

The Collaborative for Building After School Systems: Building After-School Systems for Diverse Populations

INITIATIVE THREE

GOAL:

To build after-school systems that account for the effects of race, class, gender and ethnicity in their program models, and in staffing and funding.

RATIONALE:

After-school programs need to support, benefit, and attract the active involvement of children and youth of both genders and of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Research data consistently show that demographic differences are associated with children's educational attainment. Given this, the after-school field must improve its understanding of these differences and its capacity to adapt program models to support diverse student populations. After-school programs can do a better job of helping children and youth succeed and complete high school if they understand and plan for diverse preferences in respect to program location, activities, community outreach, funding and staffing. In this way, after-school can help level the playing field for disadvantaged groups.

STRATEGY:

To ensure that after-school systems and programs more effectively support youth across race, class, gender and ethnicity, CBASS will draw on existing research from partner cities and the field to assess the following:

- How do differences across race, class, gender and ethnicity influence the ways in which diverse youth and their families engage with OST systems in CBASS partner cities?
- What are existing program models and best practices that have effectively served diverse populations?
- How can professional development and leadership training techniques help to recruit and retain diverse OST staff and prepare them to address the needs of different student groups?
- What does it cost to implement these strategies on a city-wide scale?

CBASS will convene a taskforce of stakeholders from academia, policy organizations, foundations and CBOs to review research findings and propose strategies.