

# How Principals Can Promote After-school to Support Student Learning

## Leadership in After-school Learning Strategies for Principals

To build a strong school culture and climate and address the widening achievement and opportunity gaps, principals are increasingly working with after-school and summer learning programs to ensure student success.

Key areas for principal action include:

- **Promote a continuum of learning and opportunity**
- **Champion after-school programs and needed resources**
- **Support quality after-school and summer learning**

### STRATEGIES

#### Expand the vision of learning to include high-quality experiences both in- and out-of-school.

- ▷ Demonstrate the belief that the school's mission, vision and plan encompass learning that occurs during and beyond the traditional school day.
- ▷ Articulate to all stakeholders the value of learning opportunities that occur after school, whether they are school-based, school-linked or community-based.
- ▷ Consider after-school opportunities as added learning time and a complement to, not an extension of, the school day.
- ▷ Offer learning opportunities in after-school that are different from, but connected to, those in the school day.
- ▷ Articulate a continuum of services and supports for students.

#### Act as a catalyst in the community to develop quality after-school programs.

- ▷ Use the credibility of the principal to advocate for after-school programs for students.
- ▷ Understand after-school funding streams and policy issues.
- ▷ Keep the public and policymakers focused on the need for a continuum of services that supports students' learning beyond the school day.
- ▷ Promote and facilitate partnerships among schools, providers and communities that secure adequate, sustainable funding for after-school programs.

**STRATEGIES****Support linkages, connections and relationships between the school day and after-school learning that ensure program content meets community, school and student needs.**

- ▷ Extend the school's culture of adult learning to after-school staff members.
- ▷ Ensure that the school's learning and core academic standards are connected to activities in after-school programs.
- ▷ Connect professional development opportunities for after-school and school -day staff members to ensure consistency in standards of teaching and learning and to encourage relationship-building among staff members.
- ▷ Collaborate with stakeholders to create learning opportunities for students beyond the traditional school day.
- ▷ Facilitate the development of an after-school plan that identifies and addresses the needs of students and the community.
- ▷ Connect students with a diverse group of role models who will help ensure their success.
- ▷ Encourage families to support and participate in after-school learning.

**Work with after-school directors to evaluate after-school programs to ensure they achieve defined outcomes.**

- ▷ Define short- and long-term outcomes for after-school programs collaboratively with the program director.
- ▷ Use data to ensure that children most in need have access to after-school.
- ▷ Hold programs accountable to expectations jointly developed with the program director.
- ▷ Ensure that after-school programs are well managed and employ sound fiscal practices.
- ▷ Create formal and informal communication strategies between the principal and the program director and school and after-school staff members.
- ▷ Use data and evaluation results to document program impact and make the case for quality after-school programs with school, community and political leaders.