



Afterschool and Summer Programs Help Students Stay in School
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The research is clear: High quality afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs, delivered through partnerships among schools and community-based organizations, contribute to student success! This in turn helps to reduce at-risk behaviors that arise when children and youth are not occupied in some form of out-of-school activity, particularly during the hours of 3pm and 6pm. Afterschool and summer programs not only increase student achievement, but provide a safe, structured environment with adults that encourage positive youth development.

Through many years of experience, we have been able to develop high quality programs throughout Wyoming that are cost-effective and delivered in a system that works in concert with classroom learning. Working together in partnership with schools, creates a process that “wraps” services together through shared communication and strategies that not only eliminates service gaps, but reduces the need for more costly academic interventions. Research from the anti-crime organization FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS indicates that “there is a clear connection between educational success and decreased involvement in crime.” Further the study goes on to say that, “only a one-year increase of staying in school reduces murder and assault by almost 30 percent, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent and burglary and larceny by about 6 percent.

This isn't the only issue facing the citizens of Wyoming. Consider the loss of revenue to the state economy. When translated into dollars, the facts are startling: 1) If graduation rates increased by only 5 percent, our economy would see a combined savings and revenue of \$9.5 million annually; 2) the state would save more than \$22.8 million in health care costs over the course of the lifetimes of each class of dropouts had they earned their diplomas; 3) \$10.1 million could be saved per year in community college remediation costs and lost earnings if all students graduated ready for college or some form of technical education (Alliance for Excellent Education, October 2009).

We also know for a fact, that early childhood education programs are extremely effective in increasing school success and reducing crime. Those children who are proficient in reading by grade 3 are more likely to be successful throughout the rest of their school careers. Our children must be ready to compete in a global economy. A combined effort between school and community partnerships is essential to circumvent the obvious results of increased risky behaviors when children and youth are left on their own during critical hours after school.

The bottom line is we can pay a little now or we can pay much more later on. The cost of a student in afterschool programs is about \$1,000 per school year. Compare that to \$100 per day for incarcerating a youth. Do the math: Trying to reverse negative behavior is costly and time consuming, and often not successful. The rates of recidivism are high. If the focus is on prevention beginning at an early age, we can help to mold positive behaviors and attitudes by supporting healthy development through consistent mentoring and reinforcement from birth to young adult.