

IN THIS COMMENTARY

- 1 **Is Civic Engagement a Core Skill?**
- 2 **Can Service-Learning Bridge School and Out-of-School Contexts?**
- 3 **What Does Civic Engagement during Out-of-School Time Look Like?**
- 5 **What Impact Can Civic Engagement Opportunities Have?**
- 7 **How Can We Strengthen Civic Engagement Opportunities during Out-of-School Time?**

COMMENTARY AUTHORS

Nicole Yohalem • Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom
Karen Pittman

The Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary series is written and published by **The Forum for Youth Investment** with support from the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**

© 2004 by the Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. All rights reserved. Parts of this report may be quoted or used as long as the authors and the Forum for Youth Investment are duly recognized. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted for commercial purpose without prior permission.

For information about reprinting this publication and information about other publications, please contact the Forum at:

The Cady-Lee House, 7064 Eastern Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20012-2031
T: 202.207.3333; F: 202.207.3329
Email: youth@forumforyouthinvestment.org
Web: www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

SUGGESTED CITATION:

The Forum for Youth Investment. (2004). Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #8: Out-of-School Time and Civic Engagement. Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. Available online at

www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/comment/ostpc8.pdf

OTHER ISSUES IN THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME POLICY COMMENTARY SERIES, each available online at www.forumforyouthinvestment.org/ostpc.htm:

- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #1: Out-of-School Research Meets After-School Policy
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #2: High School After -School: What Is It? What Might It Be? Why Is It Important?
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #3: Reflections on System Building: Lessons from the After-School Movement
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #4: After-School for All? Exploring Access and Equity in After-School Programs
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #5: Inside the Black Box: Exploring the "Content" of After-School
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #6: Participation During Out-of-School Time: Taking a Closer Look
- Out-of-School-Time Policy Commentary #7: School's Out: A Look at Summer Learning and Engagement

The non-school hours, often framed as a period of risk, idleness or remediation, in fact constitute a powerful opportunity for civic renewal, engagement and change. Structured out-of-school time programs do two things that make them ideal vehicles for realizing this opportunity. First, they provide children and youth with opportunities to grow, develop and engage in their communities. Second, they provide older youth and adults of all ages opportunities to work or volunteer in meaningful roles as educators and mentors.

Civic engagement is back on the radar of policy makers and educators. Practitioners around the country are working hard to figure out how to best nurture it; researchers are exploring how to best measure it. Large national funders including the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York and Pew Charitable Trusts have brought more funding and visibility to the topic in recent years. Robert Putnam's 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*, helped fuel this renaissance, warning that young people's disengagement has us headed down a path toward civic crisis. While many have argued that Putnam's characterization is unfair and that civic engagement has changed more than it has declined, no one argues with the basic assertion that civic engagement is critical to our democracy and that it is in all of our best interests to find ways to bolster it.

This commentary describes how out-of-school time programs make ideal contexts for nurturing civic engagement, exploring the issue from the practice, research and policy perspectives.

In the process, we show what civic engagement looks like in the context of

out-of-school time programs and break down how programs engage different age groups across the lifespan. From a research perspective, we explore the impact of civic engagement on young people as well as communities. We close by highlighting opportunities at the policy level.

IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT A CORE SKILL?

The answer, from all corners, is a resounding yes. World and national events in recent years have sparked renewed public attention to the importance of global awareness and cross-cultural competency. Several organizations and groups have taken a fresh look at the state of civic engagement and what young people need in order to engage effectively in the 21st century.



In 2002, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and Carnegie Corporation, in consultation with the Corporation for National and Community Service, convened a series of meetings to determine the components of effective and feasible civic education programs. The resulting report, *The Civic Mission of Schools*,ⁱ outlines six promising approaches to civic education (see box).

In June 2003, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills issued a call to action around the range of skills, knowledge and experiences today's young people need. Their framework reflects an extensive consensus-building process with educators, employers, parents, community members and students, and includes three critical skills and content areas related to civic engagement:

1. A disposition towards acting responsibly, and with the interests of the larger community in mind; demonstrating ethical behavior in a range of contexts.
2. Applying a range of skills and knowledge to understand and address global issues; and dialoguing and working collaboratively with individuals across cultures, religions and life styles.
3. Exercising the rights and obligations of citizenship at all levels, from local to global; gaining skills to participate effectively in civic life, and understanding the implications of civic decisions.ⁱⁱ

The base of skills that young people need for effective citizenship is broadening to include increased cultural competence and appreciation of diversity, sophisticated media literacy skills and refined global sensibilities.

As we broaden the base of skills considered critical, and as schools are asked to take more responsibility for nurturing those skills, it is important that we recognize and tap into the full range of resources at our disposal.

While schools are the primary places where organized learning occurs, increasing acceptance of the idea that skills like math and global awareness are in fact part of one common core aligns with a growing understanding that learning occurs in a range of settings. *The Civic Mission of Schools* report underscores this by arguing that schools should reclaim responsibility for civic education but, at the same time, acknowledges that to do so effectively requires engaging students in structured learning experiences both inside and outside of the school day and school building.

THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS PROMISING APPROACHES TO CIVIC EDUCATION

1. Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy.
2. Incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
3. Design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
4. Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.
5. Encourage student participation in school governance.
6. Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Reed Larson's research has shown that young people report highest levels of both motivation and concentration when they are in voluntary, structured programs (compared with being in school, playing sports, or hanging out with friends).ⁱⁱⁱ By bringing out the best in young people, these settings are ideal for building awareness, experience and enthusiasm around civic participation.

Given their flexibility, connections to community, voluntary nature, and ability to engage and motivate, out-of-school time programs are strong and logical places for civic engagement to be effectively nurtured. While it is difficult to ascertain just how prevalent civic activities are in the after-school context, anecdotal evidence suggests they are increasingly common. Part of the challenge in quantifying the trend is semantic. Not all after-school programs that include civic activities identify themselves as civic engagement programs, and plenty of civic engagement programs that happen during the non-school hours may not identify with the after-school movement. Despite the semantic challenges, the intersection of the after-school and civic engagement movements offers a unique and timely synergy.

CAN SERVICE-LEARNING BRIDGE SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL CONTEXTS?

Service-learning has, perhaps more than any other factor, helped open the doors of classrooms and schools to the community at large, by turning civic education into action. While according to Kenny Holdsmen of the National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development, "the service-learning field has yet to fully mature in terms of positioning, policy and supports for effective practice," there is no question it has matured significantly over the past decade and accomplished a great deal. Advocates and practitioners have successfully made the case that service activities must be

integrated not only into the school day but also into curriculum and instruction.

Recent data suggests that in 2004, 22 percent of public elementary schools, 31 percent of middle schools and 44 percent of high schools offer curriculum-based service-learning experiences. Those numbers are much higher when you identify schools that offer community service opportunities that are not integrated into the curriculum — 60 percent of all elementary, 69 percent of middle and 81 percent of high schools.^{iv}

While impressive, these numbers are actually down slightly from 1999. Like other kinds of enrichment experiences, opportunities to apply knowledge and skills to real-world community problem-solving appear to be on the decline. “You have to acknowledge No Child Left Behind as the 800-pound gorilla in the room,” said Holdsman. “To the degree that schools must pay very particular attention to math and reading, and progress is largely assessed by high stakes tests, service-learning has been squeezed a bit. In some places more than a bit.”

When the National Commission on Service-Learning released their final report in 2002 calling on educators and policy makers to increase policy, program and financial supports for service-learning, one of the barriers to implementation they identified was time – fitting meaningful service experiences into a 50-minute class period is a bit like forcing a square peg into a round hole.^v

The adoption of block scheduling and other structural innovations can build more flexibility into the school day and therefore facilitate the integration of service. Some schools have recognized the after-school hours as ideal for these kinds of opportunities, and are finding ways to position service-learning as a natural bridge between the school day and the after-school hours. “While it’s still the exception rather than the rule, there are places where community-based service-learning providers are aligned with schools and curriculum standards,” noted Holdsman.

WHAT DOES CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME LOOK LIKE?

“Our society typically thinks of youth as consumers — they consume our time, they consume other resources. In the Citizen Schools model, we’re really trying to reframe that so that young people are seen as producers and contributors.”

— ADRIAN HAUGABROOK, CITIZEN SCHOOLS

Civic engagement is a broad term used to encompass a host of strategies through which children and youth are engaged in purposeful action. Community service, service-learning, leadership, governance, advocacy, organizing and peer education all represent distinct, in some cases overlapping, strategies that organizations across the country are employing.

There are important distinctions between many of these strategies that reflect real differences in philosophy, approach and implementation. Some characterize this range of strategies as multiple pathways toward youth engagement; others see them as a continuum, from efforts that instill kindness, to those geared at social and political change; still others may see them as completely distinct. The key is that, at their core, all of these strategies require that young people have the knowledge and skills to act, the motivation to care and concrete opportunities to participate. For a range of examples, see page 4.

We would paint an incomplete portrait of civic engagement during out-of-school time if we focused solely on how programs engage youth participants. Out-of-school time programs present a huge opportunity for broad community engagement, and specifically, for tapping the time and talents of adults.

Adult volunteer activity represents a significant asset in the United States. Estimates suggest that 44 percent of Americans age 21 and over volunteered for an organization in 2000.^{vi} Service connected with helping children ranks highly among adults’ volunteer interests.^{vii}

Motivations and entry points into civic participation vary across the adult developmental trajectory (see table on page 5). College students and young adults are motivated by career exploration, and seem attracted to programs that are flexible and easy to access.^{viii} AmeriCorps provides opportunities to pay for college in return for service, and programs like City Year often shape early career trajectories. Parents are often motivated to engage as an extension of parenting, volunteering at school or becoming coaches or scout leaders.

Recently retired adults often have more time to devote to volunteer activities and may be looking for deeper opportunities as their primary professional identities wind down. Baby boomers, the oldest of whom are recently retired, may be looking less for a “slow-down” and more for a second career.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME – ACROSS THE DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YOUTH	MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH	HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH
Community Service & Service-learning	The Shemamo Council Girl Scouts of Decatur, Illinois partnered with the Illinois Raptor Center through a program called Linking Girls to the Land . Girls helped to restore Daffodil Valley prairie and wetland, a natural habitat for wildlife. Tasks include reseeding after the removal of non-native plants and planning butterfly gardens. Participants keep online journals to document their progress on this multi-year project.	Young people choose between media, environmental, mentoring or community outreach service tracks when they participate in the San Jose Children's Discovery Museum's Summer of Service program . Sessions run on two-week intervals and target middle school students, focusing on hands-on projects where youth can see the tangible effects of their service. For example, students can lead play-based activities for and mentor young children who attend the Discovery Museum's Head Start pre-school program.	Publicolor is a school-based after-school program operating in several New York City middle and high schools. The PAINT Club mobilizes youth, parents and teachers to paint all public spaces in their schools with vibrant colors, brightening the physical environments in which students learn. Young people learn basic painting skills in addition to taking leadership on planning and design. Interested students can also join the COLOR Club , a painting apprenticeship program that provides marketable skills and life skills training.
Leadership	Duafe , a rites of passage program at the Kujichagulia Lutheran Center in Milwaukee focuses on third through fifth grades. Seeking to involve girls before they enter adolescence, the program engages participants in activities and service projects focused on identity, tradition and community. Intergenerational connections play an important role in the program, and girls learn the importance of these ties for identity and community building.	Selma, Alabama's 21st Century Youth Leadership Movement trains the next generation of community leaders. Leadership training programs begin engaging youth at the middle school level, with intensive instruction in grassroots organizing strategies, leadership skills and education on social justice issues. Participants learn how to impact current problems related to education, violence and youth underemployment. Youth can deepen their involvement through the Committed Leaders program.	Arizona-based TOCA (Tohono O'odham Community Action) addresses the crisis of identity among local Native American youth through its Youth/Elder Initiative. The program provides culturally-rooted opportunities to develop leadership and identity. Youth participate and take leadership in TOCA's traditional signaling and dance group, contribute to the revitalization of ceremonies, participate in a traditional arts summer program, and help lead the Tohono O'odham Basketweavers Organization , a program to keep the tradition of basketry alive.
Governance	The HELP (Helping Everyone Live Peacefully) program at the Isaacs Center in New York is designed to work toward building an after-school environment that combats bullying and teasing. Youth in the K-5 program work alongside adults to create an environment that is bully-free and to positively affect the climate at local schools. The program uses an anti-bullying curriculum, helping students discuss and set guidelines for making the center a safe place for everyone.	Project Victory is an intensive after-school program targeting middle schoolers in Chelsea, Massachusetts. ROCA collaborates with the local schools to engage some of the community's most challenged youth. As in all of ROCA's programs, peace circles are used to discuss norms for group behavior, raise community issues, work through conflicts and celebrate successes. They provide youth and adult participants a level platform from which to speak, and teach a communal way of problem solving and decision making both within the center and in the community.	The Boston Mayor's Youth Council advises the city on its youth-directed efforts and sponsors youth-led public service projects. Comprised of high school juniors and seniors, the council tackles citywide youth concerns and helps the city address improved youth access to neighborhood services. Among the Council's projects include a youth consumer guide for teens and working with city libraries to make them more accommodating for teens.
Advocacy/ Organizing	Bookends , a national organization that supports "student-to-student solutions for literacy," was started over ten years ago by a fourth grader. It helps elementary-aged and other students organize book drives that provide books to libraries and after-school centers in high-need areas. While most projects are undertaken by classrooms, out-of-school time programs like the San Fernando Valley Girl Scouts have organized book collections and educated others about disparities in resources between urban and suburban areas.	Concerned about pedestrian safety near their school, Roadrunners , a student group at Skinner Middle School in Denver worked for the installation of a four-way stop sign near their school. The students drew up maps, recorded traffic incidents, polled hundreds of other students and met with police and community leaders. The data were so well developed and the student voices so persuasive that the city installed a four-way stop sign at an intersection that the young people had declared unsafe.	The Mothership , a project of Street Level Media in Chicago, was conceived and developed by teen mothers. Its goal is to create a safe and respectful space on the Internet where teen moms can engage in dialogue, discussion, action and change, and can receive accurate and supportive information in order to make healthy choices for themselves and their children. The Mothership is designed to address the alienation many young mothers experience that keep them from accessing critical resources and information.
Peer/Community Education	Fourth and fifth graders at North Andrews Gardens Elementary participate in a museum outreach program at the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art . In this community-based partnership, youth learn about permanent and visiting exhibitions and develop speaking and presentations skills. In turn, the students serve as museum docents for their peers and other community members.	Boston eighth graders at a Citizen Schools program conducted research and created a guide to the city's high schools for their fellow peers. Boston's system allows for students' choice about which high schools to attend. The students sought to close a gap between this opportunity and many students' ability to make an informed choice about their high school years. The guide provides information on based on graduation rates, class offerings, school climate and the application process and timeline.	Students from the Southern Nevada Water Authority's Youth Advisory Council in the Las Vegas area worked with Pulte Homes, a private homebuilding company, to educate the public about residential water conservation. Students researched water-related issues and helped promote a "water-smart" home design. The goal is to increase residents' awareness of water conservation, an important public awareness campaign in an area with significant conservation-related environmental concerns.

ADULT ENGAGEMENT DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME

	MOTIVATION/SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	PROGRAM EXAMPLES
High School Youth	Today's teens are more likely to volunteer than their adult counterparts. Many youth volunteer in conjunction with school-based assignments or projects; connecting their service to classroom learning. They are often interested in hands-on, tangible projects and issues that personally affect them and their communities. Identity development and connections with peers and others are important developmental tasks; opportunities for peer mentoring or education offer great potential.	The San Francisco Peer Resources Program (Peers) was created by the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco Education Fund. Peers trains over 1,000 middle and high school students to act as peer counselors, tutors and conflict mediators to over 15,000 of their fellow students. Participants work in both school day and after-school contexts. One peer-to-peer program is called Strategies of Successful Students (SOSS) which pairs academically successful students and those having difficulty for after-school tutoring and peer mentoring support.
College Students/ Young Adults	According to the Institute for Volunteering Research, youth aged 18–24 are most attracted by programs offering flexibility, ease of access, experience, variety and fun. Programs like AmeriCorps or City Year that recognize and support current educational and vocational goals and build career-related skills and experience fill a critical need. Tuition assistance, professional training opportunities, career mentoring and flexibility to balance school, home and work obligations are valuable incentives.	City Year corps members (young adults aged 17–24 who give one year to full-time service) lead the Young Heroes program at Marin and Hamilton Middle Schools in Cleveland. Young Heroes is a service-learning and leadership development program for 6th–8th graders that allows middle school students from diverse backgrounds to demonstrate their ability to transform communities and lead others into service. Participants engage in a variety of service projects, including transforming vacant lots into community gardens, visiting with and serving alongside senior citizens, participating in immunization drives, restoring green space and leading younger children in service. City Year alumni receive a grant to further their education.
Working Adults	Corporate America is placing a greater value on supporting corporate volunteer programs. Many companies have developed partnerships with specific schools and programs and provide time for employees to do volunteer work in those settings. Working adults often have specific skills or expertise that they are motivated to share with young people. Training on working with youth may be particularly valuable for those who have less experience working with children.	100 Black Men is a national organization that recruits black male professionals from all walks of life to mentor black youth and support efforts to improve school and after-school programs. The program runs mentoring, anti-violence, education and economic development programs, jointly called Four for the Future. Local chapters partner with and implement projects in schools, often taking on schools located in neighborhoods experiencing long-term disinvestment. Over 100 chapters engage 10,000 adults and 100,000 youth nationally.
Baby Boomers	As some begin to enter retirement, baby boomers represent a strong potential volunteer workforce for out-of-school time programs. While recently retired individuals may have more time, they may still require flexibility as they negotiate other roles or obligations — caring for elderly parents, launching second careers or enjoying extended vacations. Tapping into the skills of experienced individuals is key and maximizing what each individual brings often requires extra attention. Some of these individuals may be interested in expanded paid or non-paid roles as "second-career" after-school professionals.	"Reading coaches" are part of an Experience Corps after-school program in Boston. Volunteers spend two days a week with second and third graders to help them improve their reading skills. At the program, students and coaches select a book from a library of approximately 150 books. Each book is accompanied by a folder of suggested activities. Coaches and students work together on reading skills, and the student selects one of the activities to reinforce what he or she has read. Coaches also help with field trips, "game days" and parties that supplement reading activities.
Senior Citizens	Seniors enjoy giving back to their communities; the current "Greatest Generation" has a well-earned reputation for civic and community participation. Most likely in full retirement, seniors may have more time, but their commitments also be affected by challenges related to health, transportation and more. Creative incentives that have helped some programs involve seniors include offering discount coupons, lifelong learning courses and connections with groups like AARP. Opportunities for intergenerational sharing may be of particular interest to seniors; training on generational differences may help seniors feel effective with today's youth.	The Retired Senior and Volunteer Program (RSVP) at Chicago's Hull House fills a crucial gap at a time when school tutoring programs in Chicago's Public Schools are closing due to lack of funding. The RSVP program recruits and trains seniors to be story tellers, tutors and mentors. Former teachers are especially welcome, but seniors of any background are sought out to tell their stories and provide academic assistance in local elementary, middle and high schools.

WHAT IMPACT CAN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE?

Civic engagement and programs designed to increase it have been the subject of a flurry of scholarship over the past several years. Still, important work remains on the research side to understand how different aspects of civic engagement develop and interact (i.e., knowledge, behaviors and attitudes); to distinguish between different types of service

experiences in terms of quality, depth and focus; and to develop effective measures of civic engagement.^{ix}

The good news is that there are some things we do know. First, three factors appear to influence the development of civic engagement: Social relationships, opportunities for practice, and the values and behaviors of adults and social institutions.^x All three of these can be effectively nurtured in the context of out-of-school time programs. In addition, evidence suggests that civic

engagement opportunities are good for young people and good for communities.



Civic engagement during out-of-school time can have a positive impact on young people in four different respects:

1. ***It can act as a gateway to future civic activism.***

Young people who participate in community service experiences as part of voluntary youth groups are more likely to vote and to join community organizations fifteen years down the road than adults who did not participate in such experiences during high school.^{xi} Sixty-nine percent of youth who as younger children belonged to a youth group, did some kind of volunteer work, or were active in student government are current volunteers. On the contrary, only 20.4 percent of those who did not have those early life experiences currently volunteer.^{xii}

2. ***It can lead to improved attitudes and behaviors related to school and work, as well as increases in academic achievement.***

Students learn best when they are actively involved in understanding and helping to solve meaningful problems.^{xiii} Participation in real world problem solving increases engagement, responsibility and motivation; promotes the public purpose of learning; and improves work habits and skills. Service-learning is associated with gains in basic skills and grades among elementary, middle and high school students. Youth who participate in community service experiences linked with school are more engaged in school — that is, more likely to attend regularly, ask questions during class, develop problem-solving skills and complete assignments.^{xiv, xv}

3. ***It can have a positive effect on interpersonal skills and social development.***

Participation in decision-making roles and volunteer activities in out-of-school time programs is correlated with positive developmental outcomes like having an increased sense of respect for others.^{xvi, xvii} Middle school students involved in service-learning are more likely than students not involved to maintain their concern for the social welfare of others. In addition, young people involved in service increased their belief in their own ability to help others, are more likely to treat their peers kindly, help their peers and appreciate cultural diversity.^{xiii, xix}

4. ***It can decrease the likelihood of participation in risky behaviors.***

While few may go there looking for it, community service is featured in the prevention literature as a powerful intervention. More than 13,000 middle and high school students have

participated in the Teen Outreach Program, a rigorously evaluated after-school program with an emphasis on community involvement and service. Participants face less than half the risk of pregnancy, school failure and suspension than similar students who do not participate. The Quantum Opportunities Program also revolves around community-based service-learning after school; program participants are less likely than similar non-participants to become involved in a range of risky behaviors.^{xx}



Each year, more and better studies are initiated about the impact of service-learning, community service, youth leadership and organizing on young people's individual development and later civic behaviors like voting. Those findings are promising. Yet understanding how young people's participation impacts the communities, institutions and neighborhoods where their efforts are focused is more difficult to measure, less understood, and equally promising. In order to leverage the current interest in youth participation in civic and community development, striking a balance between focusing on individual youth outcomes and broader community outcomes is important.

Sheer rates of voluntary participation in community-building activities are impressive. Based on Independent Sector estimates, the value of service carried out by young people on National Youth Service Day alone exceeds \$171 million.^{xxi} But descriptions of the actual contributions young people are making underscore the valuable impact they can have and put real teeth behind those figures. At Community IMPACT! Nashville, high school students teach financial literacy to adults in the community, educate citizens about the Earned Income Tax Credit, provide assistance with tax returns, and are organizing to shut down predatory lenders in their neighborhood. At the Food Project in Boston, young people work after school and during the summer to grow nearly a quarter-million pounds of food yearly without chemical pesticides, donating half to local shelters. Locally, they partner with urban gardeners to help remediate lead-contaminated soil and grow healthier food.

HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES DURING OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME?

From a policy perspective, there are multiple ways to think about strengthening civic engagement opportunities during out-of-school time.

The role that AmeriCorps and other national service programs play in bolstering the after-school field is significant. According to Shirley Sagawa, who calls AmeriCorps volunteers the “silent after-school workforce,” roughly two-thirds of all AmeriCorps volunteers work with children and youth. The after-school field needs strategic ways to attract and maintain a stable, trained work force. Sagawa suggests that a concerted effort to create a national, professional corps of youth workers through AmeriCorps, not unlike Teach for America, represents a significant opportunity to do this.

Many programs do include an emphasis on civic engagement. For programs like Citizen Schools, this commitment sits at the core of what they do; for others, service may be one of a range of activities participants choose from. But many programs that have the potential to integrate strong civic engagement strategies lack the resources and training to do so. Public and private funders have made significant investments in identifying promising practices and developing curricula and professional development opportunities in areas like science and arts programming. Civic engagement warrants similar attention.

Summertime presents a valuable opportunity for extended civic engagement experiences. Policy advocates have proposed legislation that would mandate a summer of service “rites of passage” program for every rising ninth grader in the country. Such a program could be administered by school and non-school based community institutions, and would serve as a gateway into the civic roles expected of every citizen.

An increasing number of school systems, colleges and universities have some kind of service requirement linked to graduation. Developing relationships with local out-of-school time programs where students receive training and credit for volunteering could benefit programs and lead to the development of more consistent high quality volunteer venues for students.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. (2003). *The Civic Mission of Schools*. New York, NY: CIRCLE and Carnegie Corporation of New York. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.civicyouth.org/research/areas/civicmissionofschoools.htm.

- ⁱⁱ Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2003). *Learning for the 21st Century: A Report and Mile Guide for 21st Century Skills*. Washington, DC: Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.21stcenturyskills.org.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Larson, R. (2000). “Toward a Psychology of Positive Youth Development.” *American Psychologist*, 55, 170-183.
- ^{iv} Scales, P.C., & Roehlkepartain, E.C. (2004). *Community Service and Service-Learning in U.S. Public Schools, 2004: Findings from a National Survey*. St. Paul, MN: National Youth Leadership Council. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.search-institute.org/whatsnew/2004G2GCompleteSurvey.pdf.
- ^v National Commission on Service-Learning. (2002). *Learning In Deed: The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools*. Newton, MA: National Commission on Service-Learning. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from <http://learningindeed.org/slcommission/report.html>.
- ^{vi} Independent Sector. (2001). *Giving and Volunteering in the United States: Key Findings*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.independentsector.org/PDFs/GV01keyfind.pdf.
- ^{vii} Experience Corps. (2004). *Experience After School: Engaging Older Adults in After-School Programs*. Washington, DC: Experience Corps. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.experiencecorps.org.
- ^{viii} Schoenberg, J., Fleshman, P., & Conn, M. (2002). *The Community Connection: Volunteer Trends in a Changing World*. New York, NY: Girl Scouts of the USA.
- ^{ix} Sherrod, L.R., Flanagan, C., & Youniss, J. (2002). “Dimensions of Citizenship and Opportunities for Youth Development: The What, Why, When, Where, and Who of Citizenship Development.” *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(4), 264-272.
- ^x Flanagan, C.A., & Faison, N. (2001). “Youth Civic Development: Implications of Research for Social Policy and Programs.” *Social Policy Report*, XV(1). Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.srcd.org/sprv15n1.pdf.
- ^{xi} Youniss, J., McLellan, J.A., & Yates, M. (1997). “What We Know About Engendering Civic Identity.” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40, 620-631.
- ^{xii} The Gallup Organization. (1996). *Volunteering and Giving Among Teenagers 12 to 17 Years of Age: Findings from a National Survey*. Washington, DC: Independent Sector. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.independentsector.org/programs/research/teenvolun1.pdf.
- ^{xiii} Blank, M.J., Melaville, A., & Shah, B.P. (2003, May). *Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools*. Washington, DC: The Coalition for Community Schools. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from www.communityschools.org/mtdhomepage.html.
- ^{xiv} National Commission on Service-Learning. (2002). *Learning In Deed: The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools*. Newton, MA: National Commission on Service-Learning. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from <http://learningindeed.org/slcommission/report.html>.
- ^{xv} Michelsen, E., Zaff, J.F., & Hair, E.C. (2002). *Civic Engagement Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis*. Washington, DC: Child Trends. Retrieved October 4, 2004, from http://12.109.133.224/what_works/clarkwww/civic/civcrpt.pdf.
- ^{xvi} Gambone, M., & Arbreton, A.J.A. (1997). *Safe Havens: The Contributions of Youth Organizations to Healthy Adolescent Development*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.
- ^{xvii} Michelsen, Zaff, & Hair. (2002).
- ^{xviii} Scales, P.C., Blyth, D.A., Berkas, T.H., & Kielsmeier, J.C. (2000). “The Effects of Service-Learning on Middle School Students’ Social Responsibility and Academic Success.” *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 20, 332-358.
- ^{xix} Berkas, T. (1997). *Strategic Review of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Service-Learning Projects, 1990-1996*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- ^{xx} Michelsen, Zaff, & Hair. (2002).
- ^{xxi} Youth Service America. (n.d.) *Facts and Figures on Youth and Volunteering*. Retrieved October 4, 2004 from www.ysa.org/nysd/statistics.html.

