

Survivors' Test For Successful After School Initiatives



Can your afterschool and summer programs handle the heat and pressure to survive/be sustained? Take this test and see how your programs score.

I. The first ingredient for surviving is that your program has to be successful and full of quality elements. How does your program stack up? On each element rate your program from 10 to 1 (high to low).

Success and Quality Ingredients-The "Six E's":

_____ **ENGAGING** (A rating of "10" should have at least these indicators.)

- ✓ The children truly "get into" the learning projects and they are designed to help them in school.
- ✓ We are aggressively reaching out to children who need extra time and help to achieve and have a significant percentage of students and families who previously were not involved.
- ✓ The young people in our program participate almost everyday.

_____ **ENRICHING**

- ✓ The students regularly participate in intentional learning opportunities that reinforce and stretch their skills (e.g., the arts, technology, 2nd and 3rd languages, interest clubs—chess, filming).
- ✓ The learning activities are linked to the school day, help the children "catch up and keep up," but are not "drill and kill" worksheets; however, they do embed state academic standards.
- ✓ Families and neighbors have chances to strengthen their skills and education levels.

_____ **EXTRA CONNECTIONS, HANDS AND HOPE**

- ✓ Participants have mentors and tutors to learn basic skills and see first-hand how their learning relates to their future (e.g., senior citizens, college students as well as from local businesses).
- ✓ Civic, arts, youth, and faith-based groups and CBO's help deliver engaging and enriching content and connect the young people and their families to positive activities in the community.

_____ **EDUCATIONAL EXPERTISE ALSO FLOWS FROM THE SCHOOLS TO THE COMMUNITY**

- ✓ The school's learning resources (e.g., library, computers, fitness equipment, drama and music facilities, and language labs) are made available as organized community learning centers.
- ✓ Students do community service - - - teach what they know to adults and senior citizens (e.g., computers, 2nd languages), maintain neighborhood libraries, and tutor younger students.

_____ **EXCELLENCE and HIGH EXPECTATIONS**

- ✓ Student and teacher work and community projects are displayed "everywhere" in the school and in the community (e.g., special presentations, art work, science and service projects).
- ✓ Very direct connections are made to help parents and students see and learn the pathway to college and promising careers.

_____ **BONUS "E":** Add 10 points if energetic (even at 5PM and in the middle of the summer) staff teach and run each of your classes and programs, and they regularly up-grade their skills and link to the regular classroom teachers and community groups.

_____ **Subtotal:** What is your score on this first half of After School Survivor Test?

II. The second ingredient for surviving and sustaining after school and summer programs is diversified funding and strong school-family-community connections. Do you have them?

Rate Each Element from 10 to 1 (high to low):

_____ ***PARENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUPPORT*** (A rating of 10 should include all indicators)

- ✓ The activities and projects reflect what families want to enhance their children's opportunities and to enhance their own skills, and we have an easily accessible parent resource center.
- ✓ Parents and family members regularly contribute in a variety of ways (e.g., volunteering time, paying on a sliding fee schedule), and they bring in other community resources.

_____ ***DIVERSIFIED FUNDING***

- ✓ We are entrepreneurial and position ourselves for new funding opportunities (e.g., Title I Supplemental Services, AmeriCorps) and seek funding from city and county governments.
- ✓ We are staffed to handle a mixture of local, state, federal, and private funding.
- ✓ The local school board, superintendent, town and county leaders, and United Way support our programs because we supply them and other key leaders with solid evaluation data.
- ✓ We are studying the potential of forming a 501-c3 nonprofit group and developing a fund raising plan.

_____ ***"IN-KIND" RESOURCES ARE FULLY USED***

- ✓ We have the buy-in of key teachers and the principal and use the school's computer and language labs, library, and art and music rooms.
- ✓ We recruit, organize and train college and high school students as tutors as well as reach out to members of faith-based organizations and employers to secure mentors.
- ✓ Parks, recreation and the public libraries are working with us, and our activities are connected.

_____ ***WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIPS***

- ✓ Local colleges and universities help middle and high school students experience the possibilities of going to college and even provide seminars in critical "gate opening courses" for college access (e.g., science, math, Advanced Placement courses, 2nd and 3rd languages).
- ✓ Local museums, public libraries, and cultural facilities offer projects at their sites and ours.
- ✓ Law enforcement and safe community programs are partners.
- ✓ Communities in Schools, Y's, 4-H, Junior Achievement, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Big Brother Big Sister are offering what they do best and work in partnership, including on transportation.

_____ ***BUILDING SENIOR CITIZEN, LOCAL BUSINESS, AND PUBLIC SUPPORT***

- ✓ Retirees are both recruited as volunteers and provided programs as lifelong learners.
- ✓ We researched what local businesses would like to contribute and seek that support.
- ✓ We have a well organized public awareness campaign, including using the AfterSchool Alliance ads, and Lights-On. We sponsor visits of officials to our programs, create special events and press releases to highlight our successes, and we have an organized and active speakers' bureau.

_____ ***Subtotal: What is your score on the second half of After School Survivor Test?***

_____ ***BONUS:*** Add 10 points if you and 10 of your local colleagues are lobbying regularly for more state and federal funding for after school and build alliances with other groups in these efforts.

_____ ***TOTAL SCORE:*** (Out of 120)

Do you think this is high enough to survive 5-10 years? What are you going to do about it? When? You can sustain your program!!

- Dr. Terry Peterson, Director of the Afterschool and Community Learning Network and Senior Fellow at the University of South Carolina and College of Charleston, prepared this for you.
- ***Rate his test:*** _____
- Please tell him about your survivor successes: FAX 843.576.6198.
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