

THE IMPERATIVE TO ACT:

INVESTING IN KIDS THROUGH
OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE IN
WASHINGTON COUNTY



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A REPORT BY



WASHINGTON COUNTY
KIDS

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*Meyer Memorial Trust is a private foundation that is not connected to Fred Meyer, Inc.

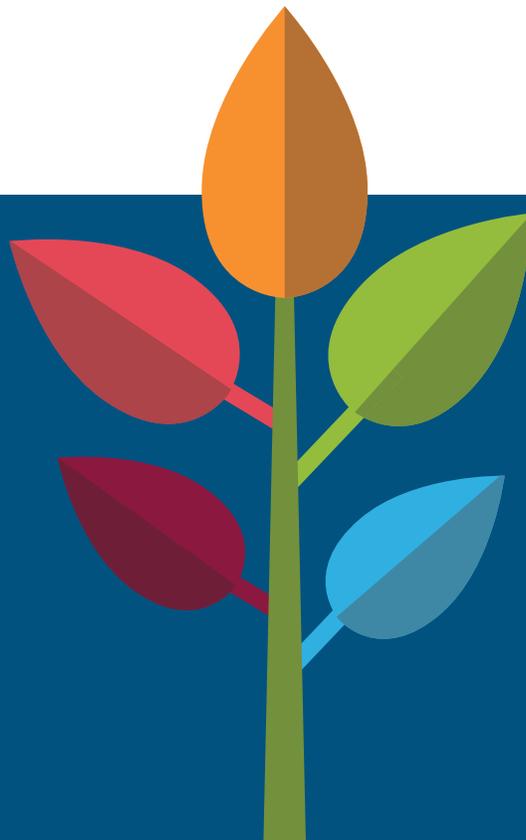


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FOREWORD



Dear Washington County resident:

As the architect of the Portland Children's Levy and former chair of its governing body for 15 years, I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Washington County Kids initiative. I also grew up in Beaverton.

I have followed the long-standing dedication and commitment to this cause that Washington County Kids has shown over the years and applaud their efforts to help the children and families in their community lead positive and successful lives.

I also understand the uphill battle that they have faced in their attempt to bring the initiative from blueprint to reality.

I recall facing skeptics the first time the Children's Levy was on the ballot in 2002. Many in the business and political community were unsure about whether the public would agree to essentially tax itself, despite the worthy goal. They also questioned whether government could create such a program that included a lean administration, public transparency and efficient oversight of funds while also providing robust and critical accountability of tax dollars.

I'm happy to report that the past 16 years of successful partnerships with nonprofit organizations throughout the city have silenced any critics, as the Levy was resoundingly renewed three times by Portland voters in 2008, 2013 and 2018 ... this last time with an 83 percent margin, the largest of any ballot measure in the city's history.

More importantly, the Children's Levy has helped tens of thousands of children, including disenfranchised and historically underserved families, with proven programs that make for a stronger and safer city.

Like the Portland Children's Levy, the Washington County Kids initiative means leveling the playing field in homes, in schools and in the greater county area so that families can overcome the barriers that come with economic instability, lack of affordable housing and systematic racism.

You can make a difference! This report's own data suggests Out-of-School Time programs make progress in preparing children for school and supporting them to be successful in and out of school. Children in Children's Levy programs report higher self-esteem and improved school results. Families fractured by poverty and under employment get the education and help they need to heal. Parents and caregivers are more confident and skilled at advocating for their children in the classroom and in life. The families participating in Levy programs see increased:

- Positive early development
- School engagement and academic achievement
- High school graduation

These collective results contribute to community-wide efforts to reduce racial/ethnic disparities in educational outcomes, family safety and stability.



While the road you are on has its obstacles, I am confident that once put to the test your voters will not only endorse the Washington County Kids initiative, they will support making the most vulnerable in your community a priority. They will say “yes” to taking care of their children; they will say “yes” to leaders who pave the way for programs that address equity issues and empower immigrants and refugees; they will say “yes” to embracing policies of caring and compassion.

In reflecting over my 20-year-tenure on Portland City Council, and five previous ones as a Multnomah County Commissioner, there is no doubt that the Portland Children’s Levy will be my lasting and best legacy. And I am heartened – and hopeful – that when Washington County voters have the chance to approve your initiative, you will look back and feel the same.

Let me know how I can help.

Sincerely,

Dan Saltzman

Former Portland City Commissioner



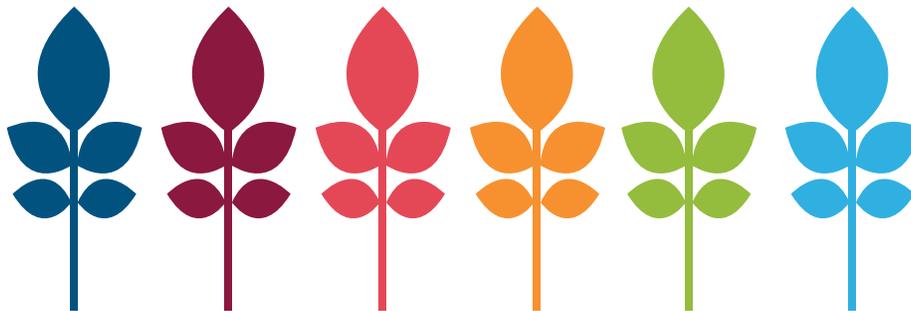
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Too many children and families in Washington County, especially children from families categorized as economically disadvantaged, are not served well by our community. When it comes to academic performance, emotional development, and preparation for employment, the County's children are missing out. The demand for infant and toddler childcare far exceeds the supply. Programs outside of school time have waiting lists and struggle financially. The community pays a price for failing to invest in its kids.

All children should have positive and successful lives. Simply attending school from kindergarten through twelfth grade is insufficient. Out-of-school-time (OST) programs have proven to be invaluable: helping pre-schoolers prepare for kindergarten, sustaining student academic progress during summer breaks, and engaging students in a variety of structured activities that improve their interpersonal and academic skills. OST programs improve mental health and social-emotional competencies as well as reduce violent and anti-social behavior, and substance use and abuse.

Washington County Kids (WCK), a nonprofit with support from Meyer Memorial Trust, examined the situation in Washington County. During 2018 and early 2019 WCK conducted Community Conversations with parents and guardians of kids, inviting those unable to attend to complete an online survey. This report details three conclusions. First, OST programs work, benefiting children and their communities. Second, families in Washington County, especially those from culturally specific populations or who face economic disadvantages, confront daunting barriers to accessing OST programs. Third, Washington County Commissioners should act aggressively to improve opportunities for OST programs.



OST PROGRAMS WORK

Studies find positive outcomes for youngsters who participate in OST programs, as well as for their parents and communities. Tracked from pre-school into adulthood, participants in an OST program had lower rates of juvenile delinquency and adult arrests, higher levels of academic success, and greater economic success, resulting in a return on investment at least double every dollar invested in the program. OST programs encourage students, especially women and students of color, to complete high school, an important precursor to gaining employment. OST programs not only improve the lives of youths, they also help avoid tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer burden over the lifetime of an unemployed individual.

PARENTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY CONFRONT BARRIERS TO OST PROGRAMS

Insufficient information: Many children are not participating in OST programs because their parents do not know about them, according to WCK's survey.

High cost: The cost of preschool childcare ranges from \$7,740 to \$16,680, comparing unfavorably to \$11,800 for a year at one of Oregon's public universities. After school and summer program costs range from free to over \$800/month.

Inaccessibility and unavailability: Lack of transportation explains why many children are not participating in OST programs. Programs tend to be concentrated geographically, making them inaccessible to children outside those areas.

Mismatch between program and parent schedules: Accommodating parents' employment schedules matters when parents choose programs. Matching parents' obligations with child care options requires continuous juggling.

Insufficient diversity of program content: Some parents want programs to enhance their children's social skills. Some want more rigorous enrichment. Others want sports, arts, or practical skills training. They often cannot find these options.

Inadequate programming for specific populations. Elementary school students comprise the largest population served by OST programs in Washington County; high school students comprise the smallest, yet parents believe adolescents require structure. Waiting lists exist at programs regardless of age group.

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS NEEDS TO:

- Identify and implement sustained funding for OST programs,
- Collect data on program availability and cost county-wide
- Serve as a clearinghouse of program information for county residents

WCK proposes a property tax levy of at least \$.35/\$1,000 of assessed valuation to generate \$21 million dollars per year dedicated to supporting OST programs. Working with school districts to use existing resources can control costs. Subsidizing current programs and working with them to develop additional spaces and programs can capitalize on their experience.

The County should centralize collection of information about OST programs. This would provide the Board with the information to plan where programs need to be developed, what types of programs are needed, and the effectiveness of programs. This information can help parents know where and how to access programs across the County.

While more than three-quarters of respondents to WCK's survey believe local government should provide support for organized OST programs, most respondents felt that Washington County was not doing enough to help children and families. This is both a cost effective and wise investment in the future of Washington County kids, especially for those on the lower end of the economic spectrum. Where there's a will, there's a way. We know the way. We need the will!

INTRODUCTION



HOW ARE THE CHILDREN?

This is an ancient African greeting that embodies the priority placed by the culture on having thriving children. What would our answer be in Washington County? Many children are doing fine. Many are not. For example looking at educational attainment, the overall graduation rate in Washington County exceeded the State's average (86.3 vs. 78.6), the graduation rates for youth from families categorized as economically disadvantaged, while still above the State's average for that group and better than the previous year, was still almost 8% lower than the County's overall rate. Comparisons with State averages throughout the nation don't speak well for Washington County. While improving to 79% since 2014, few states have graduation rates lower than Oregon's.ⁱ

We want all children to have positive and successful lives. It is not sufficient to focus only on having good educational programs from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Out-of-school-time (OST) programs are invaluable: helping pre-schoolers prepare for kindergarten; sustaining student academic progress during the summer break; and engaging students of all ages in a variety of structured activities that improve their interpersonal and academic skills. Effective OST programs:

- encourage engagement at school and support academic success
- improve mental health and social-emotional competencies and reduce violent and anti-social behavior, substance use and abuse, and involvement in the juvenile justice system.ⁱⁱ

By not providing sufficient space in high quality OST programs, Washington County not only misses an opportunity to help its children be the best they can be, it fails them and others in the community:

- Children who arrive at kindergarten unprepared struggle to succeed in school.
- Parents who are struggling to make ends meet also struggle to support their children in school and out of school.
- Employers struggle to find graduates who are qualified to fulfill their needs.

How serious are these problems? Washington County Kids (WCK), a nonprofit whose mission is to raise awareness of the importance of out of school time programs and the need for a sustainable source of funding for them, received a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust* to investigate. During 2018 and early 2019, WCK conducted Community Conversations with parents and guardians of kids. WCK invited those unable to attend a Conversation to complete an online survey.

This report contains WCK's findings and recommendations. It references relevant research and county and state data to provide background. Quotations from parents or guardians who participated in the Conversations or survey appear in text boxes to illustrate themes. This report argues:

- Washington County's youngsters and families are missing out, possibly harmed by insufficient access to OST programs,
- A substantial body of research demonstrates that OST programs work, benefiting children and their communities.
- Families in Washington County, especially those from culturally specific populations or who face economic disadvantages, confront daunting barriers to OST programs.
- Washington County Commissioners should act aggressively to improve opportunities for OST programs.

WASHINGTON COUNTY'S YOUNGSTERS ARE MISSING OUT



Failure to provide opportunities for children during prime periods of their development, whether as infants, toddlers, or adolescents, hurts them today and their communities tomorrow. The foundation for brain functioning throughout life occurs between birth and five years of age. In Washington County, there are 5.6 children for each available early childhood program slot; too many children are unable to access opportunities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Beginning during the summer after first grade, lacking structured learning opportunities, students start to lose what they have learned during the school year. That contributes to an achievement gap between low-income students and their higher income peers for years to come.^{iv} For example, the County's dropout rate of 3.9 is better than the State's 2.2; for its economically disadvantaged students, it is 3.1.^v In terms of English Language proficiency measured in third grade, the County scored better overall than the rest of the State, 56% of county students met proficiency expectations compared to 47% statewide, but only 35% of its economically disadvantaged students met expectations, barely higher than the State's level. The County did better than the State overall in math proficiency: 56% met expectations compared to 45% statewide; again, its economically disadvantaged students were significantly lower, 34%, about the same as the State.^{vi}

During adolescence, a developmental period between childhood and adulthood when the brain reorganizes, research has shown an inclination toward novelty, excitement, and peer interactions. Lacking structured activities to engage these natural proclivities in positive ways, these inclinations can tend toward negative behaviors, such as drug and alcohol use and breaking the law.^{vii} Individuals and the community pay the price and forego potential benefits when adolescents find few opportunities for more constructive outlets.^{viii}

As Robert Putnam's compelling study reports, public schools serve increasingly more economically and socially segregated student populations and offer fewer extra-curricular activities.^{ix} For those activities they offer, pay-to-play is common. Not surprisingly, differences in levels of participation in extra-curricular activities have increased

across groups by race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status.^x In addition to losing mentors in structured programs, children have fewer informal mentors because of more limited interactions with neighbors who are not at home because they are working.



Recognizing that children who are able to complete their education and get a job are much less likely to turn to a life of crime, Oregon's law enforcement leaders also embrace high-quality early care and education. They know children are more likely to succeed in life if they have positive adults in their lives.^{xi}

Finally, the absence of OST programs hurts parents and families. In 2018, almost 30,000 16-24 year-olds in the Portland metropolitan area neither go to school nor work. While the percentage of all youth who are "opportunity youth," as these young adults are called, has been declining, the percentage of opportunity youth who are foreign born or people of color has been increasing (e.g., from 30% in 2014 to 42% in 2016). 3,700 of these youths were females living with their children and 1,300 of these were single parents. Limited child care options keep some of them from entering the work force.^{xiii}

OST PROGRAMS WORK



Studies find positive outcomes for the youngsters who participate in OST programs, as well as for their parents and communities.^{xiii} For example:

- Tracked from pre-school into adulthood against a group of similar children, participants in an OST program had lower rates of juvenile delinquency and adult arrests, higher levels of academic success, and greater economic success. An independent analysis by the RAND Corporation established a return on investment at least double every dollar invested in the program.^{xiv}
- In one area the employment rate among mothers of children aged five or less who received child care jumped 16% (64% to 80%) compared to 4% in the rest of the country. The increase in tax revenues from the working mothers exceeded the costs of the program; it paid for itself.^{xv}
- A recent study of elementary students participating in OST programs found they were more likely to graduate on time.^{xvi}
- An OST enrichment program helped close the achievement gap in math and English for gifted elementary students from economically disadvantaged and diverse cultural backgrounds.^{xvii}
- More generally, children from economically disadvantaged families who enrolled in OST programs: scored better than a control group in reading and math, repeated fewer grades, and were less likely to be placed in special education. By age 19, fewer had become parents. At age 21, they were more likely to be employed or in higher education. At 30, they were more likely to be employed full-time and in good health, and less likely to be using the social safety net system.^{xviii}

Our daughter is more responsible since [being in the program]; the difference is noticeable. She is careful and helpful now and communicates with other kids.

- Studies focused on the efficacy of OST programs for middle and high school students lead to similarly positive conclusions.^{xix}
- Another study showed that investing moderate resources in OST programs compensated partially for a disadvantageous home learning environment and previous low school performance—even among 16 year-old students.^{xx}
- A national study of Black students—traditionally underrepresented in STEM subjects and careers—who engaged in OST science activities participated in more advanced science courses in high school than their Black peers who did not. This proved to be especially true for female students.^{xxi}
- OST programs encourage students, especially women and students of color, to complete high school, an important precursor to gaining employment. Thus, OST programs not only improve the lives of opportunity youths, they can avoid tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer burden over the lifetime of an unemployed individual.^{xxiii}
- 72% of Oregon’s parents agree that after school programs help reduce the likelihood that youngsters will engage in inappropriate risky behaviors.^{xxiv} 59% agreed that after school programs help children gain workforce skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking: deeper learning skills for which business leaders are clamoring.^{xxv}

My kid has learned to socialize with other kids, be part of a group. Physically, [the program] has helped him, as well. Emotionally, [it] helps my kid. They can help with homework...sometimes the parents can't.



*This program has been a lifesaver
[for single mom and daughter].*

*At school my daughter opens up but only if she feels comfortable.
My daughter feels comfortable here. It's small and closely knit. My
daughter entered a singing competition [at the program], which
was a big step. There are tons of things to do including the creative
side, learning to understand herself, and finding new friends.*





In sum, OST programs work,^{xxvi, xxvii} but do they all perform equally? Three conditions characterize programs that work best: First: access to and sustained participation in the program.^{xxviii} Not surprisingly, researchers identified gaps associated with income; children from families with higher incomes and more education were more likely to participate in OST programs, participated more frequently during the week, participated in a greater number of different activities, and engaged more in enrichment than tutoring.

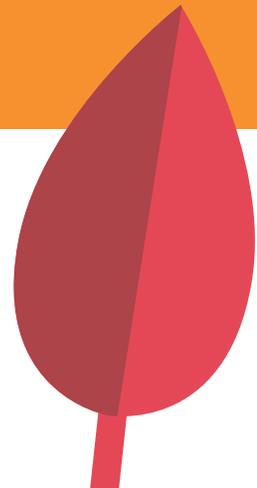
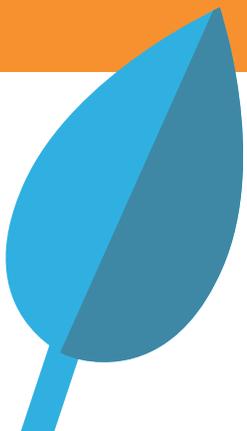
Second, quality programming and staffing. Children in higher-quality childcare were better prepared for school at age four than children in lower-quality care. At age 15, they were still performing slightly above their peers and experienced significantly lower levels of behavior problems compared with children in lower-quality care.^{xxix}

What is quality? Successful programs provide sequenced activities designed to develop targeted skills, employ active experiential learning, include components for developing personal or social skills, and target explicit personal or social skills. Whether the activities involve art, sports, or academics, high quality OST programs foster a mind-set of mastery, develop intrinsic motivations, and promote community among participants.^{xxx} Programs don't teach these capacities. Rather, they infuse them into educational experiences where participants have choices and engage in activities. Staff model preferred behavior, promote student mastery of skills, listen attentively, provide individualized feedback, and set clear expectations. In low quality programs, staff engage in punitive interactions more than in supportive behaviors.

Third: Partnerships make stronger programs. This includes students' schools, homes, and other community institutions. Indeed, coordinated collaboration across all contexts where students are learning proved to be particularly effective.



There is a diversity of activity [in this program]... Instructors are the best part. They are dedicated and make connections with the children. Every child has the opportunity to pursue his/her point of interest. The child's needs are attended to, and interpersonal problems are well managed.



PARENTS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY CONFRONT BARRIERS TO OST



INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION

WCK's Conversations found significant barriers to accessing OST programs in Washington County, especially for families with single parents or both parents working outside the home. When participants in WCK's survey were asked why their children were not participating in OST programs, 41% said they did not know about available programs.

More information is needed about available classes at which locations. Telephone communication can be a problem [the parent speaks Spanish].

To make decisions about whether and where to send their children, parents in the WCK Conversations wanted to know which programs are available, their quality, start and drop off times, as well as costs. A parent expressed frustration that an online state resource for childcare programs was not updated and may not be accurate. Another parent found Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District boundary lines confusing: despite believing the family is in-district, it turns out they are not and must pay out-of-district fees. In general, parents feel isolated and value the opportunity to interact with other parents who have common interests and concerns. But they struggle to find each other.

It would be nice to know bus drop-off times. We don't know when to be there to meet the bus.

Survey respondent request: More information about programs getting to residents in formats not including social media.



HIGH COST

After the challenge of becoming informed, cost is the most significant barrier, a surprising finding given Washington County's overall economic condition. The second most populous county in Oregon with the second highest per capita income and the highest median income, Washington County approached 600,000 people in 2018. The County's population has grown exponentially.^{xxxii} Children represent almost 25% of the County's population; 8% are five years old or younger.^{xxxiii} However, these figures mask considerable economic disparities within the County. In 2017-18, more than 50% of the students at forty out of 133 schools (30.1%) were eligible for free and reduced price school meals in contrast with 2000 when only 10 schools had over 50% of their students eligible. During the same period the overall number of eligible students went from 22% to 38.6%.^{xxxiii}

Many parents simply find program costs to be prohibitive. For instance, the annual cost of preschool childcare in Washington County is \$7,740 in a small home setting, \$11,700 in a large home setting, and \$16,680 in a center setting,^{xxxiv} which compares unfavorably to \$11,800 for tuition and fees for a year at one of Oregon's public universities. Some programs also require families to pay to reserve spots, essentially paying for a place on a wait list. In 2015, Oregon ranked as the third least affordable state for childcare in the nation.^{xxxv}

After school and summer OST range in cost but can be as high as \$800 or more per month. Adelante Mujeres, the Beaverton Education Foundation, and Centro Cultural do not charge participants for programs. The Hillsboro Inukai Family Boys and Girls Club only charges \$100/year per elementary child and \$5/year for teens (with additional costs for summer activities.) These free and low-cost programs are available because they are heavily subsidized through fundraising.

Parents with financial and social capital can address the barriers discussed in ways that are not available to other parents. For instance, a group of Nike and Intel parents formed a nonprofit to provide after-school programs for

I'm a single mom and got lucky. I can afford the programs my kids are in. More academics—group reading, math, coding, would be great. If I moved, what would I do? The cost goes up.

children K-6, and classes and summer camps in STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) subjects for students K-12. Available in Bethany and Beaverton, the after school program costs participants \$400 per month. Yet, participants in the WCK Conversations report paying more than that for after-school or summer programs that they perceive to be just watching their children.

While some families have the required financial resources or can draw on employee assistance programs for information and discounts on childcare and activities, OST programs are out of reach for others. Washington County children under the age of 5 who are living in poverty number approximately 10,850 (16%) Although some programs serve children up to 130% of the Federal Poverty Level, such as Oregon's Childhood Promise, they still only serve 18% (1,969) of those eligible. An additional 10,480 Washington County children of school age are living in poverty; data are not available from non-profits on poverty level for school age children they serve. The need for public funding is clear.

You don't want to spend so much money, but you love your children. You want them to be well taken care of, engaged, running around burning up the energy.

Researching programs is hard and stressful. They are geographically spread out.

If you can find one you can afford, there is no transportation. This program picks up. Other programs don't pick up.

Registration requires planning many months in advance. You have to put registration on your calendar months in advance. Navigating online to add both kids at one (program) was a disaster.

Summer time is panic time... trying to find space for our kids in programs.... Programs we had relied on aren't being offered this summer.... Summer camps fill early... Summer planning is like a part time job—how far are they, when's the registration date and cost—every one is different.

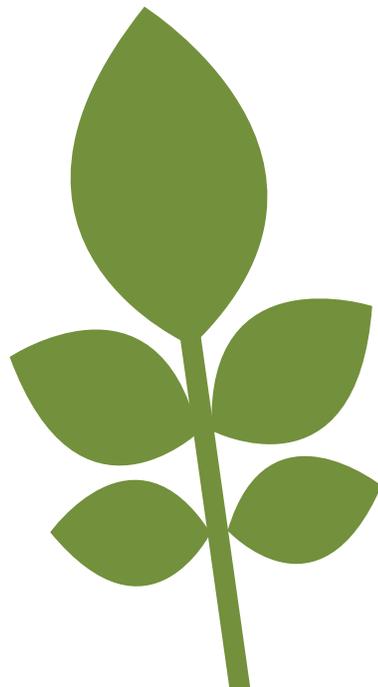
INACCESSIBILITY AND UNAVAILABILITY

Seven percent of respondents in WCK's survey described the lack of transportation as a reason why their children are not participating in OST programs. Programs tend to be concentrated geographically. This makes them inaccessible to children outside the areas of concentration.

Where programs exist, they may be available only to segments of the student population. For example, the Forest Grove school district has a 21st Century Program for middle school and high school students (supported by a Federal grant) but elementary school students have no district provided programs. In addition, some local non-profit programs such as Bienestar's early childhood and after school programs are no longer available because of insufficient funding. In Beaverton some schools have access to programs subsidized by the Beaverton Education Program, others have access to the Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation Program in three locations, and the Community Partners for Affordable Housing provides after school care at their sites. Two new programs will be offered at two elementary schools through a 21st Century Grant but three other schools that were covered by a previous grant no longer have programs.

Despite our efforts, we cannot know the true extent of the access and availability challenges faced in the County because we lack a comprehensive inventory of the programs serving communities and the communities not served. WCK reached out to as many programs as it could find but there is no centralized listing.

Even cumbersome registration procedures create challenges for families trying to apply. Whether it's distance from where they live, inadequate transportation options, or insufficient spaces to meet demand, parents struggle to find solutions.

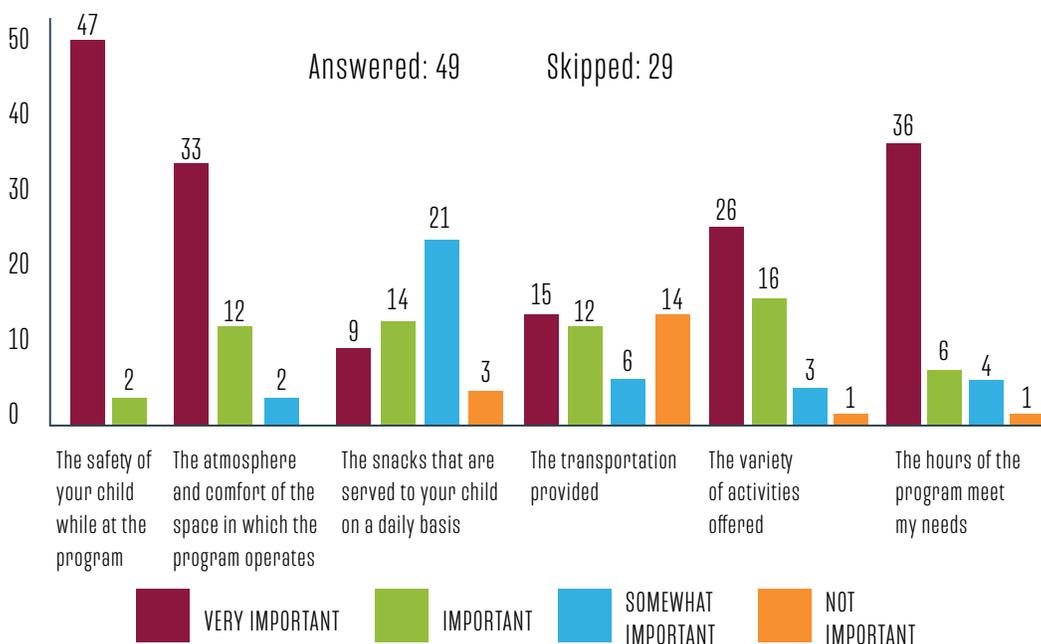


MISMATCH BETWEEN PROGRAM, PARENT, AND CHILD SCHEDULES

For those who can access them, OST programs provide Washington County parents with peace of mind. They know where their children are and that they're participating in constructive activities in a safe environment. However, accommodating the parents' employment schedules is the second most important consideration when parents choose programs. See Chart 1.

CHART 1: SURVEY ON OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

When you are considering out of school time programs for your child during the school year, how important are the following services?



Demand for programs during the year varies, judging from the distribution of participants who responded to WCK's survey. See Chart 2. Many programs do not operate throughout the year. Some programs start after and end before the normal work hours with few options for early morning drop off or late pick up. Some begin after the school year starts and end before the school year finishes, with few summer activities to pick up the slack. Some operate only when school is in session, leaving parents to fall back on family and friends, when they can, on days when school is out during the school year.

Matching parents' obligations with child care options outside the home requires continuous juggling, especially when the demands of work change unpredictably. Parents also find that it is difficult to find care when there is early release or non-school days.

The most positive aspect of the program is that it gives peace of mind. We know where our kids are.

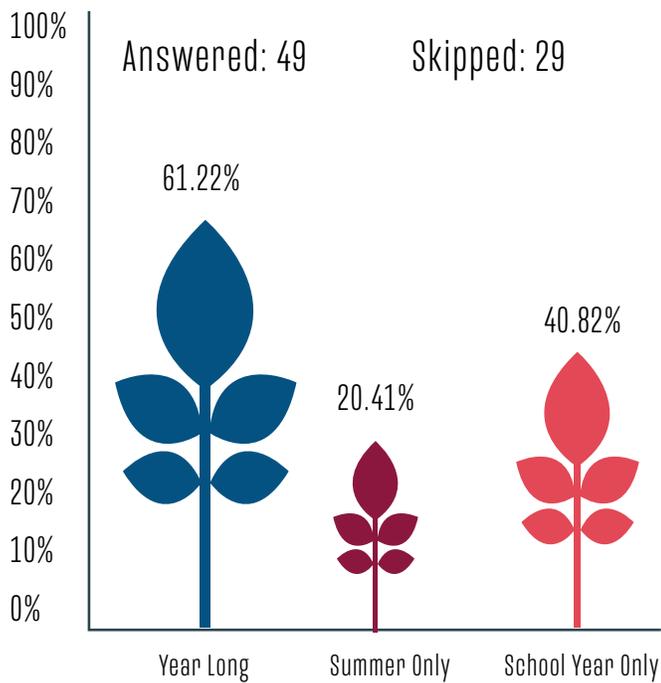
Having to drop off at 6:50 AM is the biggest problem in order to get to work on time...I have to leave work early to [pick up my child] on time...Drop-in childcare is almost nonexistent.

My background is working retail and those hours can change daily. Trying to find child care to accommodate is very tough.

It is a challenge to find other families to help out when the program doesn't fit work schedules.

CHART 2: SURVEY ON OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

Does your child participate in programs that are year-long, summer only, or school year only?



We need programs that promote teamwork and collaboration because my younger boy doesn't like athletic programs.

My child would go to the babysitter and only watch TV. We didn't have other options. Now we have help with homework.

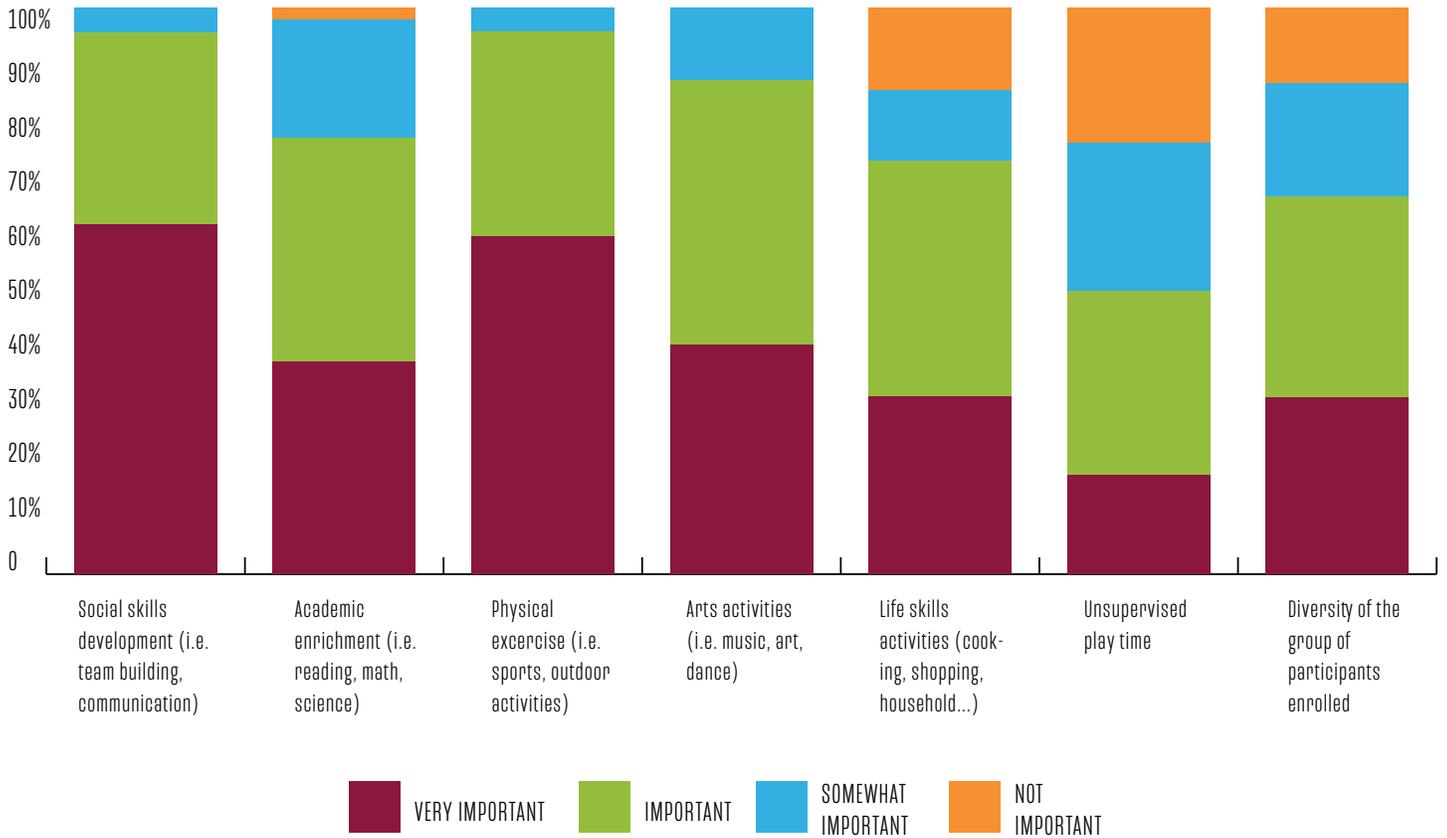
INSUFFICIENT DIVERSITY OF PROGRAM CONTENT

From WCK's research, in addition to affordability, accessibility, and flexibility, parents want diverse content. Parents believe it is important to enhance their children's social skills first and foremost; exercise, arts, academic enrichment and life skills follow closely. Chart 3. Some parents said they want their children to have more academic content or at least assistance with homework. Others want their children to have access to sports, arts, or practical skills training in everything from babysitting to robotics and public speaking. They often cannot find these options.



CHART 3: SURVEY ON OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

When you are considering out of school time programs for your child, how important are the following program elements?



WCK’s review of literature found some parents focus on learning and quality, typically these are parents with resources that allow them to be selective in their childcare arrangements. Other parents focus on practicality, typically parents driven by work-related factors, especially lower-income, single female parents. Their differing concerns derive in part from the ages of their children and perceptions of each child’s developmental needs. A third group of parents want it all: affordable, convenient, and meeting child needs; these tend to be the most socio-economically disadvantaged parents who have limited resources.^{xxxvi}

Kids love it. They need to play and socialize. They love exposure to diverse kids; it will make them better people. It helped my child be less shy.

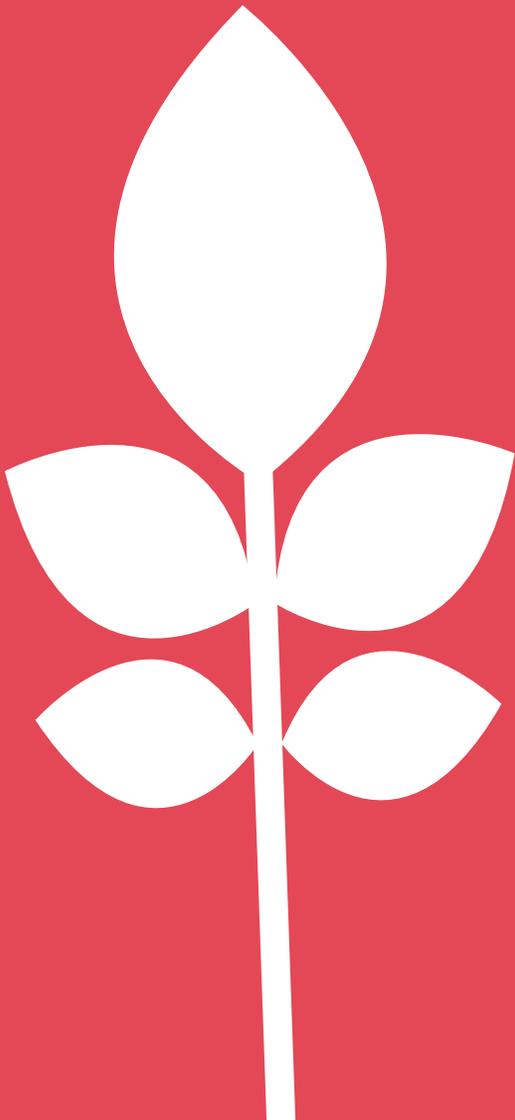
According to WCK’s online survey, over 70% of parents somewhat or strongly agree with the statement that they are satisfied with the OST programs their children attend. A similar percentage agree with the statement that their children are happy attending OST programs. But only fourteen percent believe their children are doing as much as they can.

Indeed, low and middle-income families and families of color are much less likely to be satisfied with options available for their children than their high-income neighbors. Almost forty percent of low-income parents want OST programs to keep their children busy and out of trouble. In general, demand for OST programs almost doubled between 2004 and 2014.^{xxxvii}

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 83% of Oregon parents support public funding for OST programs.

Survey: I would love to see organized activities that are well-chaperoned for teens.

High school students are often ignored because they are old enough to go home alone, but they still need support and programs.



INADEQUATE PROGRAMMING FOR SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

During the school year, elementary school students comprise the largest population served by non-profit OST programs in Washington County; high school students comprise the smallest. See Table 1. The same pattern holds for summer programs. High school students might no longer seem like children, but parents believe adolescents require structure to guide them toward responsible risk-taking and to continue learning.^{xxxviii} Waiting lists exist at programs regardless of age group.

TABLE 1

| Population served by nonprofit OST programs during the school year | Number of children |
|--|--------------------|
| Pre-K | 2,580 |
| Elementary School | 22,436 |
| Middle School | 9,324 |
| High School | 4,709 |
| Total | 39,049 |

In a national survey^{xxxix} of middle and high school students in 2004, over half say they participate in an OST activity or program—sports, clubs, volunteering, faith-based activities, lessons in music, dance, or art—daily; another third say they do so a few days each week. Many do so on weekends, as well. More than one-third of high-school students work part-time and a third receive regular tutoring or extra academic work. Yet half say that they are sometimes or often bored and three quarters agree that being bored leads to kids getting into trouble. The survey also found that parents underestimate how much time their children spend on the internet, how often they hang out at a mall, and whether their children are where their parents think they are. Nearly thirty percent of children say they are home alone after school at least three days a week, similar to a finding in WCK’s research.^{xl}



WASHINGTON COUNTY SHOULD SUPPORT OST PROGRAMS



Despite the high number of children in the County and the existence of barriers to accessing high quality OST programs, the County has not given enough attention to this issue. The County Commission, during its planning and budgeting process has not prioritized programs or policies that are youth focused. Even a cursory look at the County’s webpage reveals this lack of prioritization: the webpage has links labeled “Animal,” “Divorce,” and “Veterans” for residents to find available information and resources; not children. With three new County Commissioners having won seats in 2018, there is now an opportunity to focus on these issues.^{xli}

Washington County is the second largest county and should not be so lacking in resources.

Addressing what parents want, what students need, and what best serves the community will require an investment of funds that can support current programs, more program development, and an information portal for community members. WCK’s research has identified significant unmet needs but can only estimate their dimensions.

Forming a new advisory group and tasking it with addressing the needs of all county children would be an important start.

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS NEEDS TO:

- Identify and implement sustained funding for OST programs
- Collect data on program availability and cost county-wide
- Serve as a clearinghouse of program information for county residents

Non-profits that deliver existing programs are desperately trying to raise money to stay afloat. Some have reached enrollment capacity, others depend on grant funding that expires with programs expected to become self-sufficient by the end of the grant period even though there are no resources to make that happen. Achieving self-sufficiency has proven to be an insurmountable hurdle. Providing county funding for non-profit programs would allow programs the ability to focus on services to youth while also providing them the needed financial resources to improve their services. Many are in aging buildings that need upgrades, costs to parents could be reduced, and transportation to/from programs could be expanded with additional, dedicated resources.

We know from research in other counties (i.e. SUN sites in Multnomah County) and with programs within Washington County that a single site after school program can operate for as little as \$130K/year. The cost for pre-K center care per child would be \$16,680. WCK proposes a property tax levy of at least \$.35/\$1,000 of assessed valuation to generate \$21 million dollars per year dedicated to supporting OST programs. Information from providers in the County indicates that working with school districts to use existing resources

and subsidizing current programs can control costs and significantly increase opportunities to impact school age kids. This solution would not provide programs for all kids, but it would help meet the most pressing needs and make a significant impact for thousands of children and their families.

With additional resources dedicated to this issue, the County should also centralize collection of information about OST programs. Data collected by the County can provide the Board with the information necessary to plan where programs need to be developed, what types of programs are needed, and the effectiveness of County funded programs. For parents, information provided by the Board can help them know where, and how to access programs, across the County.

While almost a quarter of the respondents to WCK's survey believe local government should provide parks and libraries, over three-quarters believe local government should also provide organized activities and programs. Most respondents felt that Washington County was not doing enough to help children and families. Partnering with school districts could offer options to maximize site space while lowering costs, including those for transportation.

Organizations have helped WCK understand the dynamics of operating programs, given the complexities of staffing and support services. Parents have helped WCK understand the need for transportation, the times that they need to be offered, and the need for access to affordable OST programs for their kids. Ample research supports the long-term benefit of early interventions and ongoing support for kids. This is both a cost effective and wise investment in the future of Washington County kids, especially for those on the lower end of the economic spectrum.

The County needs to fashion an approach that fits its population, geography, and financial capacity but it need not invent one. It can learn from successful efforts in other jurisdictions that created mechanisms to coordinate providers, often with leadership from elected officials.^{xlii} Where there's a will, there's a way. We know the way. We need the political will.



METHODOLOGY



WCK obtained information for this report from multiple sources. First, it surveyed twenty-eight, mostly non-profit, organizations that serve children throughout the County. Almost ninety percent responded with information about the population each served and program costs. The WCK website shows a map of program locations.

Second, WCK scheduled community conversations at venues throughout the County. The Conversations involved twenty-one different groups of parents/guardians affiliated with 11 organizations across the County. A list of participating organizations appears in Appendix 1. One hundred thirty-nine people attended with involvement ranging from zero (at only two sites) to twenty-four participants. Both English and Spanish-speaking facilitators led the groups. Facilitators used four questions to trigger conversation.

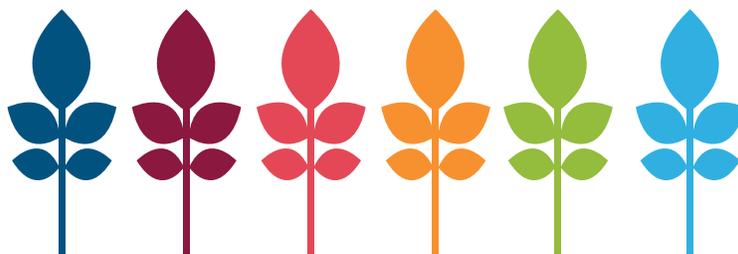
1. Is this the first time your children have been in an out-of-school program?
2. What has been your experience when obtaining childcare, after-school, before-school, and summer programs for your children?
3. What problems have you experienced with childcare, after-school, before-school, and summer programs for your children?
4. What other services for your children do you wish you could have?

Notes from each conversation were reviewed for themes and illustrative quotations.

Third, WCK created an online survey in both English and Spanish and sought responses through its non-profit partners, notices posted in Facebook, Twitter, and Next Door, as well as local newspapers, and sent announcements to 30 organizations, including 28 OST providers, attracting seventy-two unique responses. 56% had children in OST programs, 37% did not, and the rest had some children in OST programs and some not. Both the Conversations and the survey were provided in English and Spanish to offer an opportunity for participation from diverse communities. Two hundred and eleven residents of the County participated in these efforts.

Finally, racial disparities in the County have been well documented in the *Leading with Race* report prepared by the Coalition of Communities of Color.^{xliii} To be as inclusive as possible, WCK contacted programs serving culturally specific communities. Because programs tend not to report their data by race, ethnicity, or national origin, this report does not do that, either. However, in our Conversations we asked participants to complete evaluations that included demographic information. The online survey requested demographic information, as well. Participants often did not provide evaluations and demographic information. Therefore, we cannot accurately report responses by these and other demographic characteristics.

However in the Conversations, we know that participants came from diverse communities. Where ethnicity proved to be relatively homogenous within Conversation groups, we could compare responses across different groups. Concerns expressed proved to be remarkably similar. They identified barriers to access ranging from cost and lack of information, through inadequate transportation and inflexible schedules, to lack of variety in content. And these were families who were already receiving care! We cannot imagine the experiences of those who were not that fortunate.



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- ⁱⁱ Stephen Small and Cailin O’Conner, “What Research Tells Us About Effective Out-of-School Time Programs for Preventing Juvenile Delinquency,” University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension, January 2008
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- ^{iv} Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson, “Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap,” *72 American Sociological Review*, April 2007, 167-180
- ^v <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/reports-and-data/students/Pages/Dropout-Rates.aspx>
- ^{vi} <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/assessment/Pages/Assessment-Group-Reports.aspx>
- ^{vii} David Dobbs, “The New Science of the Teenage Brain,” *National Geographic*, October 2014
- ^{viii} Frameworks Institute, *Building Opportunity into Adolescence: Mapping the Gaps between Expert and Public Understandings of Adolescent Development* (2018)
- ^{ix} Robert Putnam, *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Simon and Schuster (2015)
- ^x Ann Meier, Benjamin Swartz Harmann, and Ryan Larson, “A Quarter Century of Participation in School-Based Extracurricular Activities: Inequalities by Race, Class, Gender and Age?,” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 47:1299–1316 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-018-0838-1>
- ^{xi} Rich Sabens, Chief of Policy in Stayton, OR, testimony before the Oregon House Early Childhood and Families Committee, Informational Hearing in Salem OR, May 23, 2018.
- ^{xii} https://www.worksystems.org/sites/default/files/Opportunity%20Youth%20Report%2C%202018_1.pdf
- ^{xiii} Stephen A Small; University of Wisconsin--Extension Cooperative Extension; University of Wisconsin--Madison; Arthur J Reynolds; Cailin O’Connor; What Works, Wisconsin: What Science Tells Us About Cost-Effective Programs for Juvenile Delinquency Prevention (United States of America: 2005)
- ^{xiv} Parks Perry High-Scope Preschool Project.pdf (2000)
- ^{xv} <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/12/affordable-daycare-subsidized-child-care-working-mom-quebec/579193/>
- ^{xvi} La Torre, D., Leon, S., Wang, J., & Cai, L. (2019). Long-term outcome study: A longitudinal study of LA’s BEST students’ persistence and graduation rates (CRESST Report 862). Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).
- ^{xvii} Jaret Hodges, Jason McIntosh, and Marcia Gentry, “The Effect of an Out-of-School Enrichment Program on the Academic Achievement of High-Potential Students From Low-Income Families,” *Journal of Advanced Academics*, Vol. 28(3) 204–224 2017
- ^{xviii} Jenny Anderson and Dan Kopf, “Dear Powerful People, Here’s the Economic Case for Investing More in Little Kids,” *Quartz*, <https://www.qz.com/1321516>, July 13, 2018
- ^{xix} MetLife Foundation Afterschool Alert, *Keeping Kids Safe and Supported in the Hours After School*, Issue Brief #65. May, 2014; and Joseph Durlack, Roger Weissberg, Allison Dymnicki, Rebecca Taylor, and Kriston Schellinger, “The impact of enhancing students’ social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school based universal interventions,” *Child Development*, February 2011
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- ^{xxiv} After School Alliance, “Oregon After 3 PM” part of the “American After 3 PM” survey, 2014
- ^{xxv} 2016-004RN_Skills Gap-OR_Report_FINAL_web.pdf
- ^{xxvi} After School Programs Make a Difference: Findings from the Harvard Family Research Project, SEDL Letter, After-school, Family, and Community, Volume XX, #2, August 2008
- ^{xxvii} Rich Sabens, Chief of Policy in Stayton, OR, testimony before the Oregon House Early Childhood and Families Committee, Informational Hearing in Salem OR, May 23, 2018.
- ^{xxviii} *After School Programs Make a Difference: Findings from the Harvard Family Research Project*, SEDL Letter, After-school, Family, and Community, Volume XX, #2, August 2008
- ^{xxix} Rich Sabens, Chief of Policy in Stayton, OR, supplemental information in testimony before the Oregon House Early Childhood and Families Committee, Informational Hearing in Salem OR, May 23, 2018.
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- ^{lii} Bodilly, Susan J., et al. Hours of Opportunity, Volume 1 : *Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer School, and Other Out-of-School-Time Programs*, The RAND Corporation, 2010.
- ^{liiii} Coalition of Communities of Color. 2018. Leading with Race: Research Justice in Washington County. Portland, Oregon: <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/research-and-publications?tag=Leading%20with%20Race>

APPENDIX 1



ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN CONVERSATIONS PROJECT*

Adelante Mujeres*

Airway Science

Beaverton Education Foundation

Beaverton PAL

Bienestar

Centro Cultural de Washington County*

Champions

Chess for Success

Citizen Participation Organization 1* (Cedar Hills)

Citizen Participation Organization 7* (Bethany)

Eden Acres

Forest Grove Community Learning Center

Forest Grove Sunrise Rotary*

Girls, Inc.

Good Neighbor Center - Tigard

Hillsboro Inukai Family Boys & Girls Club*

Hillsboro Parks and Recreation Department*

Homeplate Youth Services

Impact NW Shine Program*

Math Gamers

MIT School (Multiple Intelligences Training)

Muslim Education Trust*

Oregon Child Development Coalition

Sherwood YMCA Child Development Center*

Tigard/Tualatin School District After School Program

Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District*

YMCA of Columbia Willamette

*Held Conversation focus groups

APPENDIX 2



WASHINGTON COUNTY KIDS BOARD, STEERING COMMITTEE, AND CONVERSATION VOLUNTEERS

Lisa Allen, WCK Board Member and member, Hillsboro School Board

Don Amon, WCK Steering Committee and Center Manager, Airway Science for Kids

Maureen Barnhart, WCK Board Member

Susan Bender_Phelps, WCK Steering Committee and Owner, Odyssey Mentoring

Maria Caballero-Rubio, WCK Steering Committee and Executive Director, Centro Cultural de Washington County

Bridget Cooke, WCK Steering Committee and Executive Director, Adelante Mujeres

Amy Corbett, WCK Steering Committee and Chief Program Officer, Metropolitan Family Service

Kathy Cvetko, WCK Steering Committee and Owner, Math Gamers

Sal DeTraglia, WCK Steering Committee

Don Domes, WCK Steering Committee

Lindsay Garcia, WCK Board Treasurer and Director of Education, Centro Cultural de Washington County and MESA Regional Coordinator

Claire Morgan, WCK Board Secretary

JinWei Nui, WCK Webmaster

Luann Pelton, WCK Steering Committee

Katie Riley, WCK Board President

Pat Salas, WCK Conversations Volunteer

Rachel Schutz, WCK Steering Committee and Executive Director, Hillsboro Inukai Family Boys and Girls Club

Barbara Sturgis, WCK Conversations Volunteer

Mariana Valenzuela, WCK Conversations Volunteer

A REPORT BY



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