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Research BRIEF

Youth Community Connections

Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance

Afterschool Programming Keeps Students In School

Quality afterschool programs can significantly increase graduation rates and reduce dropouts.

STUDENTS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL FOR MANY REASONS

Students cite many reasons for dropping out of school. Afterschool programs can help to keep students engaged and in school.

- ◆ Students aren't challenged or don't feel like what they learn is useful
- ◆ Students don't feel like they are an important part of the school community
- ◆ Students don't perform academically or believe they can succeed in school are less likely to stay in school

MINNESOTA FACES DROPOUT CHALLENGES

While Minnesota as a whole is slightly above national average for high school graduation, there are significant disparities among white students and students of color.

- ◆ 78% of all Minnesota students graduate from High School, compared to the national average of 70%.
- ◆ 70% of Asian students in Minnesota graduate. The national average is 81%.
- ◆ 42% of Hispanic students in Minnesota graduate. The national average is 58%.
- ◆ 39% of African American students graduate in Minnesota. The national average is 55%.

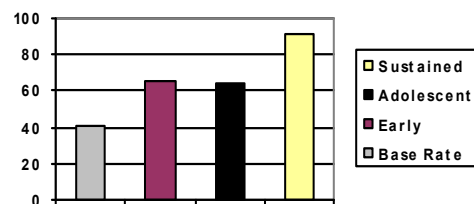
AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR ENGAGING STUDENTS IN LEARNING

- ◆ Students involved in afterschool programs are far more likely to graduate from high school (66%) than those who are not involved (42%) and are less likely to drop out (23% to 50%).
- ◆ Afterschool programs increase connections to schools - more than 85% of students say that afterschool programs caused them to try harder and care more about school.
- ◆ Afterschool programs provide students with diverse opportunities to apply and explore skills they learn in school in ways that are relevant to their interests and their future.

- ◆ Students involved in afterschool programs see significant improvements in their academic performance and achievement. 42% of students involved in afterschool programs continue their schooling, as opposed to 16% of those who are not involved.

THE POTENTIAL OF SUSTAINED INVESTMENT IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, estimates that with sustained investment in programming from early childhood through high school, graduation rates can be raised from 41% to 91%. The chart below shows the estimated graduation rates depending on when investments in children and youth begin.



BENEFITS OF INCREASING GRADUATION RATES

There are significant advantages not only to young people, but to our communities, our businesses, and our state, if we can keep students in school and raise high school graduation rates.

- ◆ **Increased Earning Power** - High school graduates will earn about \$263,000 more over the course of their lives, even assuming they do not go on to college.
- ◆ **Fewer Risky Behaviors** - High school graduates are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and be involved in criminal activities. If the national graduation rate can be raised by just 1%, the nation will save \$1.8 billion per year from the reduction in crime alone.
- ◆ **Increased Workforce Skills** - High school graduates are more likely to have the skills necessary to be productive members of the modern workforce. The more people who graduate the stronger the workforce will be.

Sources

- ◆ *Diplomas Count*, Education Weekly, Minnesota summary
- ◆ “How Afterschool Programs Reduce Drop Out Rates and Increase High School Graduation Rates,” City of Denver
- ◆ “After-school Opportunities,” National Dropout Prevention Center
(www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/after_school_opps/overview.htm)
- ◆ “Study: Minn. Ranks at Bottom for Black Graduation Rate,” MPR
(www.minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/06/04/graduate)