

Afterschool Programs:

Improving Graduation Rates · Providing 21st Century Skills · Fostering Economic Development

Afterschool Programs Improve Graduation Rates and Academic Outcomes

- » Just over 3 percent of Iowa's 9-12 graders dropped out in 2009, which has increased from 2.85 percent in 2008. Iowa's dropout rate is a growing problem that demands a solution.
- » Afterschool programs are effective in reducing dropout rates because they address the fundamental factors that influence dropouts – lagging academic achievement and a lack of experiences that connect learning to life outside the classroom.
- » A national study of high quality afterschool programs found that the average math score of participants in the program was higher than 70 percent of their peers who were not enrolled in the program (*Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs, 2007*).

Afterschool Programs Provide Crucial 21st Century Skills

- » Afterschool programs are effective in providing students with 21st century skills. They have greater flexibility in programming than schools, so they can cater to hands-on, experiential learning. Afterschool programs reinforce skills such as financial literacy, health literacy, civic literacy, technological literacy, and soft skills including accountability, integrity, working within a team, punctuality, and other skills crucial to gaining and maintaining employment.

Iowa Afterschool Programs are:

- » *Promoting financial literacy.* The ECHOES afterschool program opened the student-run Tiger Branch of the Cedar Falls Community Credit Union. The Tiger Branch offers many of the same services as other credit union branches, but all services are run solely by students and staff. Students receive on-the-job training at their credit union, helping students, staff, and families use debit cards and ATM services, apply for loans, and open checking and savings accounts – all right at the school.
- » *Promoting employability through career exploration.* In Davenport, the Stepping Stones program has incorporated Career Clubs into their program in conjunction with the local ISU Extension office. Workshops provide background on necessary skills, salary ranges, and other relevant information on careers. The program also coordinates visits to potential employment sites such as radio stations, hospitals, and restaurants.
- » *Providing students with opportunities for skill building and college exposure.* The Iowa Afterschool Alliance is piloting afterschool programming that connects ninth-grade students with opportunities for skill building, career exploration, and college exposure. Pilot programs will link K-12 education, workforce, afterschool, and business to engage students in learning and prepare for a path to career and college after high school graduation. The Iowa Afterschool Alliance will pilot programs in Sioux City and Oskaloosa beginning in the fall of 2011. For more information on this project, please contact Michelle Rich at mrich@sppg.com or 515-243-2000.

Afterschool Programs Foster Economic Development

- » Afterschool programs provide safe places for students to spend time after the school day ends. This increases the productivity of working parents and reduces work time lost.
- » Parent stress is costly. Child care-related absences cost U.S. companies an estimated \$3 billion annually due to decreased productivity (Corporate Voices for Working Families, 2006).



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