



American Youth
Policy Forum

Afterschool and Workforce: *Opportunities for System-Level Alignment*

An American Youth Policy Forum White Paper

Carinne Deeds

Olivia Thomas

American Youth Policy Forum

I. Introduction

Employers in every sector have emphasized the need for a well-rounded, highly skilled workforce. Recent survey data indicates that over 90% of business leaders think American workers are not as skilled as they need to be.¹ According to the Business Roundtable, CEOs around the country have noticed a particular gap in “employability skills” such as effective communication, critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving.²

To address this gap, youth development leaders, including those in the afterschool sector, have worked to provide high quality skill-building experiences inside and outside of the classroom.³ Afterschool programs provide opportunities for career exploration, exposure, and hands-on learning focused on the cultivation of many of the skills desired by employers. Similarly, the workforce sector has sought to narrow the gap by providing programs and services to help job seekers attain and demonstrate these skills. Importantly, both sectors aim to provide opportunities for skill development to individuals from low-income families and communities, who may not otherwise have opportunities for high-quality skill development and are often disproportionately left out of the labor market.

The workforce sector’s goal of developing a better-prepared and highly skilled workforce is well aligned with the mission of the youth development field: to prepare young people to succeed. Despite their shared interests, however, the youth development and workforce sectors often operate in isolation, failing to leverage the capacities of the other. Given that afterschool is centered around youth development and that youth development goals have significant overlap with workforce development goals, there is an important opportunity to more strategically and intentionally align these systems. This white paper will explore the need for and benefits of better alignment across afterschool and workforce systems and the ways in which they can work together to better meet the needs of youth and the workforce.

II. Definitions

Before exploring how afterschool and workforce initiatives can align at the systems level, it is important to establish common definitions of important terms. For the purposes of this paper, the following key terms will be utilized:

System: An afterschool or workforce “system” refers to the collective efforts of any group of entities, agencies, or organizations working to coordinate services. These *systems* may coordinate a number of individual *programs* within a specific area to ensure greater access and high quality. Although both afterschool and workforce systems are affected by federal policies and generally receive funding from the federal government, this paper will focus on systems at the state and local level, as coordination typically occurs on these levels.

Sector: The term “sector” is used as a general term to refer to any entity, agency, organization, or individual involved in the field, but does not imply any degree of coordinated services. Whereas *system* coordination

¹ “Watch the Skills Gap,” *Addeco USA*, last modified October 25 2017, <https://www.addecousa.com/employers/resources/skills-gap-in-the-american-workforce/>.

² “CEOs Tackle Skills Gap as a ‘National Crisis’ Threatening America’s Economic Future,” *Business Roundtable*, last modified June 2017, <http://businessroundtable.org/media/news-releases/ceos-tackle-skills-gap-%E2%80%99national-crisis%E2%80%99-threatening-america%E2%80%99s-economic-future>.

³ *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework* (The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2015).

generally occurs at the state or local level, a *sector* is inclusive of those working at the national level such as associations, advocacy organizations, researchers, policy leaders, and other general thought partners.

Afterschool: The term “afterschool” is used in this paper to include any learning activity that occurs outside of the school day. This includes traditional afterschool programs as well as activities occurring before school or during the summer. Although afterschool generally refers to programs and experiences for youth of all ages, this paper will particularly focus on those for older youth (grade 6-12).

Afterschool system: Afterschool systems are comprised of organizations and leaders working to coordinate afterschool programs and services in order to increase access to high quality programs within a city, region, or state. These systems (sometimes called “networks”) typically have a coordinating entity or group of entities such as a backbone or intermediary organization.⁴

Workforce system: At whatever level coordination occurs, workforce systems are comprised of entities such as workforce agencies, workforce investment boards, industry organizations and associations, employers, community-based organizations, institutions of higher education, training organizations, and any other state or local actor involved directly in workforce development.⁵

Community: The term “community” is used broadly in this paper to refer to any city, region, or state working on system-level coordination. The case studies explored in this paper focus primarily on citywide system coordination, but we recognize that communities of all types are working on alignment.

III. How Afterschool Supports Employability

The skills that employers demand which are necessary for the labor market are known as “employability skills.”⁶ These skills are often prioritized and cultivated in afterschool settings even though they may be called by a different name.⁷ Before exploring alignment at the systems level, it is important to understand the important role that employability skills play in both afterschool and workforce settings.

In an attempt to unify frameworks across different sectors, the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education developed a cross-cutting framework for employability skills in consultation with leaders from K-12 and postsecondary education as well as workforce, industry, and business partners.⁸ This framework illustrates the skills that are widely recognized to be in demand by employers and necessary for success in the labor market. Each skillset listed in the central framework (Figure 1) is inclusive of several other skills within that category. For example, “interpersonal skills” includes skills like teamwork, leadership, resolving conflicts, and negotiation.

⁴ Daniel Browne, *Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems*, The Wallace Foundation, 2015.

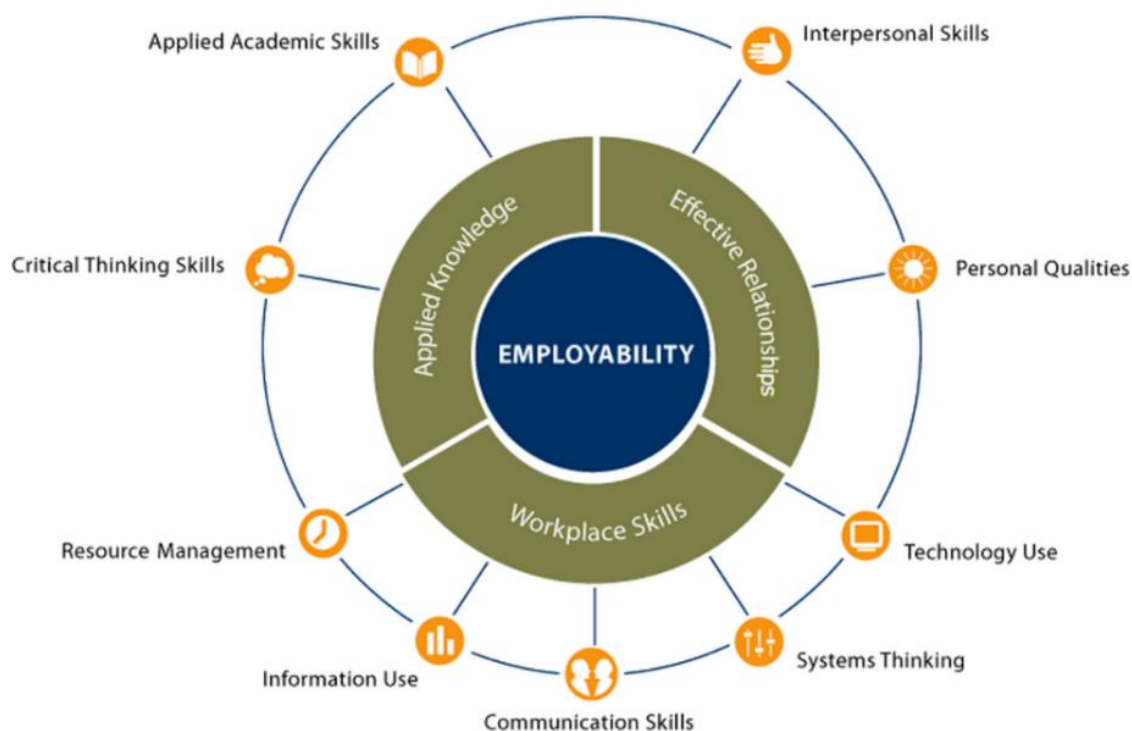
⁵ Martha Laboissiere and Mona Mourshed, “Closing the Skills Gap: Creating Workforce-Development Programs That Work for Everyone,” *McKinsey.com*, last modified February 2017, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/closing-the-skills-gap-creating-workforce-development-programs-that-work-for-everyone>.

⁶ “Employability Skills Framework: Why was the Framework Developed?” *CTE.ed.gov*, accessed October 2017, cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/background/why.

⁷ *Ready for Work? How Afterschool Programs Can Support Employability Through Social and Emotional Learning*, American Institutes of Research.

⁸ “Employability Skills Framework: Why was the Framework Developed?” *CTE.ed.gov*.

Figure 1. Employability Skills Framework

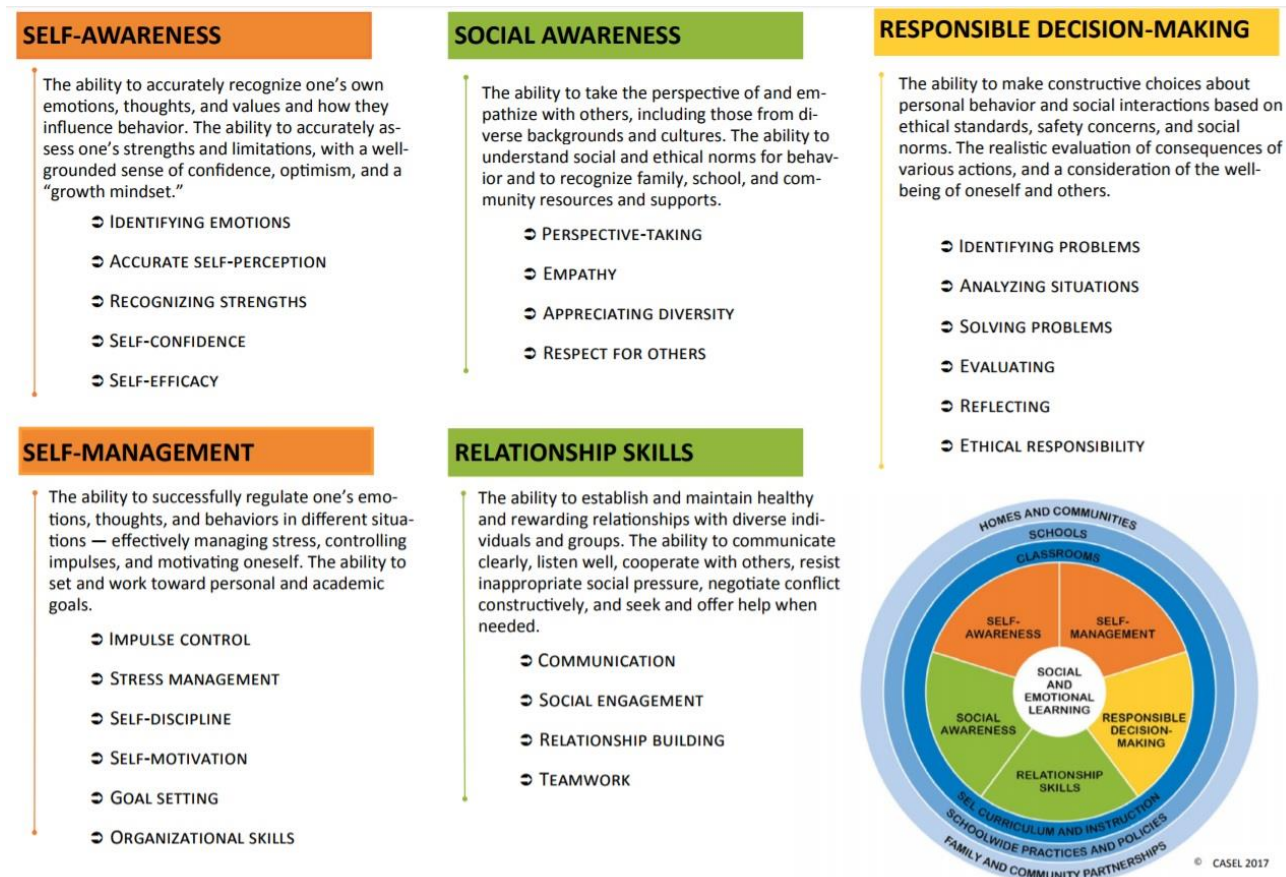


Source: Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, <http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/background/why>

The framework focuses heavily on “soft” skills or skills that fall outside of the academic or technical realm. These skillsets include communication skills (like verbal communication and listening), critical thinking skills (like problem solving), personal qualities (like adaptability and self-discipline), and interpersonal skills (like teamwork and leadership). Furthermore, these skills are also part of the core social and emotional competencies identified within the social and emotional learning (SEL) framework put forth by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).⁹ Each of the “soft” employability skills noted above are also competencies included in the SEL framework (Figure 2).

⁹ “What is SEL?” CASEL.org, accessed October 2017, www.casel.org/what-is-sel/.

Figure 2. Core Social and Emotional Competencies (CASEL)



Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, <http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Competencies.pdf>

Afterschool settings are uniquely positioned to cultivate these social and emotional competencies and have demonstrated success in doing so for many years. According to a 2007 meta-analysis by Durlak and Weissberg,¹⁰ participation in high-quality afterschool programs has a positive impact on problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-control, leadership, and responsible decision-making, all of which are included within the employability and SEL frameworks. SEL has many holistic benefits to youth¹¹ and, to be sure, the goal of SEL is not exclusively to prepare young people for the workforce. For example, SEL promotes inter- and intrapersonal competence, enhances students’ capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors, and gives students the tools to effectively deal with daily tasks and challenges.¹² As previous scholars have noted, however, social and emotional competencies are very closely aligned with employability skills.¹³ Afterschool leaders agree, noting in a recent survey that many of the skills afterschool cultivates are the same skills that employers demand (Figure 3).

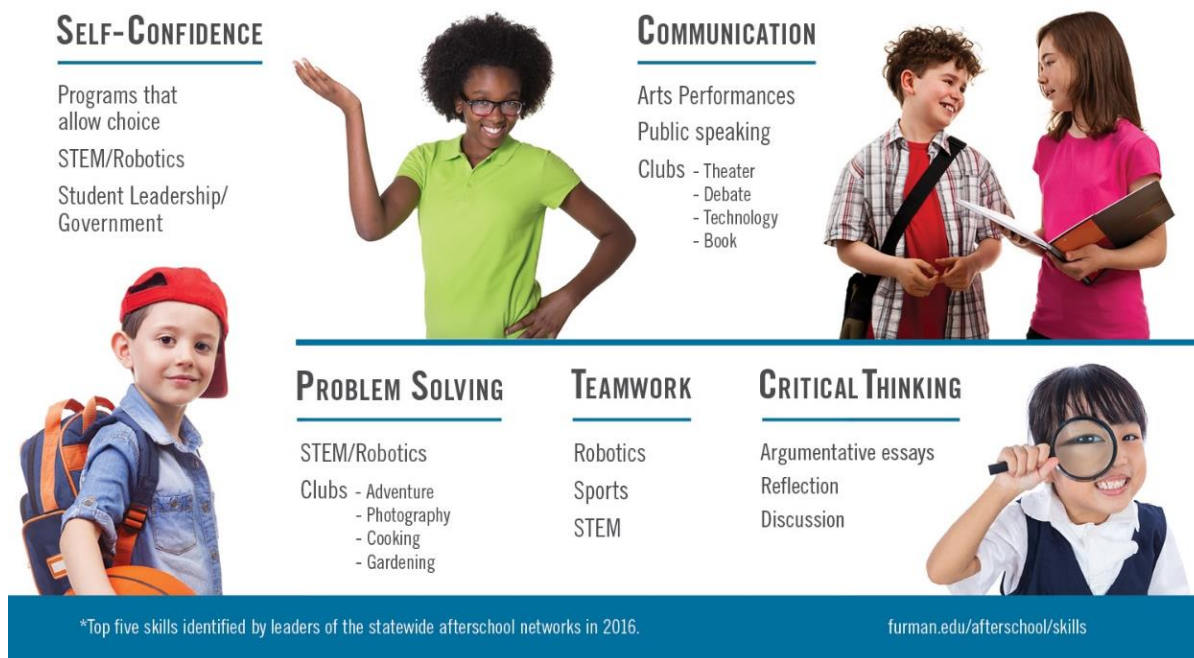
¹⁰ Joseph A. Durlak and Roger P. Weissberg, *The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills* (Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007).

¹¹ “SEL Impact,” CASEL.org, accessed October 2017, www.casel.org/impact/.

¹² “Core SEL Competencies,” CASEL.org, accessed December 2017, <https://www.casel.org/core-competencies/>.

¹³ *Ready for Work? How Afterschool Programs Can Support Employability Through Social and Emotional Learning*, American Institutes for Research.

Figure 3. Top Five Employability Skills Cultivated in Afterschool Settings



Source: The Riley Institute for Education Policy, <https://riley.furman.edu/education/projects/white-riley-peterson-policy-fellowship/workforce-skills>

In addition to “soft” or social and emotional skills, the employability skills framework also includes applied academic skills as well as technical skills such as technology use, information use, and systems thinking. As a unique part of the learning continuum, afterschool settings are well positioned to complement in-school academic and technical learning and have been shown to bolster achievement in multiple subjects.¹⁴ Specifically, research on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in afterschool settings indicates that these programs can better prepare youth for STEM-related pathways in college and careers by exposing them to their options, inviting STEM professionals to share their experience, conducting job visiting or shadowing programs, and providing hands-on STEM-related learning experiences.¹⁵ Youth participating in afterschool programs “not only become excited and engaged in these fields but develop STEM skills and proficiencies, come to value these fields and their contributions to society, and – significantly – begin to see themselves as potential contributors to the STEM enterprise.”¹⁶

As afterschool leaders seek to promote sustainability and broaden their networks of support, it is critical to examine potential areas for coordination. Given the proven capacity of afterschool programs to cultivate the skills that are necessary for the workforce, there is significant opportunity to more intentionally and strategically align the work of afterschool and workforce systems.

¹⁴ Anita Krishnamurthi, Melissa Ballard, and Gil G. Noam, *Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs* (the Noyce Foundation, 2014).

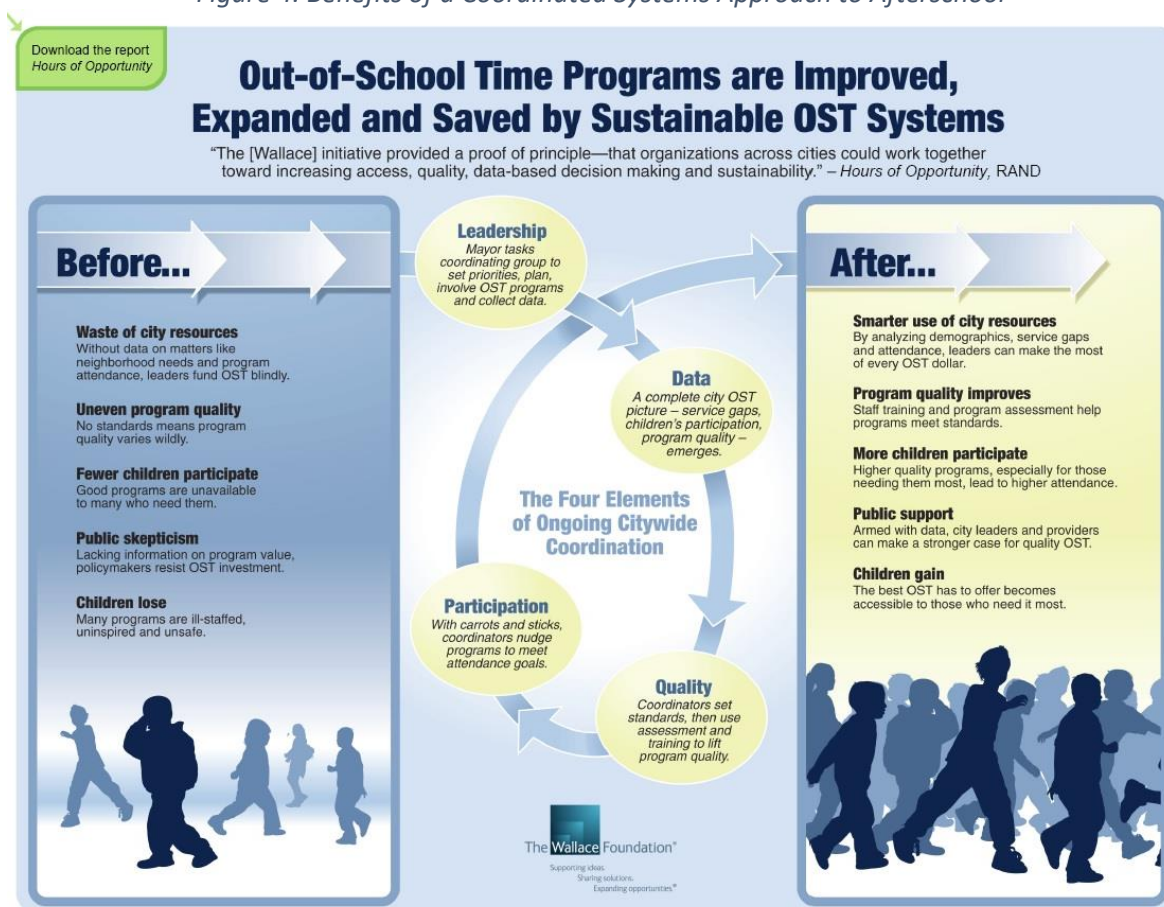
¹⁵ Betsy Brand and Jessica Kannam, *Career and College Exploration in Afterschool Programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)*, ed. Ronald Ottinger (STEM Ready America, 2017).

¹⁶ Krishnamurthi, et. al, *Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs*.

IV. Why Systems Alignment?

Leaders across the country have taken significant steps to improve system-level coordination of afterschool programs and services. In *Growing Together, Learning Together*, an analysis of a decade-long investment in afterschool system building, The Wallace Foundation identified the core elements of an effective afterschool system and demonstrated the benefits of a systemic, coordinated approach.¹⁷ According to this analysis, which features research and testimonials from various citywide system leaders, coordinated systems improve access to and increase the quality of afterschool programs. Figure 4 further outlines the elements of an afterschool system¹⁸ and the benefits of coordination. For example, the coordination of data within a citywide system can help leaders identify gaps in afterschool programs and services. Similarly, a coordinated system can set quality standards for afterschool programs and implement assessment and training to ensure that afterschool programs meet those quality standards. Ultimately, these systems can work to improve, expand, and sustain afterschool programs and ensure that more young people have access to high-quality developmental opportunities, including employability skill development.

Figure 4. Benefits of a Coordinated Systems Approach to Afterschool



Source: The Wallace Foundation, <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Wallace-Foundation-OST-system-graphic.pdf>

¹⁷ Browne, *Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems*.

¹⁸ Note that this graphic is from an older report, *Hours of Opportunity*. The four elements were updated in *Growing Together, Learning Together* and "participation" was changed to "coordination".

Many afterschool *programs* around the country are effectively leveraging partnerships with workforce development programs and services in order to connect youth and teens to workplace skills, career exploration, and work-based learning experiences.¹⁹ Yet too often, afterschool and workforce *systems* operate in isolation, failing to take advantage of the shared goals and mutually beneficial expertise in exposing students to critical skills and competencies needed in the workforce. Better alignment between afterschool and workforce systems may serve as a powerful promoter of equity. High youth unemployment rates disproportionately affect youth from low-income families and youth of color, denying them the same access to labor market resources as their middle class peers. Research indicates that afterschool participation has the greatest benefits for those same youth, who are less likely to attend high quality K-12 schools, less likely to participate in extracurricular activities, and are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. By intentionally aligning skill frameworks, strategies, data, funding, and other resources, afterschool and workforce systems have the opportunity to collectively provide access to high quality programs and services to a greater number of youth and teens.

As AYPF's conversations with afterschool and workforce leaders have previously indicated, both systems are components of a broader youth-serving ecosystem which includes K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, collective impact entities, and other community organizations.²⁰ Afterschool and workforce systems each bring to the table their own unique assets, from agency capacities to funding sources. When well-coordinated, those assets can be mutually beneficial and can be leveraged to support a more robust ecosystem of services for youth and teens, particularly in terms of the development of employability skills. While many in the field have long examined connections between schools and the workforce, as well as between schools and afterschool, less attention has been paid to the potential links between afterschool and the workforce. This critical connection, though often overlooked, represents an important opportunity for further exploration.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

A recent issue brief from the Afterschool Alliance explores promising practices in connecting afterschool and workforce efforts at the *program* level, including examples of innovative programs that effectively prepare students for their futures.

Read more here: http://afterschoolalliance.org//documents/issue_briefs/issue_workforce_readiness_70.pdf

V. Case Studies

Despite a general disconnect, innovative communities across the country have begun to effectively align afterschool and workforce systems as components of a collective community agenda. This type of system alignment has manifested in a variety of ways, as communities organize their systems differently. While some communities may have two distinct intermediary organizations working together to achieve common goals, others facilitate the blending of knowledge, strategies, and funding between a host of systems and organizations. Regardless of the approach, the most effective alignment of afterschool and workforce systems is responsive to the needs and the context of the individual community. Below are four case studies of communities that have taken significant strides to align these two systems.

¹⁹ "Building Workforce Skills in Afterschool," *Afterschool Alliance*, last modified November 2017, http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_workforce_readiness_70.pdf.

²⁰ "Afterschool and Workforce: Bridging Systems to Serve Older Youth," *American Youth Policy Forum*, last modified July 2017, <http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Event-Summary-Brief.pdf>.

Broward County, Florida

The Children's Services Council of Broward County (CSC) is an independent, county-wide taxing authority established by local voters in 2000 that has thoughtfully integrated programs and services across afterschool and workforce systems. The CSC functions as an intermediary in the community, working to provide leadership, advocacy and resources to improve the lives of youth and empower them to become responsible, productive adults. As the largest funder of afterschool activities in the county, the CSC works collaboratively with a host of organizations in the youth-development, education, and workforce development sectors to strategically coordinate efforts and resources from afterschool to youth leadership to youth employment, among others.

Integral to the CSC's alignment work is their focus on creating and leveraging a diverse funding pool through coordinating with entities such as the local workforce board, Chambers of Commerce, school districts, and community organizations. In addition to a diverse pool of local funding, federal dollars provided through 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21CCLC) and the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) have given the CSC a direct opportunity to align the work happening in afterschool and workforce development. Also integral to successful alignment has been the federal support the CSC received through a Performance Partnerships Pilot (P3) grant²¹ in 2016, which allows local entities to blend and braid funds and waive federal or state program requirements to better align services, particularly for out-of-school or out-of-work youth. Through this flexibility, the CSC has provided numerous afterschool programs and activities focused on skill development and workforce experience.

For example, the Best Opportunity to Shine and Succeed (BOSS) initiative is a tiered case management program that began when the CSC received the P3 grant. As a result, CSC and its partners were able to more effectively blend and braid funds. The CSC, which receives and distributes 21CCLC dollars, coordinates with CareerSource Broward, the Broward Workforce Development Board that receives and distributes WIOA dollars, to provide afterschool opportunities to help at-risk youth and teens explore career pathways and develop employability skills. The CSC has also partnered with Broward County Public Schools, with whom they have established a data sharing agreement, to match youth participants with a case manager who helps them set career and academic goals and refers students to relevant afterschool programs. This integrated strategy allows youth to explore different career pathways while participating in relevant afterschool programs to develop critical employability skills. The CSC also offers a robust Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), which provides economically disadvantaged youth ages 16-18 with job coaches, explicit training in employability skills, and work experience. The work experience portion of this program, supported in part by a variety of local businesses, is a paid, six-week program that provides teens with a chance to gain exposure to the workforce and put the specific skills they have learned within and outside of school into practice. In the summer of 2016 alone, this program placed over six hundred teens at numerous work sites across the county.

For more information about the work in Broward County, please visit:

The Children's Services Council of Broward County: <https://www.cscbroward.org/>

CareerSource Broward: <http://www.careersourcebroward.com/>

²¹ "Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3)," *Youth.gov*, accessed October 2017, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots>.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The citywide coordination in Philadelphia involves a number of entities working to support youth, families, and the workforce. The push to better align systems originated from grassroots collaboration efforts, but has increasingly been undertaken and bolstered by citywide intermediary organizations. In order to better coordinate the afterschool system in particular, Mayor Jim Kenney launched the Philadelphia Out-of-School Time Initiative (OST Initiative) in February of 2017. This initiative is housed in the mayor's Managing Director's Office and is working to develop a strategy to inform how services and programs are delivered across the city, from elementary to high school, based on common outcomes desired by the City. The Managing Director's Office collaborates with entities such as the Department of Human Services, the Free Library, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the School District of Philadelphia, and others to advance equity by ensuring that every young person has access to high-quality programs.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has been particularly important in ensuring the OST Initiative is aligned with the workforce system. DHS is the largest funder of OST opportunities in the city and is beginning to more explicitly focus on connecting middle and high school students to skill development and workforce exploration opportunities. According to Waleska Maldonado, Deputy Commissioner at DHS, "Key partners in the OST Initiative are seeking to better align systems in order to solidify and nurture relationships across the city. This will hopefully evolve into more blended and braided resources to better meet the needs of all Philadelphia youth and teens."

The Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) is also a partner of the OST Initiative and has been central to the alignment of systems across Philadelphia. The organization, whose vision is to alleviate poverty and inequity through education and employment, functions as the backbone organization for the city's collective impact efforts. PYN aims to create a unified system of services and resources and oversees numerous cross-sector projects organized around the cultivation of employability skills. One project of note, WorkReady Philadelphia, is a portfolio of programs offered during the school year and in the summer to address the skills gap for disadvantaged youth. WorkReady programs provide young people aged 14-24 with opportunities to learn specific employability skills in various afterschool settings and to eventually put those skills into practice through paid internships, which are generally funded by employers or local philanthropic organizations. Many participants earn academic credit and/or an industry credential upon completion of the program. In offering these opportunities, PYN coordinates with different stakeholders in the afterschool and workforce systems to provide youth with a range of options and experiences.

PYN has leveraged a diverse pool of resources that better allow them to work with others in closing the skills gap in the city. With funding from the local workforce investment board, the City, local philanthropists, employers, and federal WIOA dollars, among others, sustaining this well-aligned system is much more feasible. According to Chekemba Townsend, President and CEO of PYN, "This kind of system-level sustainability really requires a mindset shift in the way that we think about resources. We're all working toward this goal together."

For more information about system alignment in Philadelphia, please visit:

Philadelphia's Citywide Out-of-School Time Initiative: <http://ost.phila.gov/>

The Department of Human Services: <http://www.phila.gov/dhs/>

Philadelphia Youth Network: <https://www.pyninc.org/>

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh has approached system alignment through a deeply integrated strategy to collectively solidify the continuum of learning citywide. The Remake Learning network, established in 2007, is a public-private partnership of over 500 organizations that share best practices, foster alignment, reduce the duplication of efforts in the region, and leverage resources collectively for greater impact. The network is supported by the Remake Learning Council, “a blue-ribbon commission of distinguished leaders from the education, government, business and civic sectors working together to support teaching, mentoring, and design—across formal and informal educational settings—that spark creativity in kids, activating them to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for navigating lifelong learning, the workforce, and citizenship.”²²

Key network partners from the afterschool system include the regional afterschool intermediary, Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST) as well as dozens of large and small afterschool providers such as the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania,²³ the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh,²⁴ and Allegheny Youth Development.²⁵ The network also includes many entities from the workforce system such as Partner4Work,²⁶ leader of the public workforce development system for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, as well as business leaders like Chevron²⁷ and the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc.²⁸

This networked collaboration facilitates the strategic alignment of systems and a deeply integrated ecosystem of learning from youth development to workforce development. Central to the mission of the network is that youth development is not separate from, but integral to, the development of essential skills for the workforce. The involvement of many industry and business leaders allows afterschool partners to gain insight into the needs of the local workforce and to tailor program offerings accordingly, while remaining committed to positive youth development. For example, STEM learning is an important priority across many partners of the Remake Learning network because of the demand for these skills in the workforce. The Pittsburgh Regional STEM Ecosystem,²⁹ which operates within the Remake Learning network, encompasses afterschool, K-12, and workforce partners to establish regional goals and metrics and provide meaningful STEM learning opportunities that are grounded in youth development *and* connected to future jobs and careers.

Finally, the network is deeply rooted in the belief that learning is best when it is equitable. This means particular attention is paid to serving learners from low-income families and neighborhoods; learners of color; learners in rural areas; girls in STEM; and learners with exceptionalities. This focus on equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities both within and outside the classroom is a unifying force behind the collective work of the hundreds of organizations involved in the Remake Learning network.

For more information about Pittsburgh’s regional learning network, please visit:

Remake Learning: <https://remakelearning.org/>

²² “Remake Learning,” accessed October 2017, <https://remakelearning.org/>.

²³ “About Our Agency,” *Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania*, accessed October 2017, <http://www.bgcwpa.org/about/>.

²⁴ “The YMCA,” *YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh*, accessed October 2017, <http://www.ymcaofpittsburgh.org/>.

²⁵ “Allegheny Youth Development: Breaking the Cycle,” accessed October 2017, <http://www.ayd.org/>.

²⁶ “Partner 4 Work,” accessed October 2017, <https://www.partner4work.org/>.

²⁷ “Chevron,” *Remake Learning*, accessed October 2017, <https://remakelearning.org/organization/chevron/>.

²⁸ “Private Industry Council: Lifelong Learning for a Successful Workforce,” accessed October 2017, <http://www.privateindustrycouncil.com/>.

²⁹ “Pittsburgh Regional STEM Ecosystem,” *Remake Learning*, accessed October 2017, <https://remakelearning.org/stem-ecosystem/>.

Chicago, Illinois

System alignment in Chicago involves the strategic and intentional integration of afterschool and workforce goals. The efforts are largely led by the city's afterschool intermediary and largest provider of afterschool services for teens, After School Matters (ASM).³⁰ ASM coordinates with dozens of local employers and workforce partners to provide over 16,000 teens across the city with access to a range of developmentally appropriate work-based learning experiences each year. In order to inspire Chicago teens to develop their occupational interests, ASM has developed a program framework that is centered around youth development while acknowledging the various interrelated domains of development that are necessary for success (Figure 5).

Figure 5. ASM Foundations for Youth Development

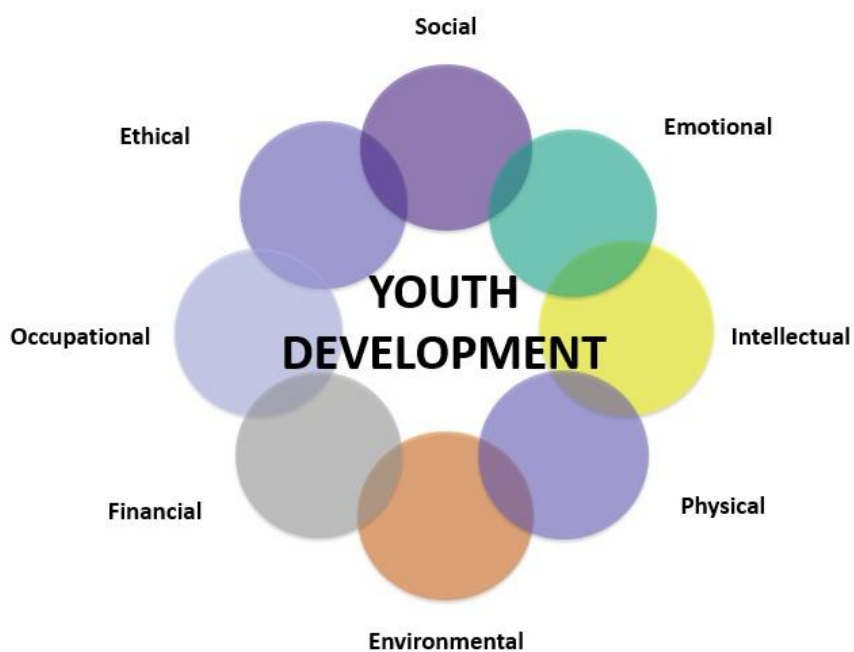


Image courtesy of After School Matters

Starting at age 14, youth are offered a tiered set of experiences, moving from career exploration to employability skill mastery (Figure 6). ASM strikes a balance between creating programs that help teens gain advanced skills in fields they are passionate about, while also ensuring the skills gained are useful for participants who decide to pursue other career tracks. In this model, workforce preparation is not an add-on, but an integral part of youth development. These initiatives have had a proven impact on a broad range of desired outcomes of the afterschool and workforce sectors related to success in school, employment, and beyond. ASM participants are more likely to be on track academically at the end of freshman year, have higher school attendance rates, are more likely to graduate from high school, and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary educational opportunities than their non-participating counterparts.³¹ Additionally, ASM participants have reported improvement across a variety of employability skills such as teamwork and problem solving.³²

³⁰ "After School Matters," accessed October 2017, <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org>.

³¹ "Our Impact," *After School Matters*, accessed October 2017, <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/about-us/general/>.

³² "Preparing Chicago's Teens for Success: 2014 Annual Report," *After School Matters*, accessed October, 2017, <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2014-Annual-Report.pdf>

Figure 6. ASM Program Model





PROGRAM MODEL	MODEL OVERVIEW
<p>Pre-Apprenticeship</p> 	<p>“I’m Exploring”</p> <p>A Pre-Apprenticeship is an introductory out-of-school-time program that focuses on career readiness skills and/or career exploration. There are opportunities to explore a variety of careers within a given field and programs are supplemented with demonstrations from visiting professionals and trips to local business sites that are leaders in the field.</p>
<p>Apprenticeship</p> 	<p>“I’m Becoming”</p> <p>An Apprenticeship is a hands-on out-of-school-time program led by expert industry professionals. Teens gain skills that are more specific to a particular field.</p>
<p>Advanced Apprenticeship</p> 	<p>“I Am”</p> <p>An Advanced Apprenticeship takes the hands-on out-of-school-time program to a higher level where teens refine their skills and produce sophisticated products or performances. Advanced Apprenticeships emphasize youth leadership and independence.</p>
<p>Internship</p> 	<p>Internships are supervised work experiences where high school youth apply their skills in workplace settings for a limited duration.</p>

Image courtesy of After School Matters

Alignment and partnerships with employers and other industry leaders are critical to ASM’s success. For example, ASM has partnered with Burns & McDonnell, a global engineering, architecture, construction, environmental and consulting firm, to provide teens with a unique and immersive workforce experience. Through this partnership, funded by Burns and McDonnell, teens can learn more about the company and engineering in general while participating in hands-on learning activities. Additionally, ASM collaborates with Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Public Library, and the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services to better facilitate access to neighborhood resources. Currently, 84% of teens served by ASM live in high-poverty communities. This focus on low-income youth is facilitated through a network of nearly 200 community organizations that allow ASM to identify the areas of the city that need the most support so they can provide programs and services where they otherwise may not exist.

For more information about coordination in Chicago, please visit:
 After School Matters: <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/>

VI. Some Considerations for Future Exploration

Upon analysis of the field, AYPF offers the following considerations for community leaders who aim to more strategically align youth and workforce development efforts:

- 1. Youth development is not separate from, but *central to employability skill building*.** A strong foundation in youth development allows afterschool providers to cultivate the skills and competencies young people need which are necessary for success in school, career, and life. The afterschool sector's emphasis on developmentally appropriate skill development, stackable experiences, exploration, and reflection are critical components of youth development and are also central to the development of the skills and competencies that will eventually make a young person employable. Although in many communities youth development is an entity of its own, there is significant opportunity to more explicitly connect the foundational skills developed through afterschool and other youth development opportunities with the skills desired by the workforce.
- 2. Effective alignment between afterschool and workforce systems does not happen in isolation from other systems.** As demonstrated in the case studies above, communities across the country coordinate and align their systems differently. In some communities the alignment is driven by a backbone organization, whereas others are led by school districts, a network of community organizations, or other stakeholders. Regardless of the means of coordination, a consistent theme in the connection between afterschool and workforce systems is that the involvement of *other* community systems is critical in ensuring a seamless flow of information and services. K-12 schools, postsecondary education, child and family advocacy, and other various entities play an important role in ensuring that skill development and learning experiences are relevant, effective, and coordinated.
- 3. Afterschool and workforce systems may have common goals but in order to succeed they need common language.** The afterschool, workforce, business, K-12, and postsecondary education sectors have all articulated the importance of employability skill development. However, these sectors have not developed a common language for discussing what these skills are, how they are developed, and in what ways they are valuable in different settings. For example, employability skill development is consistent with and related to the youth development approach, but afterschool leaders do not always use the same terms to describe the skills young people obtain through participation in afterschool programs. A common language can ultimately be one step toward the development of a shared understanding of the important role that afterschool opportunities can play in developing and preparing young people for the workforce. .
- 4. Systems can leverage funding and data to meet common goals.** An important part of system coordination is the ability to leverage funds to more comprehensively serve young people within a community. This leverage can take the form of blended funds, braided funds, or the more efficient use of existing resources. Communities with strong system alignment have been able to leverage both public and private dollars, afterschool dollars, workforce, career and technical education dollars, and K-12 education funding to not only meet shared goals, but also to ensure those funding streams work better together so that more young people can access available resources.

5. System alignment can further expand access to high quality programs and services. Community leaders around the country generally share the belief that all youth within a community should be able to access systems that will support their development and prepare them for their futures. One of the primary benefits of system-level coordination is the ability to provide greater access to high-quality programs and services so that more young people can reap the benefits. Alignment *between* systems can also facilitate a more effective coordination of services, division of responsibilities, and sharing of data to ensure that more young people have the opportunity to benefit from community resources. Thoughtful and strategic alignment can also allow communities to place a priority on traditionally underserved populations or neighborhoods, the needs of which may not be fully met by one system.

About American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), founded in 1993, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, DC that provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on youth and education issues at the national, state, and local levels. AYPF's goal is to enable policymakers at all levels to become more effective in the development, enactment, and implementation of sound policies affecting the nation's young people by providing information, insights, and networking opportunities to better understand the development of healthy and successful young people as productive workers and participating citizens in a democratic society. AYPF's work covers a range of education and youth topics, such as afterschool and expanded learning opportunities, social and emotional learning, college access and success, career and technical education, dropout prevention and recovery, alternative education, youth employment, and service learning. This breadth of knowledge allows AYPF to bridge fields and sectors and supports our view of the need for integrated, holistic, and comprehensive academic and support services to help every youth be successful. AYPF has interacted with thousands of policymakers by conducting an average of 40 annual events such as lunchtime forums, out-of-town study tours, and discussion groups. AYPF also publishes a variety of youth policy reports and materials, available at www.aypf.org.

This white paper was developed through the generous support of The Wallace Foundation.

Bibliography

- “About Our Agency.” *Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania*. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.bgcwpa.org/about/>.
- “Afterschool and Workforce: Bridging Systems to Serve Older Youth.” *American Youth Policy Forum*. Last Modified July 2017. <http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Event-Summary-Brief.pdf>.
- “After School Matters.” Accessed October 2017. <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org>.
- “Allegheny Youth Development: Breaking the Cycle.” Accessed October 2017. <http://www.ayd.org/>.
- Brand, Betsy, and Jessica Kannam. *Career and College Exploration in Afterschool Programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)*. Edited by Ronald Ottinger. STEM Ready America, 2017.
- Browne, Daniel. *Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems*. The Wallace Foundation, 2015.
- “Building Workforce Skills in Afterschool.” *Afterschool Alliance*. Last modified November 2017. http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_workforce_readiness_70.pdf.
- “CEOs Tackle Skills Gap as a ‘National Crisis’ Threatening America’s Economic Future.” *BusinessRoundtable.org*. Last modified June 2017. <http://businessroundtable.org/media/news-releases/ceos-tackle-skills-gap-%E2%80%99national-crisis%E2%80%99-threatening-america%E2%80%99s-economic-future>.
- “Chevron.” *Remake Learning*. Accessed October 2017. <https://remakelearning.org/organization/chevron/>.
- Devaney, Elizabeth and Deborah Moroney. *Ready for Work? How Afterschool Programs Can Support Employability Through Social and Emotional Learning*. American Institutes of Research, 2015.
- Durlak, Joseph A., and Roger P. Weissberg. *The Impact of Afterschool Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007.
- “Employability Skills Framework: Why was the Framework Developed?” *CTE.ed.gov*. Accessed October 2017. cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/background/why.
- Krishnamurthi, Anita, Melissa Ballard, and Gil G. Noam. *Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs*. The Noyce Foundation, 2014.
- Laboissiere, Martha, and Mona Mourshed. “Closing the Skills Gap: Creating

Workforce-Development Programs That Work for Everyone.” *McKinsey.com*. Last modified February 2017. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/closing-the-skills-gap-creating-workforce-development-programs-that-work-for-everyone>.

“Our Impact.” *After School Matters*. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/about-us/general/>.

“Partner 4 Work.” Accessed October 2017. <https://www.partner4work.org/>.

“Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3).” *Youth.gov*. Accessed October 2017. <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/reconnecting-youth/performance-partnership-pilots>.

“Pittsburgh Regional STEM Ecosystem.” *Remake Learning*. Accessed October 2017. <https://remakelearning.org/stem-ecosystem/>.

“Preparing Chicago’s Teens for Success: 2014 Annual Report.” *After School Matters*. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/2014-Annual-Report.pdf>

“Private Industry Council: Lifelong Learning for a Successful Workforce.” Accessed October 2017. <http://www.privateindustrycouncil.com/>.

“Remake Learning.” Accessed October 2017. <https://remakelearning.org/>.

“SEL Impact.” *CASEL.org*. Accessed October 2017. <https://www.casel.org/impact/>.

“The YMCA.” *YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh*. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.ymcaofpittsburgh.org/>.

“Watch the Skills Gap.” *AddecoUSA.com*. Last modified October 25, 2017. <https://www.adecousa.com/employers/resources/skills-gap-in-the-american-workforce/>.

“What is SEL?” *CASEL.org*. Accessed October 2017. <https://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>.