
Foreword

This book provides a widely useful compilation of ideas, cases, innovative approaches, and practical strategies for enhancing a little-discussed school activity—afterschool programs. By taking a new look at these ubiquitous programs, Anne Turnbaugh Lockwood identifies a substantial resource in the effort to increase student learning. In this book she provides an enormously useful range of strategies for designing, implementing, and evaluating afterschool programs.

This work would be an important resource if it only highlighted the ways afterschool programs could enrich their missions by establishing academics as a more central part of their work. But the book goes well beyond just making us aware of this seemingly underutilized learning setting. It covers and describes all the major factors in building successful afterschool programs that enhance achievement.

This volume is an important resource for school principals, agencies that provide afterschool programs, districts, and parent groups whose children use these services. First, it provides a new perspective on afterschool programs, showing how they can be an important source for both recreation and academic learning. Afterschool programs are found all across the United States serving millions of students. Understanding how they can more effectively serve the learning needs of students adds a major cache of time for helping all students achieve. Second, the book provides a relevant and constructive set of strategies and ideas for making these programs effective. Numerous research studies, Internet Web sites, and publications extend these ideas.

This book should be read by anyone who views afterschool programs as an additional way to help students learn, because it offers a wide set of practical ideas for designing, implementing, and evaluating these programs. All the key processes necessary for changing an existing or implementing a new program are found in this volume.

Any leader who wants to develop effective afterschool programs that foster student learning will gain much from this book. For example, the reader is offered concrete examples of effective programs through case studies of existing afterschool efforts. These cases show what a good program looks like, how it is run, and key features. In addition, the book lays out practical steps for planning programs, hiring staff, designing curriculum, selecting activities, and providing professional development. In another section, Lockwood lists an important set of issues to consider when designing an afterschool program and then adds an inventory of important questions to consider. She describes barriers to success and then presents suggestions for overcoming those barriers. Throughout the book, Lockwood sets out to make the material accessible to readers interested in implementing these programs—these ideas are found in the form of questions and suggestions, tables of issues to address, and practical strategies to consider. The tables and strategies themselves are worth the price of the book.

This book also examines several other issues that often spell the end of quality programs—developing a parent and community base of support, designing adequate program evaluation processes, and planning for sustainability. One finds a useful set of questions, ideas, and strategies for building a base of support among parents and the community. The section on program evaluation is quite practical and detailed. It offers a clear description of ways schools can and should evaluate afterschool programs. Finally, the chapter on sustainability details challenges to the viability of afterschool programs and suggests actions schools should take to ensure that these programs are successful in the long term.

Overall, this book offers a variety of school and community leaders a concrete, useful, and in-depth look at ways to design, implement, and evaluate a major resource in the learning of students. Clearly written, well organized, and enormously practical, it should be in every school's professional library.

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