

Afterschool in Rhode Island

An Overview



Agenda

- Overview of RIASPA
- History of afterschool in Rhode Island
- Key successes of afterschool
- Addressing new challenges
- What the research says
- What parents say
- What's next

Afterschool in Rhode Island

- Has become a profession over the last ten years.
- Shifted from afterschool childcare to more robust programming.
- Programs offer wide variety of educational and enrichment activities.
- Programs are beginning to build meaningful collaborations with schools.

Examples of Afterschool Today

- Bailey Elementary School Reading Intervention Initiative
 - YMCA and Providence Schools
- Cranston 21st Century Community Learning Center
- Woonsocket Schools/Museum of Work and Culture Collaboration

What is RIASPA?

- Founded in 2002
- Catalyst for change in afterschool field.
- Focus on professional development, public awareness, and public policy to increase access to high-quality afterschool programs.
- Incubate innovative ideas that connect afterschool with school day.
- Make connections to promote collaboration between schools and afterschool.

Relationship with UWRI

- UWRI has always maintained a focus on ensuring children's success in schools and in life.
- RIASPA's past goals and goals for the next five years are part of bigger educational landscape for United Way of RI.
- As an afterschool field, we are poised to tackle key challenges and meet outcomes to realize this greater vision.

From Childcare to Improving Education

- Afterschool started as a way to ensure child safety in the hours after the school day.
- Realization among federal government and funders that afterschool can be powerful tool.
- Focus on social/emotional outcomes, learning supports.
- Quality improvement and professional development has created shift to educational outcomes

Key Achievements Leading to Shift

- Program Quality Standards for the field, including a program quality assessment.
- Built professional development system for afterschool field.
- Developed pilots to address summer learning loss, and high school graduation rates.
- Codified role of afterschool in the Basic Education Program.

Key Achievements Continued

- Creation of afterschool coalitions in Woonsocket and Central Falls/Pawtucket.
- Increased legislative attention to the need for afterschool.
- Development of youth development certificate program and youth development degree program at Rhode Island College.

Improving Educational Supports

- Since 2002, afterschool has become a profession in the state, moving from afterschool child care to an opportunity to reinforce learning with hands-on, engaging activities.
- RIASPA has led efforts to increase connections with other education entities to improve outcomes for children.

Collaborations with Schools

- Collaboration with schools is key to student success during the school day and after school ends.
- Blending academics and broader outcomes simultaneously will improve children.
- Communication between community educators and teachers will rethink the boundaries between the school day and afterschool.

Creating Engaged Learning

- Afterschool provides context for learning through hands-on, experiential activities.
- Reinforces academic concepts in different way.
- Examples
 - Sullivan School – Newport
 - Community Boating Center – Providence
 - RiverzEdge Arts Project – Woonsocket

Reducing Summer Learning Loss

- Summer Learning Loss contributes greatly to the achievement gap. To improve student achievement, we must reduce summer learning loss.
- Since 2008, RIASPA has been working with districts and community organizations on innovative summer learning models.
- Major goal to transform summer school in Rhode Island.

Multiple Pathways to High School Graduation

- High school students need multiple ways to achieve success towards graduation. Not every teaching style works with every student.
- Since 2008, RIASPA has been working with statewide partners and with local districts to develop system for high school credit for out-of-school time.
- Example – Museum of Work and Culture, Woonsocket

Challenges in RI Education System

- Not enough time in the school day or school year to “dive deep” on concepts.
- Summer break causes students to fall behind.
- Focus on tested subjects leaves little time for other critical concepts such as civic education and the arts.
- Ensuring students graduate from high school and graduate prepared for post-secondary education or a career.

How Out-of-School Time Can Help

- Out-of-school programs can help address **all** of these challenges.
- High-quality OST programs:
 - Can boost student attendance.
 - Contextualize learning for children.
 - Support social and emotional growth.
 - Enhance critical thinking and other necessary life skills.

Research Supports This

- High-school dropout research.
- Academic outcomes research.
- Research on increased attendance.
- Research on social/emotional impacts.
- Service-learning and STEM research.

Parents Also Support This

- In June 2011, UWRI and RIASPA did survey of parental attitudes on out-of-school time.
 - 63 percent of parent's satisfied with their children's school experience, but...
 - 91 percent of parents said school alone is not enough to develop skills needed to succeed.
 - Parents believe afterschool promotes social development, and boosts academic achievement.

What is Next?

- Developing measurable benchmarks for goals.
- Developing common outcomes and measurements for the afterschool field and school partners.
- Focused professional development.
- Greater collaboration between schools and out-of-school time partners.

The question is not, “How
do we make our schools
better?”

The question is, “How do we help our students succeed?”