers at Their School Could Do to Better Help Children Deal with the Impediment They Have Observed*

<b>Suggested Help from/by School</b>	<b>Frequency Suggested</b>
Compassionate	10
Support Teachers and Staff	7
Communication	4
Relationships	4
Growth	2
Community	1
Engagement	1

Expectations	1
Inclusion	1
Interaction	1
One on One Support	1
Preparation	1
Structure	1

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether teacher perceptions suggest that after-school programs are effective and beneficial to at-risk students who struggle academically and personally. Additionally, the study sought to receive suggestions from teachers about how teachers themselves can help at-risk students who need support.

Survey results suggested that after-school programs often are perceived as beneficial and effective for helping at-risk students, but not at the level the researcher anticipated. Responses highlighted several factors which contribute to the effectiveness of after-school programs. Many teacher respondents reported that they have students who attended a variety of after-school programs within or outside of their schools. Interestingly, a majority of programs were offered in the schools or on the school campuses.

When asked how helpful communications with the after-school program were, the majority of the teachers responded that the communication is mutually satisfactory, followed closely by those who would like to receive more communication. Most of the communication between the teachers and the after-school programs reportedly occurred by e-mail. Though e-mail provides a rapid and easily shared means of communication for teachers, after-school programs, families, and students, it has some disadvantages. Desirability of including parents in communications was not assessed in the survey, but likely would be beneficial to ensure all caregivers are working together on common goals to help students. Although e-mail could enable such collaboration, all individuals involved would need internet, computer and smart phone access which could be a barrier to families who cannot afford them.

As shown in Table 7, above, when they were asked to rate their overall perceptions of a

list of potential changes they have seen in at-risk students who attended after-school programs, the majority of the teachers' responses regarding the targeted behaviors or attitudes tended to be positive. One hundred and nineteen responses indicated that no notable changes were observed and 252 responses indicated that slight to greater improvement was observed. Only 19 responses indicated any worsening of the academic and personal characteristics assessed and 23 responses indicated that teachers did not know about how the programs affected the students' behaviors or attitudes.

When asked to share what they thought was the greatest impediment to the personal and/or academic success of at-risk students at their school, lack of parental support and involvement was cited most frequently. This response may suggest that the parents did not understand the school curriculum, did not have the learning resources at home, and/or were unable to participate in school events or communications for various reasons which may have included working multiple jobs.

Finally, the study gathered suggestions from teachers about what teachers themselves can do from the school setting to help at-risk students who struggle academically or personally. Teachers' suggestions included providing structure, positive leadership, and communication. Overall, their suggestions to indicate that they believed empathy or caring and collaboration between and among teachers, communities, families and after-school programs could result in more personal and academic success for at-risk students.

### **Implications**

Based on their survey responses, teachers appeared to believe that after-school programs can benefit at-risk students, but for them to be effective, the involvement of parents, teachers, and the community is needed. As one teacher noted on the survey, the main thing schools can do

to address these needs is, “Care! Go the extra mile to help them succeed!!!” This heightened involvement might be supported by implementing programs and activities during after-school hours as well as during the school day. Overall, the teachers’ responses indicated that they cared about the well-being of the students and that they observed potential and actual benefits of students’ participation in a range of after-school programs.

### **Threats to Validity**

A few elements threatened the validity of this study. One factor was that some teachers did not fully complete the survey and some filled in some items with responses that did not relate to the questions, even when the questions were clear to most respondents. In an effort to avoid such issues, the survey was piloted with several individuals to ensure that the survey did not take more than 10 minutes to complete and that each item on the survey was clear. Despite those efforts, some misinterpretations were made which compromised the researcher’s ability to compute statistics on some data or to interpret some responses with confidence.

Another element that threatened the validity of this study was whether all the after-school programs listed by the teachers actually matched the operational definition of an after-school program of the type that was of interest to the researcher. Additionally, some teachers reported very high numbers of their students (up to 80) as participating in after-school programs. This response suggested that they may have been referring to school-wide activities or behavior management plans rather than therapeutically-oriented after-school programs.

Another element that may have threatened the validity of this study is the possibility that teachers may not have answered all items candidly or thoroughly. This warrants noting as, when asked about the effects of after-school programs on students’ characteristics, some teachers rated the effects on each characteristic identically, which seems unlikely to reflect their actual

experiences. Based on these response patterns, it appears possible that some participants may have felt pressure to comply despite the voluntary nature of the study but did not feel compelled to respond accurately or thoroughly to all items.

### **Comparisons with Other Studies**

As did studies reviewed in Chapter Two, the results of this study suggested that teachers believe that after-school programs can be effective and beneficial for at-risk students. Key elements that were shared about what makes after-school programs effective included, “positive diverse leadership, consistency, and connection to school/communication.” These perceptions are similar to the findings of Nelson et al. (2012), who found that frequent interactions between and among schools, families, and communities resulted in more students likely being able to receive common messages from various people about the importance of school, working hard, thinking creatively, helping one another, and staying in school.

Teachers participating in this study shared perceptions of changes they had observed in students over the past two years in a variety of characteristics and behaviors following their participation in after-school programs. These perceptions were shared using a five-point scale in their responses to survey questions. As noted above, most ratings ranged from not notable to great improvement. These findings are similar to the findings of Huang et al. (2010) evaluation project, which was to create resources and professional development that addresses issues relating to the establishment and sustainability of after-school programs. For Years two and three of the evaluation project, day-school teachers were included in the survey administration. Huang et al. (2010) found that, the teachers noticed positive changes in students’ behaviors in terms of school attendance, frequency of classroom participation, effort given to school work, paying attention in class, and discipline problems.

## **Implications for Future Research**

Given these results suggesting that teachers perceive after-school programs as needed and helpful on many counts, future studies should continue to examine the potential benefits and effectiveness of such programs for at-risk students. It would be interesting to clarify what programs work most effectively and perhaps most efficiently and economically, to address particular needs of students and to solicit input from participants, parents, and after-school program staff as well as from teachers. Perspectives of the staff who work/volunteer at after-school programs could yield insights about what they believe the program offer that is most helpful for students and what the program appears to be lacking. Perspectives of both school teachers and the staff of the after-school programs may reveal what is working for the students, what is not working for the students, and what could be added to benefit the students in both settings. Student and parent views of how after-school programs support or fail to address the students' academic performance and/or personal needs would offer useful information for individuals who plan and implement after-school programs. Such information may yield improvements which encourage others to attend after-school programs and enable programs to receive support from schools or school districts and possibly access additional funding.

Researchers conducting future studies should pilot their surveys and data collection tools, as was done in this study, and provide clear and thorough definitions of "after-school programs" in their instructions. These steps would help to ensure that data obtained from the research would accurately reflect perceptions and results of the interventions assessed.

Researchers conducting future studies also should consider studying the accessibility and appropriateness of after-school programs for students at particular ages/developmental stages. Providing and making after-school programs appropriate and accessible to children of all ages

might increase the number of students who attend and enable more participants to attain greater long-term academic and personal gains, particularly if problems are addressed constructively and early in the students' school experience. Finally, future studies should investigate the effects and benefits of funding after-school programs. Comparisons between programs addressing similar needs and serving similar populations might help determine what programs work best and are most cost-effective.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this research was to investigate teachers' views of the need for and effectiveness of after-school programs for helping at-risk school students with academic and personal needs. To gather the teachers' views, the researcher created a voluntary, anonymous written survey which was completed by 53 respondents who enrolled in three graduate courses in Education.

It was found that although many types of after-school programs are offered, not all address student needs that their teachers identified as common or the greatest impediments to personal or academic success of at-risk school students. The survey results did suggest that after-school programs were perceived to be effective and beneficial to at-risk school students in many instances. Respondents also expressed that they could take some responsibility and ownership in offering support for at-risk students. Findings affirm that there is a wide variety of programs offered for at-risk students, and that these programs are helpful for many student participants. Further, results from the study revealed that the majority of teachers support the concept of after-school programs and that they often recognize improvement in the academic performance and behaviors of their students who attend them. Continued research is warranted to determine how after-school programs can address students' most pressing academic and personal needs most

effectively.

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**APPENDIX A**

**TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS SURVEY**

Survey # \_\_\_\_ Gender: M F Class in which survey was completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in or circle responses for the following items:

1. \_\_\_\_ How many years have you been teaching?
2. \_\_\_\_ What grade(s) do you teach?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ In which district do you teach?
4. \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ Which grades levels are in the building in which you currently teach?
5. Yes No Is your school a Title I school?
6. Yes No Is an after-school program offered within your school building or campus?
7. If you have students who attend an After-School Program, please fill in the table below. *(If you have students enrolled in more than 4 programs, please list them on the back, thank you.)*

Program Name	Is this program located within your school building/campus <i>(Please circle one)</i>	Number of your students attending this program	On average, how many times per week do you correspond with staff at the program about each student who attends it? <i>(Please circle one option)</i>	How do you correspond with staff at these programs? <i>(Please circle all that apply)</i>	Please rate the degree to which you feel the communication is helpful for enabling you to support the student's success at school and in the after-school program using this scale:  1=I would like more communication 2=The communication level is basically adequate 3=The communication level is mutually satisfactory 4=The communication is a bit too frequent or time-consuming but helpful 5=The communication is too much and beyond what is relevant to help my student
A.	Yes          No		0 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5	Email Written notes Phone calls Conferences Other: (please fill in:_____)	1    2    3    4    5

B.	Yes  No		0 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5	Email Written notes Phone calls Conferences Other: (please fill in:_____)	1 2 3 4 5
C.	Yes  No		0 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5	Email Written notes Phone calls Conferences Other: (please fill in:_____)	1 2 3 4 5
D.	Yes  No		0 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5	Email Written notes Phone calls Conferences Other: (please fill in:_____)	1 2 3 4 5

8. Please consider **your OVERALL experience with students in your class who have participated in an after-school program(s)** in or outside of your school in the past 2 years. Then please rate your impression of the students' changes in each area listed below after the participation in the after-school program using the following scale.

	<b>Ratings</b> 0=don't know 1=this worsened significantly 2=this worsened slightly 3=no notable changes 4=this improved slightly 5=this improved significantly	<b>Comments about what changes you've observed</b> <i>(if possible)</i>
<b>Class Participation Level</b>		
<b>Grades</b>		
<b>Homework Completion Rate</b>		
<b>Social Adjustment</b>		
<b>Cooperation with teachers/authority</b>		
<b>Attendance</b>		
<b>Attitude/Mood</b>		
<b>Satisfaction with School</b>		
<b>Involvement in school activities</b>		
<b>Social Skills</b>		
<b>Overall Academic Growth</b>		
<b>Overall Personal Growth</b>		

9. Please fill in the chart below based on your perceptions of at-risk students at your school.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Your response</b> ( <i>circle one or fill in</i> )
What do you think is the greatest impediment to the personal and/or academic success of “at-risk” students’ at your school?	
Are you familiar with any after-school programs in your school or community that are intended to address this?	YES NO DON'T KNOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you said YES, have you seen evidence that these programs are successful in working to address the impediment you identified?</li> </ul>	YES NO DON'T KNOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Based on your reply directly above, what do you think are the 3 main reasons any of these programs are effective or not?</li> </ul>	1. 2. 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you said NO, do you feel an after-school program COULD help address or meet this need?</li> </ul>	YES NO DON'T KNOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What would be the 3 key elements of an effective after-school program?</li> </ul>	1. 2. 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you feel families in your school would be interested in a program that incorporated these elements?</li> </ul>	None would Maybe some would Yes some would Definitely many would Nearly all would
Please list the main thing you think teachers at your school could do to better help children deal with the impediment you stated above.	

***Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!!!!***