

**EVALUATION OF NEW JERSEY AFTER 3
TRENTON AFTERSCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS:
A Citywide Initiative to Improve Student Outcomes
and Meet the Needs of Parents**

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Summary

New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3) is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to expand and improve afterschool opportunities for New Jersey's youth. NJ After 3 supports youth-service providers that deliver afterschool services based on NJ After 3's program model. In 2009, NJ After 3 and Trenton Public Schools launched the Trenton Afterschool Partnership (TAP) initiative, which provides Trenton children and families access to an affordable, safe, and engaging learning environment for youth in the afterschool hours at all 21 schools in the district. The Trenton Afterschool Partnership is the first such citywide initiative in New Jersey and the first time that the NJ After 3 model has been extended to the high school level.

Under an agreement with NJ After 3, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. conducted a one-year evaluation of the Trenton Afterschool Partnership. Overall, participation in the program was very high and participants and parents alike reported high levels of satisfaction. Specifically, evaluators found that in the 2009-10 school year, the first year of the TAP initiative, NJ After 3 programs in Trenton had high levels of attendance, enrollment, and retention.

- **The average citywide attendance rate was 80 percent.** Elementary participants had the highest attendance rate, at 87 percent. The attendance rates of NJ After 3 TAP participants compare favorably well with the attendance rates of similar programs in other cities, for example, New York City.
- **2,398 Trenton Public Schools students participated in NJ After 3 TAP during the 2009-10 school year,** nearly one quarter of all students in the district.
- **Eighty-five percent of youth who had enrolled in the program by November remained in the program through the end of May.** Most schools maintained or increased their enrollment numbers during the school year. Six schools increased enrollment by more than 25 percent, suggesting increasing demand for the program.
- **The program served large numbers of children from low-income families.** Fifty-four percent of NJ After 3 TAP participants were known to be eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. The eligibility status of 31 percent of participants was unknown. However, given the high proportion of youth in the district who were known to be eligible for the program and the large proportion of youth in TAP who were known to be eligible, many of the students of unknown status were likely to be from low-income families as well.

NJ After 3 data show that **NJ After 3 TAP participants spent an average of 49 percent of program time on academic activities. Twenty-six percent of time was spent on health and fitness activities, and 25 percent of time was spent on other non-academic enrichment activities.** Youth participants in NJ After 3 TAP reported high levels of exposure to engaging program activities, positive relationships with staff and peers, opportunities to lead, and feelings of attachment to the program. Participants also reported high perceptions of academic benefit associated with the program.

- **Eighty-five percent of youth reported that the program helped them finish their homework all or most of the time.** Ninety-seven percent of youth said that the program helped them finish their homework at least some of the time. Ninety-five percent or more of participants also reported that the program gave them the chance to do a lot of new things, that they felt safe in the program, they felt like they were doing well in the program, they had a lot of friends in the program, and they got along with other students in the program at least some of the time.
- **Youth who spent more time on homework assistance and other academic activities while in the program reported experiencing more academic benefit from participating in the program.** Youth in programs with an average of 133 hours or more spent in academic activities reported greater academic benefit from NJ After 3 TAP, compared with youth in programs where less time was spent on academic programming.

Parents who responded to the survey reported very high levels of satisfaction with NJ After 3 TAP. Large majorities agreed that the program provided benefits for their children while also helping to meet parents' own needs.

- **Ninety-seven percent of parents said that the program was important to them.** Ninety-eight percent of parents said the program was important to their child.
- **Eighty-nine percent of parents rated their child's program as "excellent" or "very good."**
- **Eighty-nine percent of parents indicated that safety was a "big reason" for enrolling their child in the program.** Eighty-four percent of parents also indicated that affordability, academic benefit, and exposure to new activities were "big reasons" to enroll their child in the program.
- **Ninety percent of working parents said that the afterschool program made it easier for them to keep their job.** Parents who reported working more hours were more likely to report that the program was very important to them. They were also more likely to report that the availability of the program allowed them to miss less work and work more hours.
- Parents strongly believed that their child had benefited from participation in NJ After 3 TAP. **Ninety-three percent of parents agreed that their child was doing better in school because of enrollment in the afterschool program and that their child was safer in the out-of-school hours.** Ninety-two percent of parents agreed that their child was able to participate in activities that they would not be able to do outside of the program.

Overview of the Evaluation

New Jersey After 3 (NJ After 3) is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to expand and improve afterschool opportunities for New Jersey's youth. Since 2004, NJ After 3 has provided a statewide system of support for community-based afterschool providers including Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, and other local nonprofit program partners who implement the NJ After 3 program model in approximately 114 public schools statewide.

The NJ After 3 model aims to increase the number of afterschool programs in New Jersey that provide a safe environment for children during afterschool hours, offer enriching academic activities and homework assistance, and expose children to nurturing individuals and meaningful experiences that promote intellectual, physical, social, and artistic development. In addition to financial support, NJ After 3 also provides professional development opportunities for site coordinators and program staff, special curricular models to address high-priority youth needs (e.g., physical fitness, math problem-solving), technical assistance for program improvement, and specialized software for youth-level tracking of enrollment and attendance.

NJ After 3 commissioned a three-year independent study of program implementation and youth outcomes that found positive results for New Jersey afterschool participants. The study found that afterschool opportunities for New Jersey youth were increasing. Youth participation in afterschool programs increased from 4,000 to 15,000 from the first year of the initiative to the 2007-08 school year. Based on teacher reports of NJ After 3 participants, evaluators also found that NJA3 participants improved their reading and language arts skills. A large majority of participants reported that they really enjoyed their afterschool program and felt socially and academically supported in the program (Walking-Eagle, Miller, Cooc, LaFleur, & Reisner, 2009).

Continuing NJ After 3's efforts to expand the availability of quality, affordable afterschool programs, NJ After 3 partnered with Trenton Public Schools in 2009 and formed the Trenton Afterschool Partnership (TAP). Through the partnership, afterschool programs were offered to all students in Trenton. The partnership marked the first citywide public/private partnership for both NJ After 3 and the city of Trenton. TAP also extended NJ After 3 programming to the high school level for the first time. Afterschool programming at the high school level has been in short supply nationally. Historically funding has been targeted to elementary schools and middle schools. However, increasingly over the years, afterschool providers have become adept at providing innovative programs to high school students in ways that meet their particular needs and interests. The TAP initiative provided Trenton high school students with the opportunity to receive such programming that offers extra academic preparation and other extended learning opportunities that will help them to succeed.

Under an agreement with NJ After 3, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. conducted a one-year evaluation of the Trenton Afterschool Partnership. Five program partners in this initiative served approximately 2,400 youth in grades K-12 through the TAP initiative in the 2009-10 school year. The five local nonprofit program partners were the Boys & Girls Club of Trenton, Children's Home Society, Education Works, Greater Trenton Area YMCA, and Princeton Outreach Projects, Inc.

NJ After 3 TAP programs serving youth in grades K-8 operated using a traditional NJ After 3 model. The high school model employed clubs that each offered specific content to complement school offerings in the out-of-school time hours such as basketball and a writing club. High school students participated in NJ After 3 TAP programming on days when they were not participating in activities offered directly by the high school. This model is typical for afterschool programs serving older youth and has shown early signs of promise in attracting and retaining older youth (Deschenes et al., 2010).

The purpose of the evaluation was to learn about youth exposure to afterschool programming in Trenton, youth experiences in the program, and parents' satisfaction with the program. The evaluation used three types of data: student afterschool participation data maintained at the school level, a survey of participating students in grades 3 and higher, and a parent survey. This report documents youth afterschool participation, youth experiences, and parent satisfaction with the program.

The report is organized in four main sections. The first section describes the evaluation approach and processes. The second section describes NJ After 3 TAP participant characteristics, patterns of program enrollment and attendance, and activity offerings. The third section presents findings on youths' views in six domains of afterschool program experiences (engagement in program activities, perception of academic benefit, leadership opportunities, attachment to the program, relationships with staff, and relationships with peers) as well as self-reports of behaviors in and outside of the program. The fourth section addresses parents' reactions to the program, particularly how the availability of the program affected their lives and how they think the program has affected their child. The final section summarizes the conclusions of the evaluation.

Evaluation Design

The purpose of the evaluation was to learn about youth exposure to afterschool programming in Trenton, youths' perceived benefits of participation in the program, and parents' satisfaction with the program. The study examined important indicators of program appeal and effectiveness in engaging youth in satisfying experiences, including youth program participation patterns and student and parent perceptions of and reactions to the program.

The evaluation of NJ After 3 TAP sought to answer the following evaluation questions:

- What was NJ After 3 TAP's reach and level of participation?
 - What was the reach of afterschool programming in Trenton?
 - What were the characteristics of NJ After 3 TAP's youth participants?
 - What were the patterns of youth participation?
 - What activities were offered, and how did youth spend their time in the program?

- What were youth and parents' perceptions of the afterschool program?
 - What was the youth experience?

- What were parents' reactions to the program?
- Has the program helped meet the needs of parents?
- Do parents and youth think that the program has helped youth academically?

Between May and July 2010, evaluators collected data from the following sources:

- ***Data from NJ After 3's management information system.*** Evaluators retrieved data on the characteristics, program attendance, and activity participation of all NJ After 3 participants in Trenton from CitySpan, the vendor for the NJ After 3 management information system, which uses software known as YouthServices.net.
- ***Surveys of program participants.*** Evaluators surveyed youth participants in grades 3-12 from all NJ After 3 programs in Trenton Public Schools who had permission from their parents to participate in the study.
- ***Surveys of parents of program participants.*** Evaluators surveyed parents of all youth participating in NJ After 3 TAP programs.

Steps to Obtain Informed Parental Consent

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and to protect the privacy of all youth participants, evaluators required that written parental research consent be obtained prior to surveying any participant. The parental consent form was made available in English and Spanish, and NJ After 3 required all programs to include evaluation consent forms in their enrollment packets and to enter each participant's parent/guardian evaluation consent status into the appropriate field in the YouthServices.net tracking system.

Prior to youth survey administration, evaluators downloaded a list of active youth program participants in grades 3-12 with written parental consent to participate in the evaluation. The list included 783 youth in grades 3-12 with parental consent. Youth whose school or grade could not be identified were excluded from the list. The parents or guardians of 88 participants denied consent, and no consent data were recorded for 449 participants.

Evaluation Data Used in This Report

This report presents analyses of data collected from all NJ After 3 TAP supported programs in the Trenton Public Schools during the 2009-10 school year. All schools were included in participant and parent survey administration and in the data extraction from the management information system. However, participation in the parent and youth surveys was voluntary, and youth survey administration was limited to students in third grade and above with parental consent to comply with federal privacy laws and ensure the quality of the data.

Therefore, survey responses do not represent the total population of participants and parents and may not reflect the views of those individuals who did not participate in the evaluation.

The following data were collected for this study:

- ***Survey data from 484 youth participants.*** NJ After 3 program staff worked with site coordinators to administer surveys. Together, they administered and returned 484 surveys from the 783 youth in grades 3-12 included in the survey administration list. The response rate was 62 percent. Only one survey was completed by a high school student and, thus, the high school student population of program participants is not represented by the survey findings.
- ***Survey data from 319 parents of youth participants.*** NJ After 3 program staff worked with site coordinators to administer parent surveys in English and Spanish to parents of all program participants. Parent surveys were anonymous, and personally identifiable information was not collected.
- ***Program attendance, demographic data, and activity data from 2,432 youth in the YouthServices.net management information services system.*** Evaluators received a custom dataset from Cityspan, containing data with 2,432 records. All youth in the management information database who attended a NJ After 3 TAP program for a minimum of five days during the 2009-10 school year were included in analysis, excluding 38 records in the system. Records on 2,398 youth in grades K-12 were included in the analysis.

Analysis Approach

When comparing the reported experiences and attitudes of different groups of youth and parents who responded to the surveys, evaluators used statistical tests to indicate the reliability of an estimated effect. An effect size was computed to indicate the relative magnitude of an estimated effect. The statistical tests and measures of effect size used in analysis varied based on the properties of the data analyzed. Generally, statistical differences presented in this report are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, unless otherwise noted. For analyses of continuous variables, evaluators selected an independent sample t-test and computed a Cohen's d (the difference in means divided by the pooled standard deviation) as a measure of effect size. For categorical data, evaluators conducted a chi-square test of significance and reported either a Cramer's V effect for nominal data or a gamma statistic for ordinal data. Pearson's correlation (r) was used for analyses of association between continuous variables.

Evaluators selected certain survey questions to develop interval scales that measure participants' attitudes about program engagement, perception of academic benefit, leadership opportunities, sense of belonging, relationships with adults, relationships with peers, health-related behaviors at home, and social behavior. Scales were constructed using Rasch modeling to interpret and analyze data. Evaluators applied the Rasch model to address issues and

assumptions that other methods of scale construction and analysis do not, such as respondent inconsistency and subjectivity of the data. For example, one respondent's interpretation of "yes, most of the time" may be closely related to another respondent's interpretation of "yes, some of the time." Rasch-calculated scale scores are built on calculations that are mathematically appropriate for measuring data that has been recorded using categorical constructs where each response is not inherently of equal value (Bond & Fox, 2007). Additional details about the methods used to develop scales can be found in Appendix A.

Although there is no single accepted standard for interpreting effect size, conventions for interpretation of effect size values between 0.10 and 0.29 indicate a small association, between 0.30 and 0.59 a medium association, between 0.60 and 0.74 a large association, and 0.75 or higher a very large association (Rea & Parker, 2005). Cohen defined sizes for Cohen's *d* as "small, $d=0.2$," "medium, $d=0.5$," and "large, $d=0.8$ " (Cohen, 1988). In this report, we interpreted an effect size of 0.10 or higher as meaningful. Associations below this threshold, even if statistically significant, were not deemed to represent meaningful effects and were thus not reported. While the associations presented in this report describe notable relationships, they should not be interpreted as implying causation.

Program Reach and Participation

This section describes NJ After 3 TAP participant characteristics, patterns of enrollment and participation, and the average amount of program time that youth spent on various activities. Findings indicated that NJ After 3 programs in Trenton served nearly a quarter of all students in Trenton Public Schools and that the programs served a population that closely resembles the general population of students in the district.

Program participants attended the program at high levels that were comparable to levels achieved by other similar citywide initiatives—often meeting or exceeding attendance targets set by NJ After 3. School-level enrollment was generally consistent or rising from the start of the school year to the end of the school year. Participants spent most of their time in homework help and activities that provided academic assistance.

Participant Characteristics

In the first year of the TAP initiative (school year 2009-10), NJ After 3 served 2,398 youth in Trenton. Slightly more than half (54 percent) of youth were identified as participants in the school's free- or reduced-price lunch program; the lunch-eligibility status of 31 percent of youth was marked "unidentified" in the database. Program participants were 49 percent male and 51 percent female. Participants were predominately African American (56 percent) and Hispanic (28 percent). The remaining participants were 3 percent White, less than 1 percent American Indian or Native American, and less than 1 percent Asian or Pacific Islander. The race/ethnicity of 16 percent of participants was not specified in the YouthServices.net database. About 5 percent of youth were identified as limited English proficient, and about 5 percent as special education students. Twenty-eight percent of participants had unidentified limited English

proficiency status, and 36 percent had unspecified special education status. Exhibit 1 presents a complete summary of NJ After 3 TAP participant characteristics.

Generally, the gender and race characteristics of NJ After 3 TAP participants closely reflected the characteristics of all students enrolled in Trenton Public Schools. It was more difficult to determine how closely the other characteristics of program participants resembled the general population of Trenton Public Schools students. However, the proportion of participants who qualified for free- or reduced-price lunch and the proportion who were designated limited English proficient were much higher when participants with unspecified status were excluded, indicating that the proportions of youth served in those categories was likely higher and closer to district proportions than what was known. The high proportions of “unspecified” in the YouthServices.net database indicate that certain characteristics of the youth enrolled in their programs were unavailable to program personnel who maintain the database.

Exhibit 1
Participant and District Demographic Characteristics, in Percents, 2009-10

Characteristics	NJ After 3 TAP Participants (n=2,398)	Trenton Public Schools Population (n=10,979)
Gender		
Male	49	50
Female	51	50
Race/Ethnicity*		
African American	56	59
Hispanic	28	37
White	3	2
American Indian or Native American	<1	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	<1	1
Unspecified	16	0
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch		
Yes	54	71
No	15	29
Unspecified	31	0
Limited English Proficient		
Yes	5	12
No	67	88
Unspecified	28	0
Special Education Status		
Yes	5	5
No	60	95
Unspecified	36	0

Exhibit reads: Forty-nine percent of program participants were identified as male and 51 percent were female. The Trenton Public Schools population was equally 50 percent male and female.

Source: YouthServices.net data retrieved July 27, 2010 and New Jersey Department of Education, DOE Data, Fall Survey Collections, Enrollment 2009-2010, retrieved on July 15, 2010 from <http://www.nj.gov/education/data/enr/>.

Note: Column totals for each characteristic may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

* Some youth had a check mark for more than one race/ethnicity, and thus the sum of ethnicity/race data is greater than 100 percent.

Most youth who participated in NJ After 3 TAP were in elementary grades. Seventy-one percent of youth were in grades K-5. A greater proportion of participants were in grades K-2 (42 percent), compared with grades 3-5 youth (29 percent), as reported in Exhibit 2. Seventeen percent of participants were in grades 6-8 and 12 percent were in grades 9-12.

Exhibit 2
Participants, by Grade Span, in Numbers and Percents, 2009-10 (n=2,398)

Grade Span	Number of Program Youth	Percent of Program Youth
K-2	1,013	42
3-5	693	29
6-8	407	17
9-12	278	12
Unspecified	7	<1

Exhibit reads: 1,013, or 42 percent, of participants were in grades K-2.

Source: YouthServices.net data retrieved July 27, 2010

Patterns of Enrollment and Program Participation

In the 2009-10 school year, NJ After 3 TAP served nearly one quarter (22 percent) of all Trenton Public Schools students.¹ One quarter of all students in the district is a significant reach for a newly established citywide initiative. By comparison, a national telephone survey conducted in spring 2009 found that 28 percent of youth in New York City participated in an afterschool program (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). New York City has a similar citywide partnership that began in 2005. The same survey also found that 14 percent of K-12 youth participated in an afterschool program across the state of New Jersey.

On average, enrollment in NJ After 3 TAP remained fairly consistent throughout the school year. High levels of retention and participation throughout the school year are promising signs that youth were actively engaged in beneficial activities that promote social, emotional, and intellectual well-being. Exhibit 3 shows the total number of active participants² in the program across all schools. At the beginning of the 2009-10 academic school year in Trenton Public Schools, NJ After 3 TAP enrolled 1,472 active participants. More than 2,000 Trenton public schools students were actively participating in the program for the majority of the school year. The number of active participants peaked in February with 2,140 participants. In May, the last month in which all schools offered programming, 2,029 participants were active. Those 2,029 youth included 85 percent of the 2,080 youth who were enrolled in November, indicating that a large majority of participants were engaged and actively participating from early in the school year until the end of the school year.

Most schools maintained or increased the number of active participants from the first month in which they began to offer programming to the last month in which they offered programming. Grace Dunn Middle School and Trenton Central High School-West were among the schools that increased enrollment. Six schools, including Grace Dunn Middle School, increased enrollment by more than 25 percent, suggesting increasing demand for the program. Regular attendance and retention can be particularly challenging for middle and high school

¹ New Jersey Department of Education, DOE Data, Fall Survey Collections, Enrollment 2009-2010, retrieved on July 15, 2010 from <http://www.nj.gov/education/data/enr/>.

² All enrolled youth who attended at least one day of programming in a given month were counted as active during that month.

programs since older youth are more likely than younger youth to choose for themselves whether or not they want to participate in a program. The consistent levels of attendance and retention in TAP, particularly at the middle school and high school levels, is a good indicator that TAP participants were engaged and satisfied with their experience in the program. The findings are particularly promising given that the 2009-10 school year was the first year for the TAP initiative and the first year that programs were offered at the high school level.

Exhibit 3
Number of Active Participants in 2009-10, by Month (n=2,398)

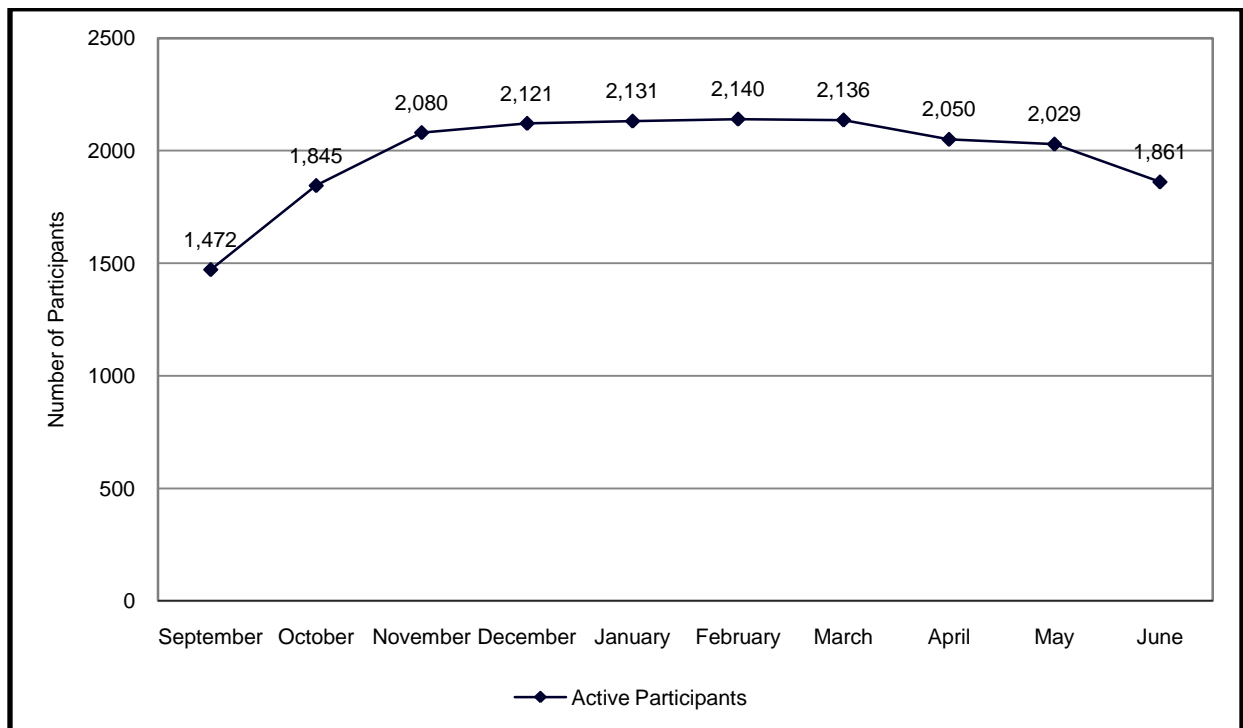


Exhibit reads: 1,472 Trenton Public Schools students were active participants in a NJ After 3 TAP afterschool program in September 2009.

Source: YouthServices.net data retrieved July 27, 2010

Attendance data showed that youth participation in NJ After 3 TAP was very high. The overall average attendance rate of program participants was 80 percent.³ Half of all participants had a participation rate of 89 percent or higher. Seventy-five percent of all participants had an attendance rate of 72 percent or higher. These high levels of participation reflect statewide trends found in a three-year evaluation of all NJ After 3 programs, which found that the overall attendance rate of NJ After 3 programs was 81 percent in 2007-08 (Walking-Eagle et al., 2009).

Analyses of the average number of days that youth attended the program also indicated high levels of exposure to New Jersey After 3 TAP in Trenton. On average, participants

³ Attendance rates were calculated for each participant as the number of days present divided by the total number of days the participant was enrolled. The number of days enrolled varied by students' start and end dates.

attended the program 114 days during the 2009-10 school year, which is comparable to findings from a three-year study of NJ After 3 programs statewide. Statewide, New Jersey After 3 participants attended an average of 115 days of programming in 2007-08 (Walking-Eagle et al., 2009).

The maximum possible number of program operation days varied by school. Maximum possible operation days ranged from a low of 97 days to a high of 178 days of programming (see Exhibit 4 for complete participation data and maximum possible days of program operation, by school). Half of all participants attended at least 132 days of programming, and 75 percent of all participants attended at least 76 days of programming.

Exhibit 4
Program Enrollment, Maximum Days of Operation, and Attendance in 2009-10, by School (n=2,396)

Grade Levels Served	School Name	Number of Program Participants	Total Number of Program Days Offered	Average Number of Program Days Attended	Average Attendance Rate
K-5	Cadwalader Elementary	116	169	111	72.9
K-5	Columbus Elementary	84	174	104	72.1
K-5	Franklin Elementary	121	158	94	79.7
K-5	Harrison Elementary	30	172	140	93.9
K-5	Jefferson Elementary	85	151	77	70.5
K-5	Parker Elementary	80	150	98	81.9
K-5	Robbins Elementary	92	170	152	95.0
K-5	Stokes Elementary	86	178	131	92.2
K-5	Washington Elementary	144	159	117	85.8
K-5	Wilson Elementary	112	169	139	91.8
K-8	Grant Elementary	105	172	164	95.6
K-8	Gregory Elementary	109	170	137	88.5
K-8	Hedgepeth/Williams Elementary	123	161	122	81.9
K-8	Hill Elementary	142	174	146	91.5
K-8	Kilmer Elementary	101	156	132	91.3
K-8	Monument Elementary	125	171	153	93.9
K-8	Mott Elementary	132	175	139	91.7
K-8	Munoz-Rivera Elementary	114	160	99	81.5
6-8	Dunn Middle School	224	155	78	58.2
9-12	Trenton Central High School	215	139	71	57.9
9-12	Trenton Central High School-West	56	97	28	45.0

Exhibit reads: In 2009-10, the NJA3 TAP program at Cadwalader Elementary School had 116 participants and offered a maximum of 169 possible days of programming. Participants attended the program an average of 111 days with an average attendance rate of 72.9 percent.

Source: YouthServices.net data retrieved July 27, 2010

On average, youth in grades K-2 and grades 3-5 participated in more NJ After 3 TAP programming compared with older youth in grades 6-8 and grades 9-12, as illustrated in Exhibit 5. Participants in grades K-2 attended their program an average of 127 days with an average attendance rate of 87 percent. Participants in grades 3-5 attended an average of 124 days with an average attendance rate of 86 percent. On average, participants in grades 6-8 attended 100 days at a rate of 70 percent. High school youth, on average, attended 63 days at a rate of 55 percent.

The average elementary, middle school, and high school attendance rates of NJ After 3 TAP participants were very strong for the first year of a citywide initiative. New York City's Out-of-School Time (OST) Programs for Youth citywide initiative serves a similar population of youth as NJ After 3 TAP. An independent study examining the first year implementation of New York City's OST initiative found that elementary and middle school participants in the OST initiative attended an average of 62 percent and 45 percent, respectively, in the first year of program implementation (Russell, Reisner, Pearson, Afolabi, Miller, & Mielke, 2006). High school participants in New York City's OST Programs for Youth initiative attended an average of 40 percent in the first year of the initiative (Russell, Diehl Vile, Reisner, Simko, Mielke, & Pechman, 2008).

Exhibit 5
Program Attendance, by Grade Level, 2009-10 (n=2,398)

Grade Span	Average Days Youth Attended	Average Attendance Rate (in percents)
K-2	127	87
3-5	124	86
6-8	100	70
9-12	63	55
Overall Average	114	80

Exhibit reads: Participants in grades K-2 attended their New Jersey After 3 TAP program an average of 127 days and had an average attendance rate of 87 percent in 2009-10.

Source: YouthServices.net data retrieved July 27, 2010

Analysis of monthly average attendance rates and the overall average attendance rate data for each school suggests that most sites were regularly meeting or exceeding benchmark attendance targets set by NJ After 3. Elementary schools were most consistently meeting their targets. NJ After 3 employs various benchmark attendance targets for programs serving youth in grades K-6, K-8, 6-8, and 9-12. NJ After 3 aims for programs serving grades K-6 to reach an average daily attendance target of 70 percent, programs serving youth in grades K-8 have a 65 percent daily attendance target, middle school programs (grades 6-8) have a daily attendance target of 60 percent, and high school programs have a 50 percent target. These targets are similar to those set by citywide initiatives in New York City and Providence, Rhode Island. New York City's citywide OST initiative expected middle-grades participants to attend programs at least three out of five days per week (Russell et al., 2006). High school youth were expected to attend a minimum of 76 hours of programming, equivalent to approximately 25 days of three-hour programming (Russell et al., 2008). AfterZones in Providence, expected programs to maintain 60 percent average daily attendance for the first four weeks of the session (Kotloff, 2010).

Program Activities

NJ After 3 TAP participants spent an average of 49 percent of program time on academic activities. Twenty-six percent of time was spent on health and fitness activities, and 25 percent of time was spent on other non-academic enrichment activities. Participants spent an average of 133 hours of programming on academics and homework assistance over the program year. One-

hundred hours were spent specifically on homework assistance in all subjects. The other 33 hours were spent on additional academic time in the core academic subject areas. The other half of program time was split about evenly between health activities and non-academic enrichment activities. Participants spent an average of 72 program hours participating in sports, health, and fitness activities. Sixty-three percent of that time was devoted to physical activity, and 37 percent was spent on nutrition and health awareness. The remaining time was spent on non-academic enrichment activities related to arts and culture, life and career skills, and civic engagement and leadership development. Youth spent a majority of their enrichment time on career exploration activities, and the visual, cultural, and performing arts.

Youth and Parent Perceptions of the Program

This section describes responses from surveys administered to NJ After 3 TAP participants and their parents in spring 2010. In general, youth reported frequent positive experiences in areas related to relationships with staff and peers, sense of belonging, perceived academic benefit, engagement in program activities, and opportunities to lead. Participants were also asked to respond to a series of questions about their general health and social behavior patterns. Respondents reported making a mix of healthy and unhealthy nutritional and recreational activity choices upon returning home from school. Most youth reported making very positive behavioral choices in life in general. Appendix B contains a summary of responses to the participant survey.

Parents expressed positive feelings about the program, believing that it had helped their child and had helped meet their own needs as well. Parents were most likely to report that the reasons they enrolled their child in the program were because the program was safe and affordable, because they believed the program would help their child do better in school, and because they wanted their child to participate in new activities. A complete summary of responses to the parent survey is in Appendix C.

Program and Other Experiences Reported by Youth

NJ After 3 TAP participants were asked to respond to various questions designed to measure their attitudes concerning engagement in enriching program activities, their perception of academic benefit from the program, leadership opportunities within the program, sense of belonging in the program, and relationships with adults and peers in the program. Previous studies have found an association between these program features and sustained program participation (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008). NJ After 3 TAP participants responded positively to questions about their program. When asked how important the program was to them, 83 percent reported that the program was important to them.

Program engagement. Generally, youth reported positively on measures of engagement in the afterschool program. As seen in Exhibit 6, 72 percent of youth reported that they frequently got to do the activities that interested them. Sixty-five percent reported that they did activities that really made them think, and 67 percent reported that they got a chance to do a lot

of new things in the program. More than half of respondents reported that they did activities that helped people in their community, made a lot of choices about the activities they did, and had the chance to do things they didn't do anywhere else most or all of the time. Almost all youth reported that they had the chance to do a lot of new things in the program at least some of the time.

Exhibit 6
Participant Reports of Engagement in the Program, in Percents, 2009-10

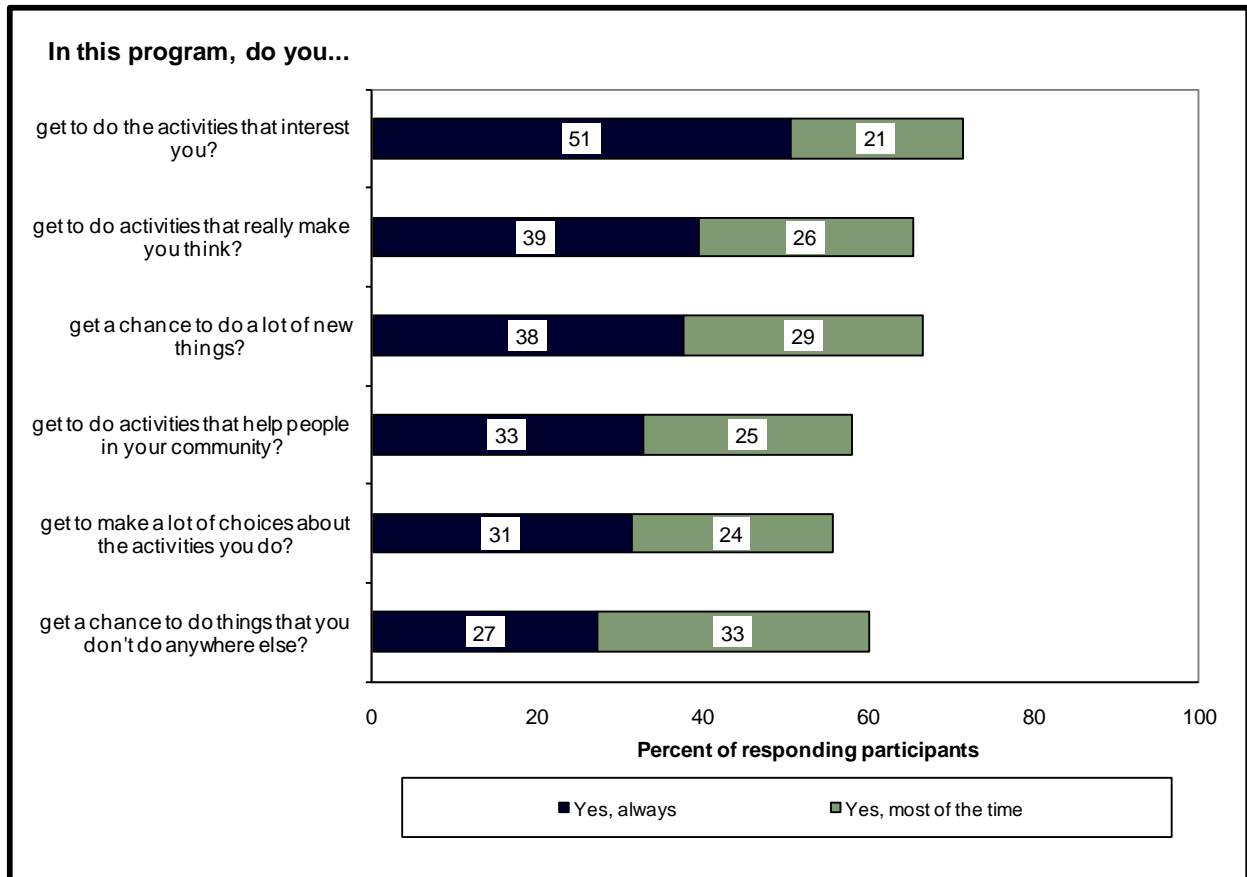


Exhibit reads: Fifty-one percent of youth reported that they “always” got to do the activities that interested them; 21 percent of youth reported that they got to do this “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Perceived academic benefit. Previous research on out-of-school time programs has found that youth who participate in a high-quality afterschool program that provides academic and enrichment content are likely to benefit from participation during the regular school day (Little et al., 2008). Youth participants reported that they think they have benefited academically from attending the NJ After 3 TAP program. Ninety-seven percent of youth indicated that NJ After 3 TAP helped them finish their homework at least some of the time. Exhibit 7 shows that 85 percent of respondents said that the program helped them finish their homework a majority of the time. Sixty-eight percent reported that the program frequently helped them read better. A

majority of respondents also indicated that the program frequently helped them solve math problems correctly, helped them get good grades, and helped them feel better about school.

Exhibit 7 Youth Perceptions of Academic Benefit, in Percents, 2009-10

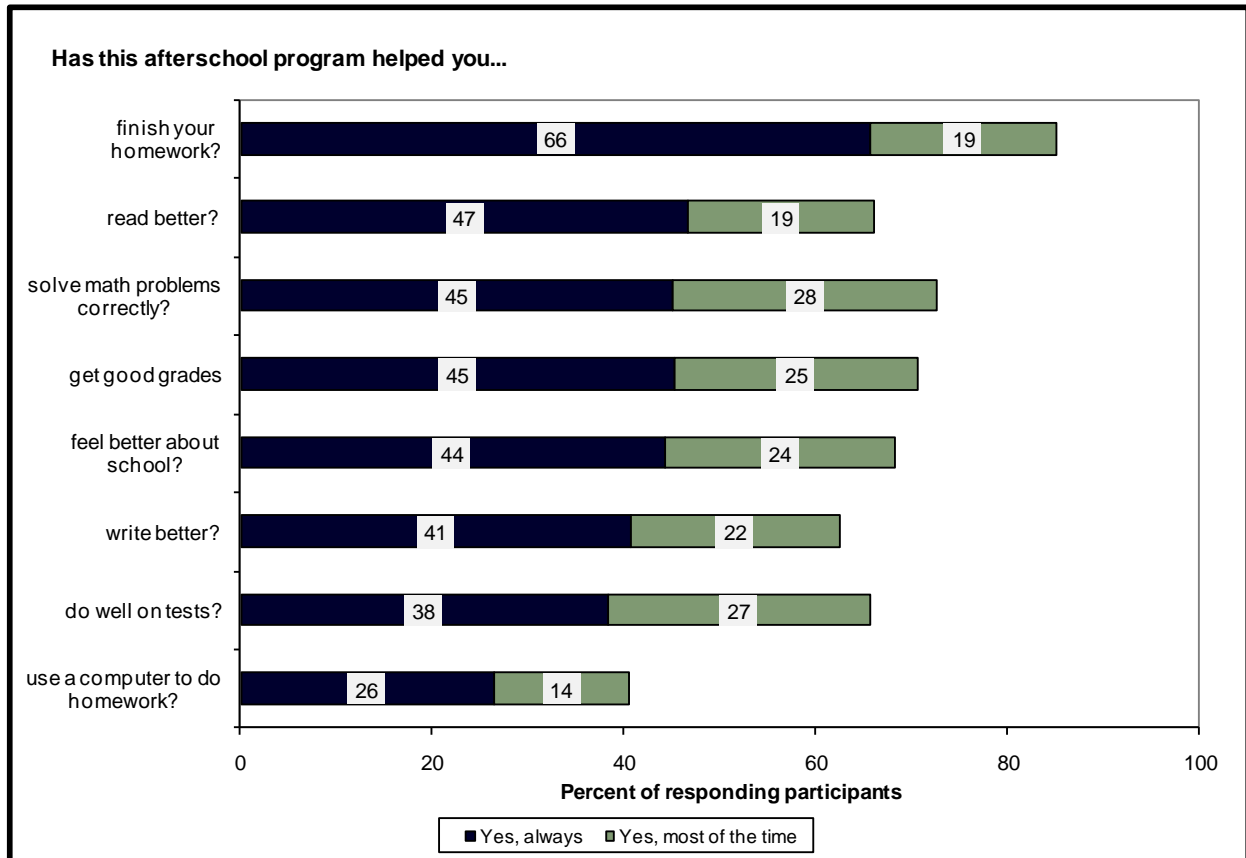


Exhibit reads: Sixty-six percent of youth reported that the afterschool program “always” helped them finish their homework. Nineteen percent said that it helped them finish their homework “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Youth who reported that the program was “very important” to them reported greater academic benefit from participating in NJ After 3 TAP, compared with youth who reported that the program was “somewhat important,” “a little important,” or “not at all important” (effect size= 0.71). Also, youth in programs with an average of 133 hours or more spent in academic activities reported greater academic benefit from the program, compared with youth in programs where less time was spent on academic programming (effect size=0.34).

Youth reported very high levels of academic aspiration. When asked “if you could go as far as you wanted in school, how far would you like to go,” 92 percent of respondents said that they would like to finish college or get more education after college. Three percent said that they would like to go to college for a while, and 2 percent said that they would like to graduate from high school.

Leadership opportunities. Sixty percent or more of youth reported that they had the opportunity to contribute ideas about the program, lead group activities, or help plan activities or events at least some of the time, if not more often. As shown in Exhibit 8, 71 percent of youth reported that they provided ideas about the program or activities. Sixty-eight percent of youth reported leading group activities, and 60 percent of youth helped plan activities or events. These proportions are particularly high considering the large number of participants in elementary grade levels, where leadership opportunities are typically not as prevalent.

Exhibit 8
Participant Reports of Leadership Opportunities, in Percents, 2009-10

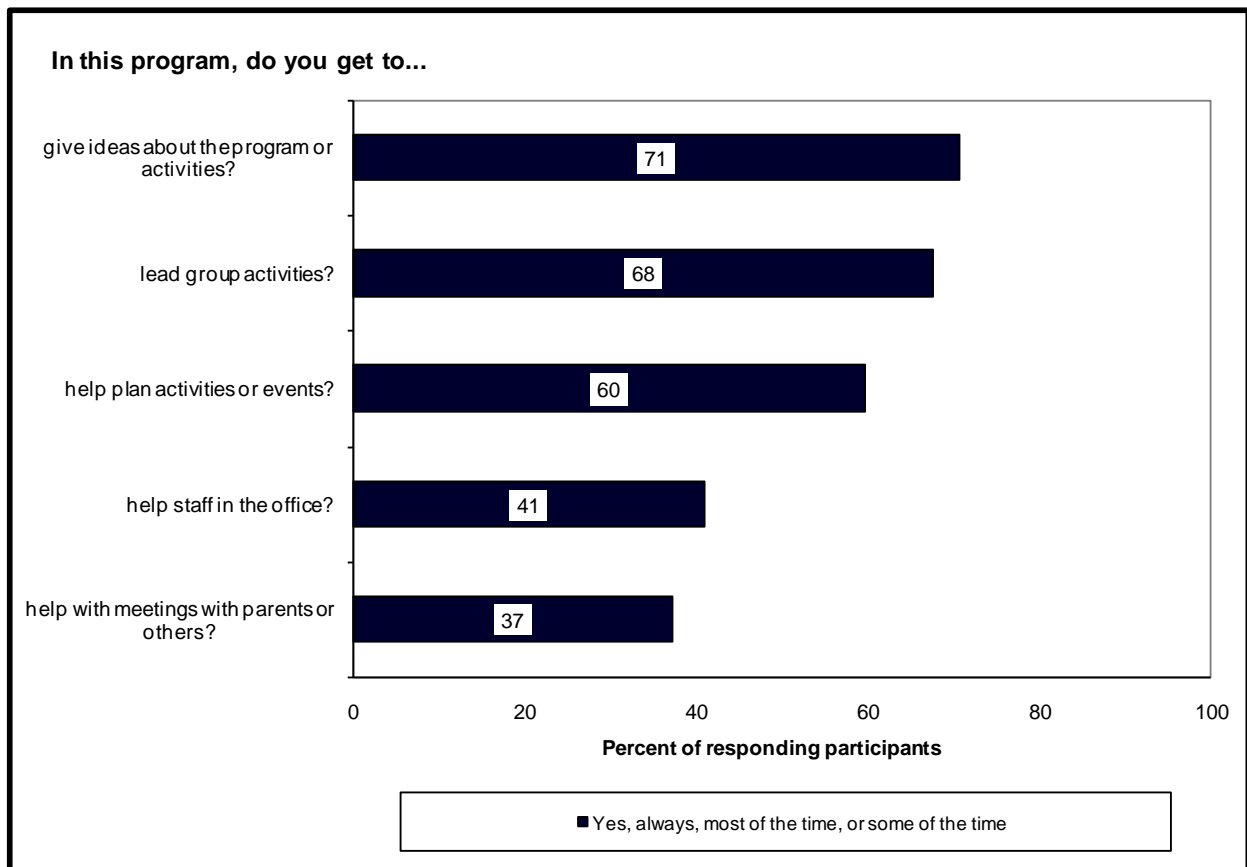


Exhibit reads: Seventy-one percent of respondents reported that they gave ideas about the program or activities “always,” “most of the time,” or “some of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Analyses of individual questions related to leadership opportunities showed that youth in grades 6-8 reported having more opportunities to help plan activities or events, compared with youth in grades 3-5. Exhibit 9 displays participant responses by grade span. The difference was significant at $p < 0.01$ (effect size=0.16). Research on afterschool programs for older youth has found that leadership opportunities are an important feature of afterschool programs, particularly for youth in grades 6 and above. These types of opportunities have been positively associated with sustained program participation for older youth (Deschenes et al., 2010). One example of

leadership opportunities associated with high-retention programs was the opportunity to design or lead activities for peers or younger youth.

Exhibit 9
Opportunities to Help Plan Activities or Events, by Grade Span, in Percents

Opportunities	Grades 3-5 participants (n=272)	Grades 6-8 participants (n=166)
Yes (always, most of the time, or some of the time)	53	69
No, never	47	31

Exhibit reads: Fifty-three percent of respondents in grades 3-5 and 69 percent of respondents in grades 6-8 reported that they helped plan activities or events “always,” “most of the time,” or “some of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Sense of belonging. Youth responded positively to several questions demonstrating a sense of belonging and attachment to NJ After 3 TAP. About three quarters or more of program participants reported that they mostly or always felt they were doing well in the program, felt happy to be at the program, felt like they belonged, and felt like they could help others, as shown in Exhibit 10. Youth who reported that the program was very important to them had a higher average score on the scale measuring sense of belonging than did their peers who rated the program as less important (effect size=0.97).

Ninety-five percent of youth said that they felt they were doing well at least some of the time. More than 90 percent of youth also said that they felt like they belonged, felt happy to be at the program, and felt like they could help others in the program at least some of the time. The high proportions of youth who reported feelings of attachment to the program are similar to survey results from a three-year statewide evaluation of NJ After 3 (Walking-Eagle et al., 2009).

Exhibit 10
Participant Reports of Sense of Belonging, in Percents, 2009-10

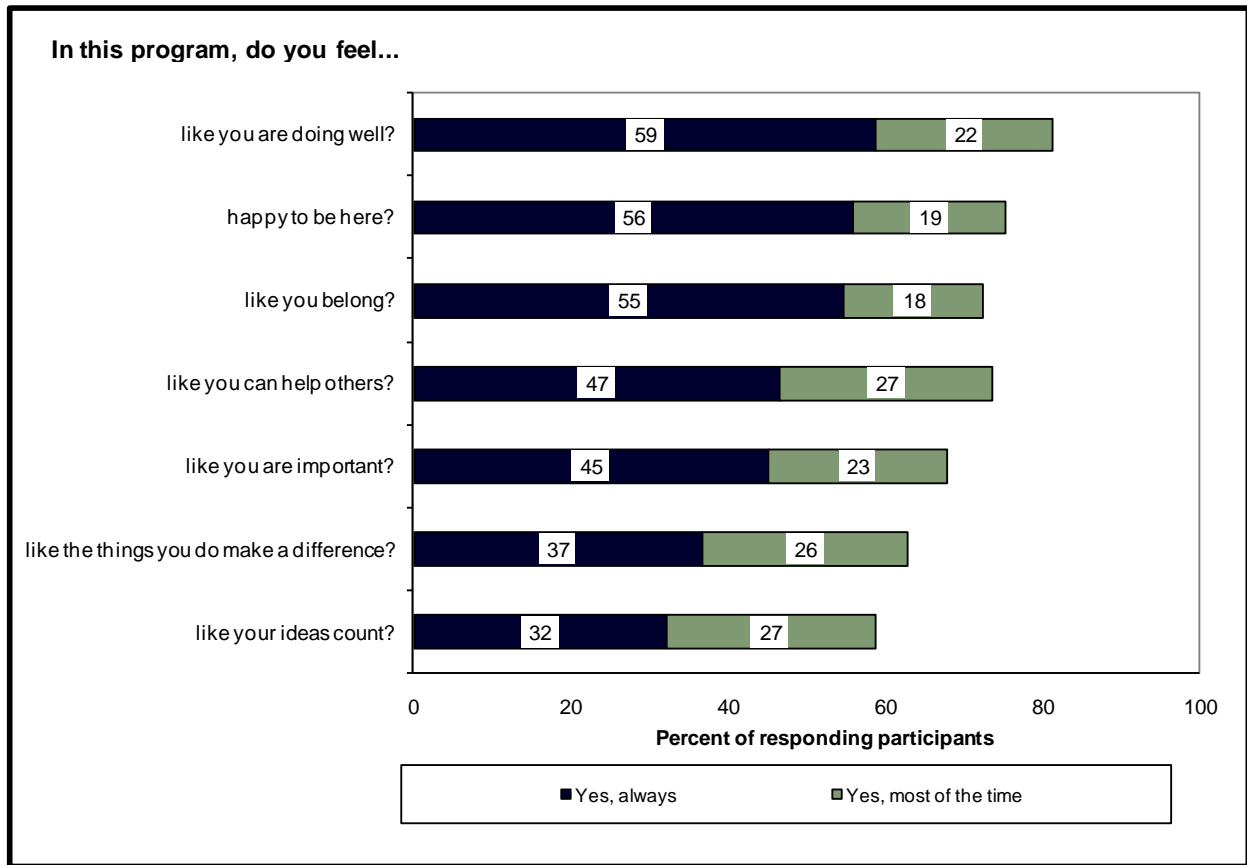


Exhibit reads: Fifty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they “always” felt like they were doing well in the program; 22 percent of respondents felt like they were doing well “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Relationships with staff. Respondents reported very high levels of positive staff interactions, as presented in Exhibit 11. Seventy-nine percent of participants reported that adults in the program treated them with respect and encouraged them to try new things most or all of the time. Seventy-six percent of participants said that the adults told them when they did a good job most or all of the time. Ninety percent or more of youth reported that the adults in the program tried to be fair, treated them with respect, told them when they did a good job, listened to them, and encouraged them to try new things at least some of the time. Evaluators did not find significant differences among groups of youth.

Exhibit 11
Participant Reports of Relationships with Staff, in Percents, 2009-10

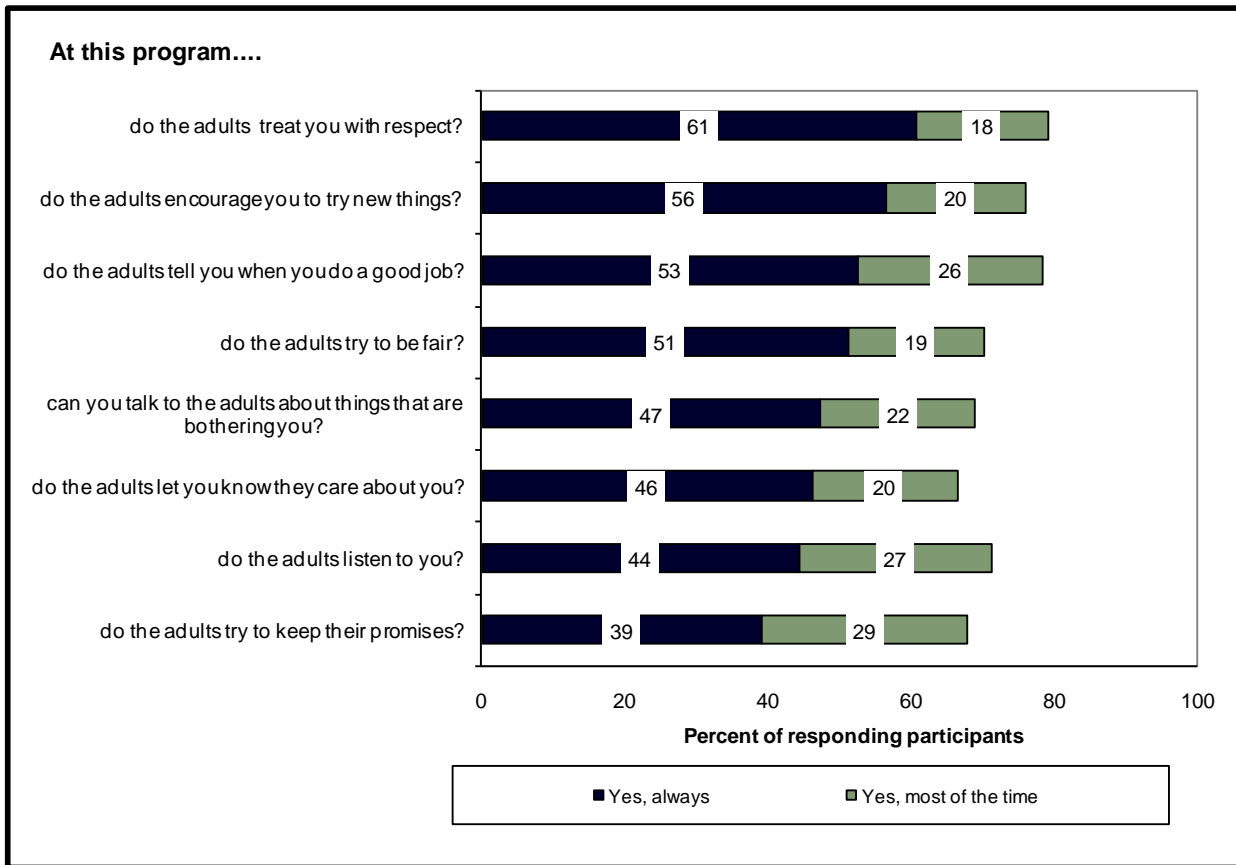


Exhibit reads: Sixty-one percent of participants said that the adults in the program “always” treat them with respect. Eighteen percent of participants felt respected by the adults “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Relationships with peers. Eighty-four percent of youth reported that they had a lot of friends in the program either most or all of the time. Seventy-seven percent of youth reported that they had a good time doing activities with other students and they got to know other students really well most or all of the time, as shown in Exhibit 12. More than 90 percent of youth said that, at least some of the time, they had a lot of friends, they had a good time doing activities with other students, they got to know other students really well, they got to work with other students as part of a team, they liked the other students, and they got along with other students. Eighty-four percent of youth trusted other students at least some of the time. Evaluators did not find significant differences among groups of youth.

Exhibit 12 Participant Reports of Relationships with Peers, in Percents, 2009-10

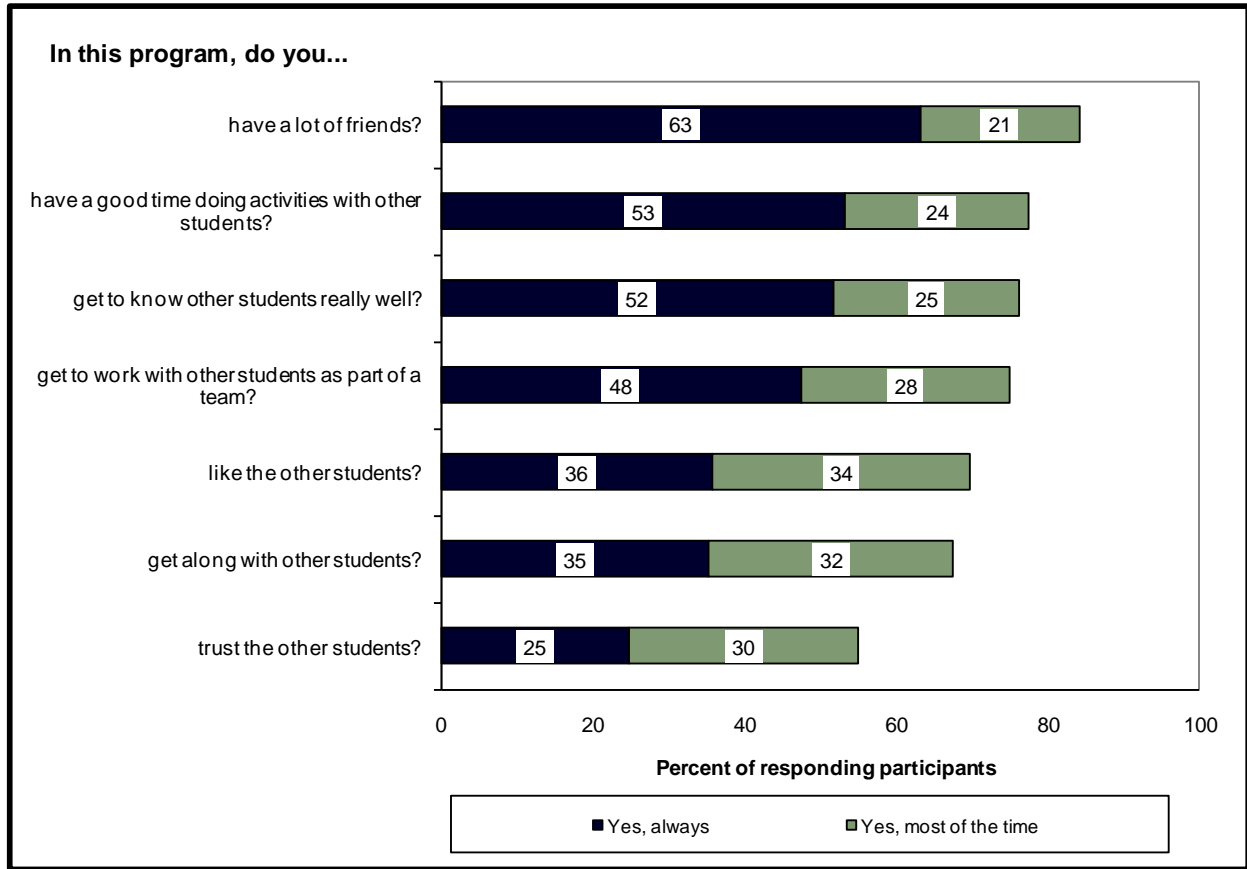


Exhibit reads: Sixty-three percent of participants report that they “always” had a lot of friends in the afterschool program. Twenty-one percent report that they had a lot of friends “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Health-related behavior. Prior research has found that afterschool programs like NJ After 3, which provide youth with opportunities for physical activity, nutrition instruction, and access to healthy snacks, can have a positive impact on the health and well-being of youth outside of the program (Little et al., 2008). In a national survey conducted in 2002, the Centers for Disease Control found that 62 percent of youth ages 9-13 did not participate in any organized physical activity outside of the school day, and 22 percent did not engage in any free-time physical activity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). NJ After 3 TAP provides youth with much needed opportunities for physical activity and nutrition education. Youth spent an average of 46 hours of programming engaged in physical activity during the 2009-10 school year and 24 hours in activities providing nutritional education and health awareness. Youth survey responses to health-related behavior questions indicate that more than half of participants were making at least a few healthy choices while at home. Although more youth reported that they watched television or played video games in the evening (70 percent), 62 percent of youth reported that they exercised or played for 30 minutes or more at least most of the time. More youth reported that they ate fruit or vegetables (60 percent) at least most of the time, compared

with 53 percent who drank soda, and 52 percent who ate potato chips or candy at least most of the time. One third of participants drank milk at least most of the time, as shown in Exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13
Participant Reports of Health-Related Behavior, in Percents, 2009-10

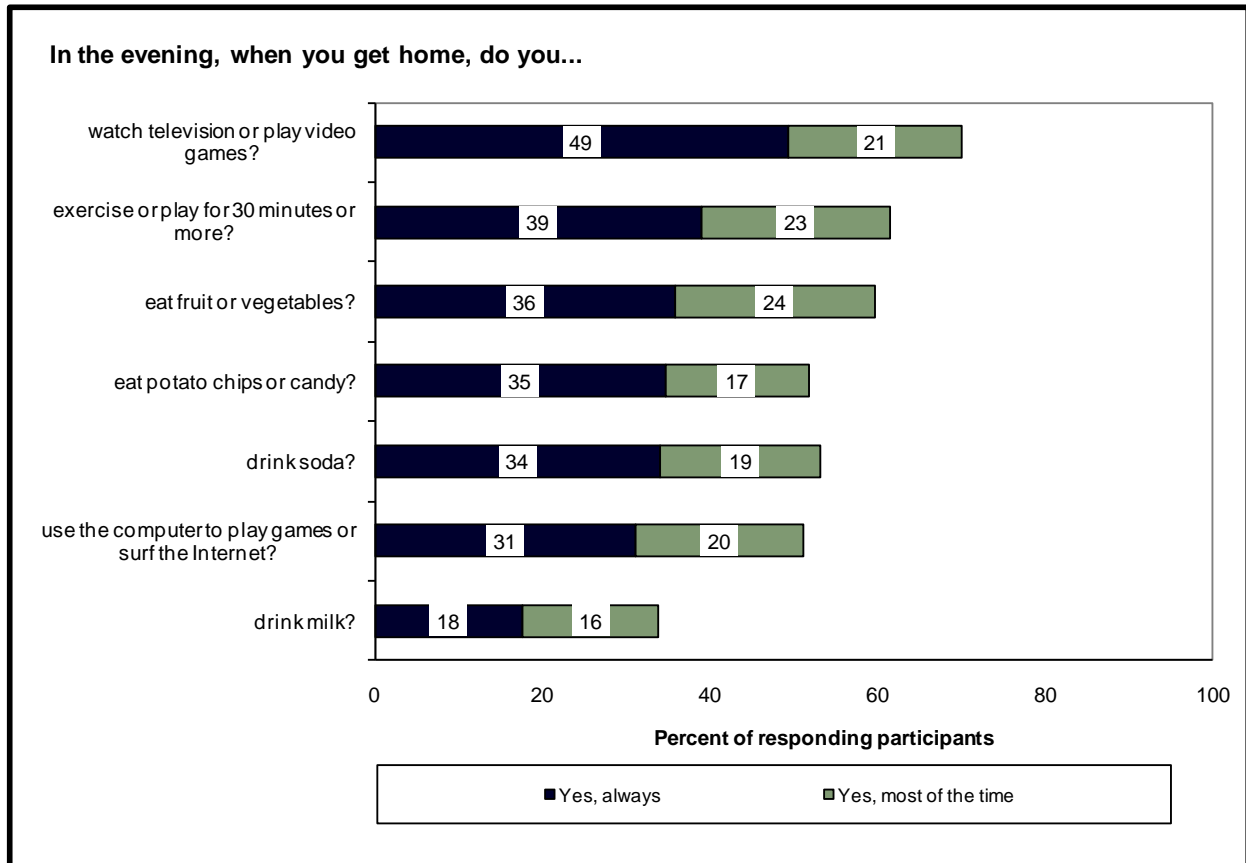


Exhibit reads: Forty-nine percent of participants “always” watched television or played video games when they got home. Twenty-one percent of participants did this “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Social behavior. Overall, youth reported high levels of pro-social behavior. (Pro-social behavior is a term from the field of psychology and refers to someone helping another person, particularly when he or she has no goal other than to help the other person.) As illustrated in Exhibit 14, when asked if they said nice things to someone who was sad, 71 percent of respondents said they did so most or all of the time. Sixty-five percent of youth reported that when they saw that someone else was sad they asked if they could help them most or all of the time, 60 percent helped peers who were mad stay out of a fight most or all of the time, and 58 percent helped peers try to solve a problem they were having most or all of the time.

Exhibit 14 Participant Reports of Social Behavior, in Percents, 2009-10

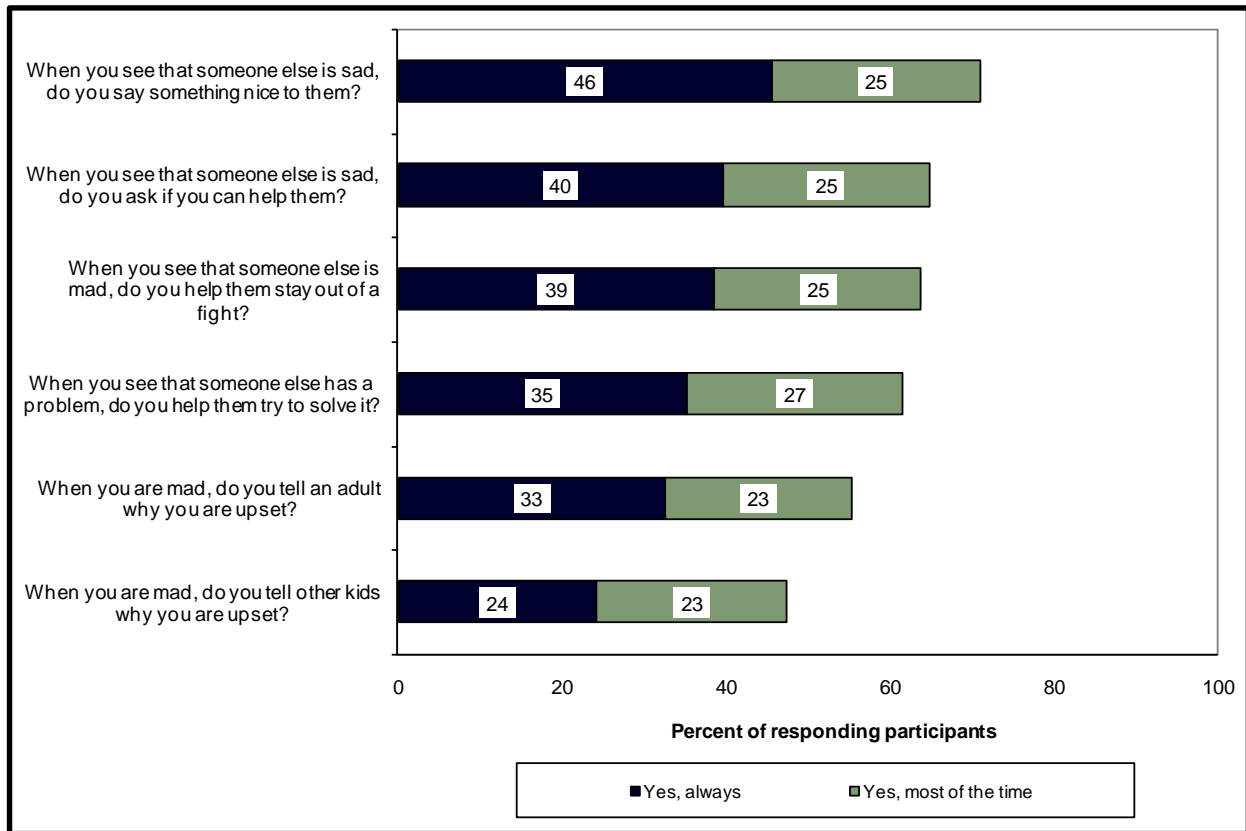


Exhibit reads: Forty-six percent of participants reported “always” saying something nice to someone if they were sad. Twenty-five percent of participants did this “most of the time.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Participant Survey, Spring 2010

Evaluators found that youth in grades 6-8 participating in programs with an average of 114 days of attendance or more reported higher levels of pro-social behavior compared with youth in grades 6-8 attending programs with an average of 113 days of attendance or less (effect size=0.37). This finding indicates that youth in programs with high overall exposure to the program exhibited more positive behavior than did youth in programs with lower levels of program exposure.

Parent Satisfaction

Parents reported very strong levels of satisfaction with their children’s NJ After 3 TAP program. When asked how important the program was to them, 89 percent of respondents said that the program was “very important.” Similarly, 86 percent reported that the program was “very important” to their child. None of the parent respondents indicated that the program was “not at all” important to them or to their child.

Reasons for program enrollment. The primary reasons parents said they enrolled their child in NJ After 3 TAP were for safety, affordability, academic benefit, and exposure to new activities. Exhibit 15 shows that 89 percent of parents indicated that safety was a “big reason” for enrolling their child. Eighty-four percent of parents said that affordability, academic benefit, and participation in new types of activities were each a “big reason” for enrolling their child in the afterschool program.

**Exhibit 15
Reasons for Enrollment in the Program, in Percents, 2009-10**

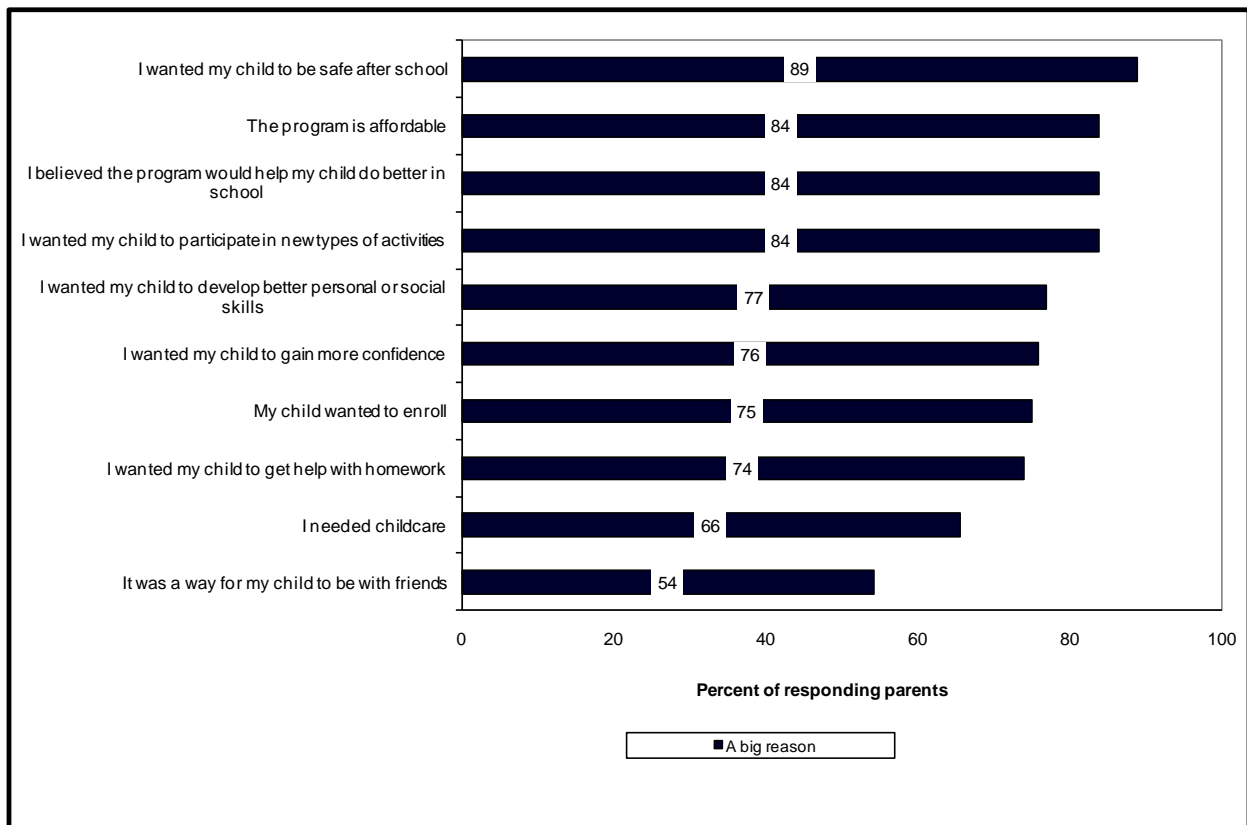


Exhibit reads: Eighty-nine percent of parents said that wanting their child to be safe after school was a “big reason” for enrolling their child in the afterschool program.

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Parent Survey, Spring 2010

NJ After 3 TAP program benefits. Parents believed that their child benefited from participation in the NJ After 3 TAP program in a variety of ways. For example, almost all parents (93 percent) agreed that their child was safer afterschool, as shown in Exhibit 16. Ninety-two percent of parents agreed that their child was able to participate in activities that they would not be able to do outside of the program. Ninety-four percent of parents agreed that their child was doing better in school because of enrollment in the afterschool program, and 93 percent of parents agreed that their child talked to them more about what happens in school.

Exhibit 16 Parent Perceptions of Program Benefits, in Percents, 2009-10

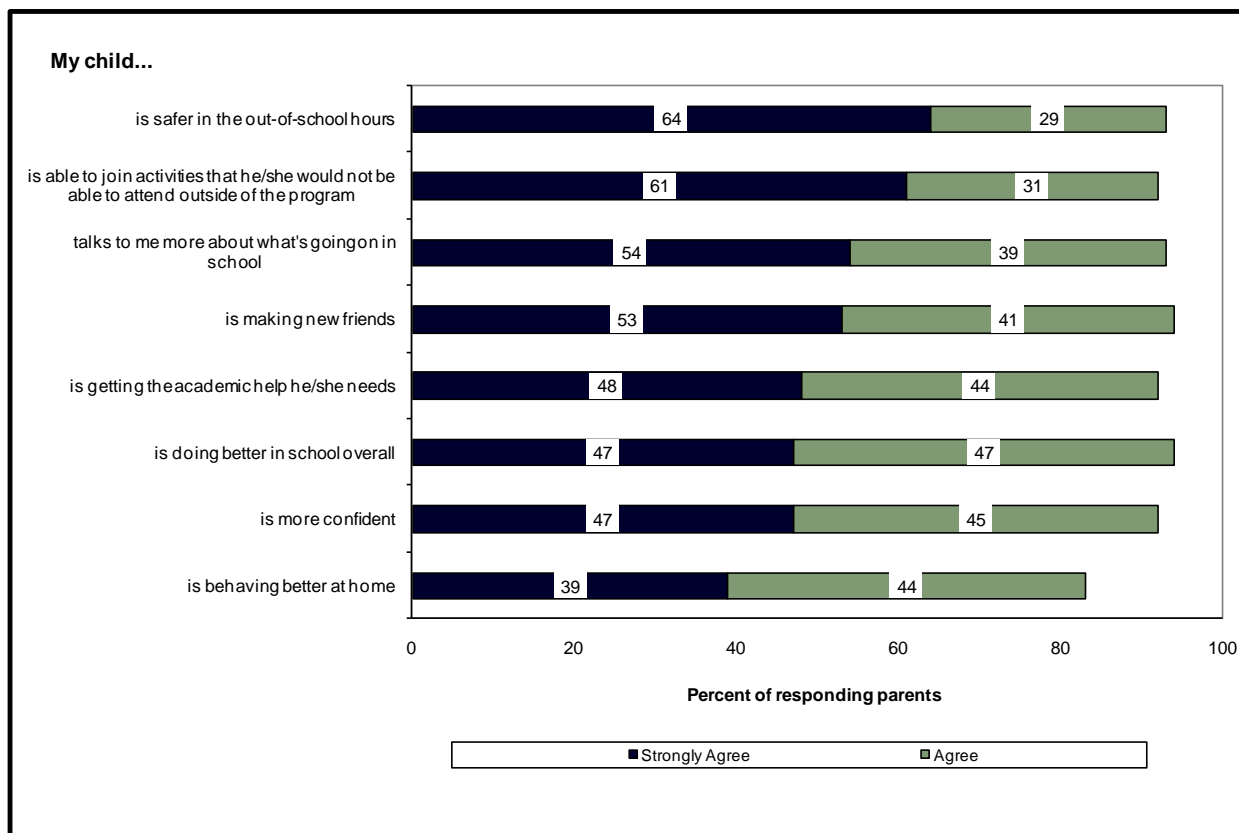


Exhibit reads: Sixty-four percent of parents strongly agreed and 29 percent of parents agreed that their child was safer in the afterschool hours because of the afterschool program.

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Parent Survey, Spring 2010

When asked how they would rate their child’s afterschool program, parents gave their child’s program high marks. Sixty-three percent of parents indicated that they would rate the program as “excellent.” Another 26 percent indicated that they would rate the program as “very good,” 9 percent rated the program as “good,” and 2 percent gave the program a “fair” rating. None of the parents rated the program as “poor.” Parents’ ratings of NJ After 3 TAP were positively associated with ratings of importance of the program ($p < 0.01$; effect size=0.69), meaning that the more important a parent said the program was to them, the higher they rated the program.

When asked which types of activities were most important, parents most often indicated that academic enrichment activities such as tutoring, literacy, or math and science projects were the most important activities offered. Thirty-nine percent of parents indicated that academic enrichment activities were most important, followed by social development activities (29 percent), homework help (18 percent), sports and physical activities (10 percent), and artistic activities (5 percent).

Parents were asked to report in their own words what they liked most about NJ After 3 TAP. The most frequent comments were expressions of gratitude for the help their child received with homework and other academic assistance. Parents liked the activities and were happy that their child was being exposed to new opportunities that they would not get to experience otherwise. Many parents praised the staff and felt that they really cared about their child, which was important for those who also expressed thanks for the peace of mind they felt leaving their child in the program rather than in less reliable or more expensive care. Parent comments included the following:

The instructors take time with the students. They are concerned for their education and their needs. Children feel comfortable and confident when doing homework. There are very skilled and intellectual instructors involved.

The staff. My children are safe, they enjoy it, and I can work and not worry about child care. They have other activities for the kids like basketball, tennis programs, and other things.

They help with his homework. He has been able to attend the Mind Our Business program, 4H Club, basketball, soccer, tennis, cooking class, learning about staying away from drugs and gangs; also no bullying, respecting everyone, and being honest. This program has enriched my son and made him have a positive attitude.

Benefits to parents. Overall, parents were in agreement that the program had provided positive benefits to their work and home lives. Excluding survey respondents who selected the “not applicable” option, almost all parents (96 percent) agreed that the program hours fit their own needs to a great extent or some extent. Of working parents, 90 percent said that the availability of the program made it easier for them to keep their job. Exhibit 17 presents all of the ways in which parents reported that the program fits their needs.

Exhibit 17 Benefits of Programming for Parents, in Percents, 2009-10

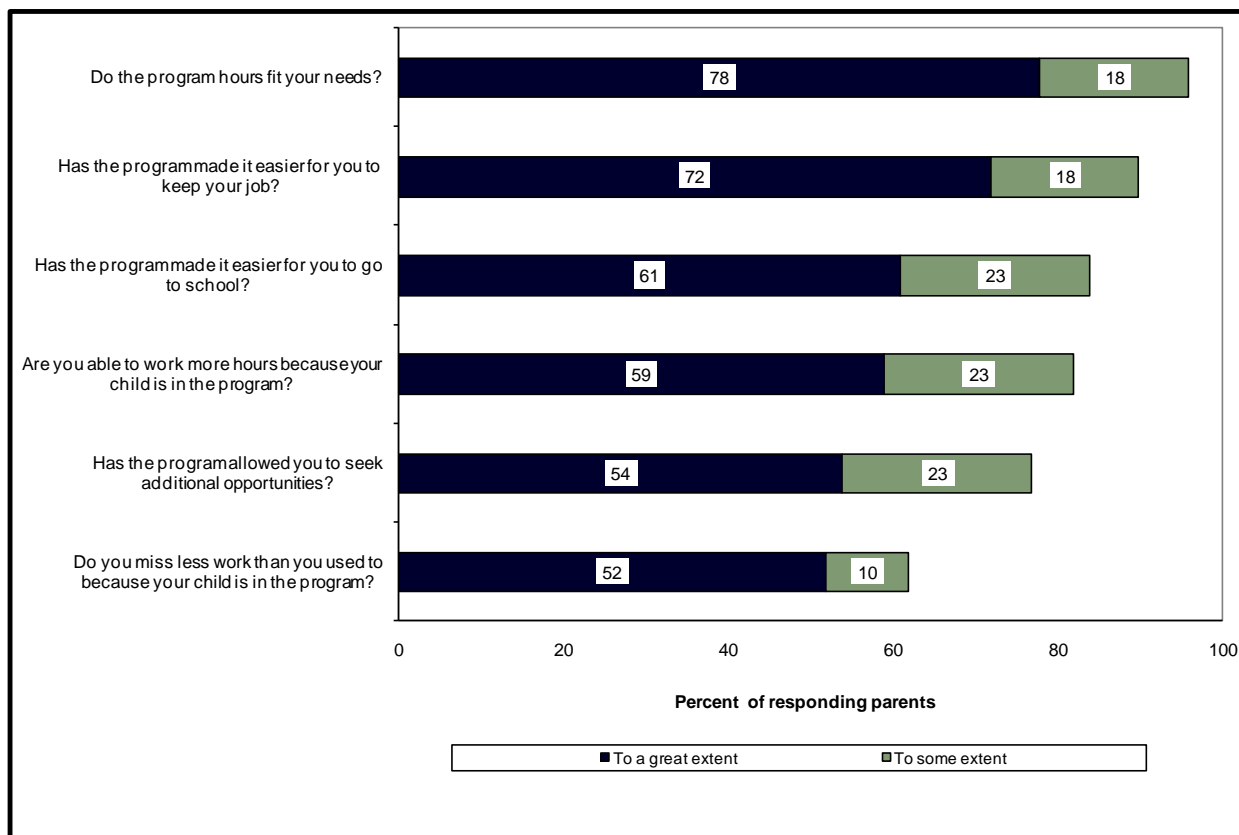


Exhibit reads: Seventy-eight percent of parents reported that the afterschool program’s hours fit their needs “to a great extent.” Eighteen percent said that the hours fit their needs” to some extent.”

Source: New Jersey After 3 Trenton Afterschool Partnership Parent Survey, Spring 2010

The time that NJ After 3 TAP allowed for parents to work and go to school was significant for parents of youth enrolled in the program. Seventy-eight percent of parents reported that they worked 20 hours or more per week, 60 percent worked 35 hours or more per week. Thirty percent reported that they attended school part-time or full-time. Parents who reported working more hours were more likely to report that the program was very important to them ($p < 0.01$; effect size=0.29), and were more likely to report that the availability of the program allowed them to miss less work ($p < 0.01$; effect size=0.29) and work more hours ($p < 0.01$; effect size=0.22).

When asked how the program had helped them and their family, the most frequent reply was that parents were thankful for the extra time they had to work, go to school, or complete other tasks at home without having to worry about the child or find a babysitter. However, most continued to comment on the ways in which the program had specifically helped their child. The following are a sample of comments made by parents in the survey.

This program helps my life to run a lot easier between the hours of 3 and 6. It's very convenient, fairly affordable, and the staff seems responsible and trusting.

Most of all, my daughter enjoys the program and I don't have to worry about her leaving the school grounds to get there. It has given my child more confidence and to better himself with his siblings.

This program helped me in a great way. Many times I would come home from work late in the evening. I used to help my son with homework along with my other children. This would go sometimes until late in the night. Because of that, my children would be [lacking sleep]. After the afterschool program, all of this has changed for the better completely.

I am able to spend quality time with my daughter that isn't school related—fun time—because having her homework done was a blessing.

When asked for recommendations for improvement, parents overwhelmingly replied that they were happy with the program as it was. A few also noted that they hoped the program would continue to operate. Approximately one third of parents offered a recommendation. Those recommendations were diverse and, in some cases, specific to conditions in a particular school. A few recommendations that were voiced by a small handful of parents (approximately five to 20 parents) included providing even more academic support and tutoring, or making the existing academic assistance more effective; offering more diverse activities, particularly sports and field trips; increasing program hours, specifically offering year-round programming and programming on half-days—even if it meant increasing fees; and improving resources, particularly providing healthier snacks and more supplies. Several recommendations were voiced only once by different parents. Among those recommendations were ideas such as providing more mentors, providing more staff on field trips, providing more opportunities for youth to choose activities, providing training for staff in communicating with parents, providing more services for students with special needs, providing more counseling to help youth with behavior, and increasing levels of parental involvement.

Conclusion

This report documents NJ After 3 TAP participant characteristics, participation patterns and experiences during the first year of the TAP initiative (2009-10), as well as youth and parent reactions to the programs. Below evaluators present the study's conclusions, as arranged by the evaluation's research questions.

What was NJ After 3 TAP's reach and level of participation? What was the reach of afterschool programming in Trenton? Trenton Afterschool Partnership programs reached nearly a quarter (22 percent) of all students in Trenton Public Schools, which is a high proportion, particularly for the first year of a citywide initiative. Most youth (85 percent) who were enrolled in the program by November, the month by which all program sites were operating, remained in the program through the end of the year. Most schools had consistent enrollment throughout the school year, and six schools increased enrollment by at least 25 percent, suggesting increasing demand for the program.

What were the characteristics of NJ After 3 TAP’s participants? What were the patterns of youth participation? What activities were offered, and how did youth spend their time in the program? The population of NJ After 3 TAP participants closely resembled the general population of students in the district. Participants were 49 percent male and 51 percent female. Most youth were African American or Hispanic. Slightly more than half were identified as participating in the free- or reduced-price lunch program, and about 5 percent were identified as limited English proficient, and 5 percent as special education students. The free- or reduced-price lunch status, limited English proficient status, and special education student status could not be determined for roughly one third of all participants.

Participation levels were high—youth attended an average of 114 days with an average attendance rate of 80 percent. Youth in grades K-5 attended more total days of programming and had a higher attendance rate compared with older youth. Analysis of attendance data suggests that most schools were regularly meeting or exceeding the daily afterschool attendance targets set for the grade levels they served, as determined by NJ After 3.

NJ After 3 TAP participants spent most of their time on academic activities, especially homework help. Participants spent approximately half of their time on academics, an average of 133 hours, 100 hours of which were spent on homework assistance. Another 72 hours, or approximately 26 percent of program hours, were spent on sports, health, and fitness activities, and 69 hours, or 25 percent of program hours, were spent on all other enrichment activities.

What was the youth experience? Participants reported having very positive experiences in the program overall. Eighty-three percent of NJ After 3 TAP participants said the program was important to them. Two thirds or more of youth responded very positively to all questions related to their relationships with staff and peers and to their sense of belonging within the program. In addition, more than half of all survey respondents reported frequent opportunities to do activities that interested them, activities that were new to them, activities that made them think, activities that they didn’t do anywhere else, activities that helped people in their community, and activities that they were able to choose. More than half of participants reported having at least some opportunities to lead group activities, help plan activities or events, and give input about activities.

Youth in grades 6-8 reported having more frequent opportunities to help staff plan activities or events than did youth in grades 3-5. There were no other statistically significant differences among youth in grades 3-5 compared with youth in grades 6-8. However, grades 6-8 youth in programs with high levels of program exposure, 114 days of programming or more, reported more frequent pro-social behavior than did youth in grades 6-8 in programs with an average number of days below 114. Youth who reported the program as “very important” to them reported a stronger sense of belonging with the program than did their peers.

What were parents’ reactions to the program? Has the program helped meet the needs of parents? Parents who responded to the survey reported very high levels of satisfaction with NJ After 3 TAP. Almost all parents said that the program was very or somewhat important to them and that the program was important to their child. Sixty-three percent of parents rated their child’s program as “excellent,” and another 26 percent rated their child’s program as “very

good.” Parents indicated that safety, affordability, academic benefit, and exposure to new activities were “big reasons” to enroll their child in the program. Parents felt that the greatest benefit of the program to themselves and to their family was that the program allowed them to work more hours and/or miss work less often. Seventy-eight percent of parents reported that the program hours fit their needs “to a great extent.”

Parents strongly believed that their child had benefited from participation in NJ After 3 TAP in a variety of ways. Ninety-three percent of parents agreed that their child was safer afterschool, and 92 percent of parents agreed that their child was able to participate in activities that they would not be able to do outside of the program. A large majority of parents also agreed that their child was more communicative at home, that he or she made new friends, was more confident, was getting the academic help they needed, and behaved better at home as a result of participating in the program.

Do parents and youth think that the program has helped youth academically? Youth participants reported very positive attitudes about how they think they have benefited academically from attending NJ After 3 TAP. Most respondents said that the program helped them finish their homework. A majority of respondents also indicated that the program helped them in the classroom by helping them solve math problems correctly, helping them feel better about school, and helping them get good grades. Youth who reported that the program was “very important” to them reported greater academic benefit from NJ After 3 TAP, compared with youth who reported that the program was “somewhat important,” “a little important,” or “not at all important.” Youth in programs with an average of 133 hours or more spent in academic activities reported higher levels of academic benefit from NJ After 3 TAP, compared with youth in programs where less time was spent on academic programming. Ninety-four percent of parents agreed that their child was doing better in school because of enrollment in the afterschool program.

Overall, NJ After 3 TAP received high levels of satisfaction from participants and their parents. Those high levels of satisfaction translated into sustained levels of participation for a majority of participants. NJ After 3, in partnership with Trenton Public Schools and other community partners, has established a firm foundation for providing Trenton youth and families with access to quality afterschool programming that provides youth in grades K-12 with enriching learning opportunities, nurturing relationships with peers and adults, and opportunities to develop important life skills and social skills. Through the TAP initiative, afterschool opportunities were extended to all Trenton students at the high school level, a population that has traditionally had limited afterschool opportunities, a first in Trenton. Although the purpose of this study was not to assess the quality of NJ After 3 TAP, synthesis of prior studies show that strong programs that offer a mix of academic and enrichment activities, such as NJ After 3 TAP, have the potential to improve youth academic and social/emotional outcomes (Little et al., 2008). Examples of improved outcomes include improved homework completion, increased on-time promotion, decreased dropout rates, less tardiness and absence in school, higher educational aspirations, decreased behavioral problems, better grades, and improved interpersonal skills. The higher the levels of participation in the program, the more likely that youth will reap the benefits. Aiming to increase the proportion of Trenton youth who participate in NJ After 3 TAP

and maintaining high levels of program attendance should be priorities as the initiative continues so that more youth may benefit from participation.

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Appendix A
Technical Properties of Participant Survey Scales

Technical Properties of Participant Survey Scales

Evaluators selected certain survey questions to develop interval scales that measure participants’ attitudes about program engagement, perception of academic benefit, leadership opportunities, sense of belonging, relationships with adults, relationships with peers, health-related behavior, and social behavior. Scales were constructed using Rasch modeling to interpret and analyze data. Evaluators applied the Rasch model to address issues and assumptions that other methods of scale construction and analysis do not, such as respondent inconsistency and subjectivity of the data. For example, one respondent’s interpretation of “yes, most of the time” may be closely related to another respondents interpretation of “yes, some of the time.” Rasch-calculated scale scores are built on calculations that are mathematically appropriate for measuring data that has been recorded using categorical constructs where each response is not inherently of equal value (Bond & Fox, 2007).


Evaluators used a reliability rating to determine the fit (the predictability) of each item in the scale and among different populations of youth based on grade spans (grades 3-5 and grades 6-8). Items and grade spans of youth that were deemed not to be behaving in a predictable manner were excluded from the construction of the scale and, therefore, from the analysis. If reliability levels remained low regardless of how the scales were constructed then the scale was excluded from analyses. Evaluators used a reliability rating of 0.69 or higher as the lowest threshold for developing a scale. Following the established criteria for analyses, program engagement and social behavior scales were developed using data from participants in grades 6-8 only. Scales for leadership opportunities and health-related behaviors were not developed. The questions used to construct each of the other scales, the reliability rating, the Rasch-calculated score, and the standardized score for each scale item are detailed in the tables that follow. Scale items are listed in order from the “easiest to endorse” to the “hardest to endorse.” Easy to endorse questions are questions where the mean of the distribution of responses is skewed most heavily to the “yes, always” response option.

Program Engagement

Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
Do the activities in this program interest you?	-1.10	-1.7082
Do you get a chance to do a lot of new things in this program?	-0.35	-0.5435
Do you get to do activities in this program that really make you think?	0.09	0.1398
Do you get to make a lot of choices about the activities you do in this program?	0.20	0.3106
Do you get to do activities in this program that help people in your community?	0.48	0.7454
Do you get a chance to do things in this program that you don't do anywhere else?	0.68	1.0560


Person reliability=0.73

Perceived Academic Benefit

	Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
Easiest to endorse  Hardest to endorse	Has this afterschool program helped you finish your homework?	-1.33	-1.8623
	Has this afterschool program helped you solve math problems correctly?	-0.38	-0.5321
	Has this afterschool program helped you get good grades in school?	-0.13	-0.1820
	Has this afterschool program helped you feel better about school?	-0.10	-0.1400
	Has this afterschool program helped you read better?	0.16	0.2240
	Has this afterschool program helped you do well on tests?	0.21	0.2940
	Has this afterschool program helped you write better?	0.38	0.5321
	Has this afterschool program helped you use a computer to do your homework?	1.19	1.6662


Person reliability=0.77

Sense of Belonging

	Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
Easiest to endorse  Hardest to endorse	Do you feel like you are doing well in this program?	-0.75	-1.3899
	Do you feel happy to be at this program?	-0.38	-0.7029
	Do you feel like you belong in this program?	-0.29	-0.5358
	Do you feel like you can help others in this program?	-0.11	-0.2016
	Do you feel like you are important in this program?	0.18	0.3369
	Do you feel like the things you do make a difference at this program?	0.61	1.1352
	Do you feel like your ideas count in this program?	0.73	1.3580


Person reliability=0.72

Relationships with Adults

	Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
Easiest to endorse  Hardest to endorse	Do the adults at this program treat you with respect?	-0.38	-1.3219
	Do the adults at this program encourage you to try new things?	-0.27	-0.9405
	Do the adults at this program tell you when you do a good job?	-0.26	-0.9058
	Do the adults at this program try to be fair?	-0.02	-0.0737
	Do the adults at this program listen to you?	0.01	0.0303
	Do you feel like you can talk to the adults at this program about things that are bothering you?	0.24	0.8278
	Do the adults at this program try to keep their promises?	0.32	1.1052
	Do the adults at this program let you know that they care about you?	0.37	1.2785


Person reliability=0.74

Relationships with Peers

Easiest to endorse  Hardest to endorse	Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
	Do you have a lot of friends in this program?	-0.73	-1.3118
	Do you have a good time doing activities with other students in this program?	-0.33	-0.5930
	Do you get to know other students in this program really well?	-0.11	-0.1977
	Do you like the other students in this program?	-0.04	-0.0719
	Do you get to work with other students in this program as part of a team?	0	0
	Do you get along with other students in this program?	0.12	0.2156
	Do you trust the other students in this program?	1.09	1.9588

Person reliability=0.69

Social Behavior

Easiest to endorse  Hardest to endorse	Scale item	Rasch-calculated scale score	Standardized scale score
	When you see that someone else is sad, do you say something nice to them?	-1.05	-1.3923
	When you see that someone else is sad, do you ask if you can help them?	-0.39	-0.5185
	When you see that someone else has a problem, do you help them try to solve it?	-0.18	-0.2405
	When you see that someone else is mad, do you help them stay out of fight?	-0.13	-0.1743
	When you are mad, do you tell an adult why you are upset?	0.87	1.1496
When you are mad, do you tell other kids why you are upset?	0.89	1.1760	

Person reliability=0.72

Appendix B
Participant Survey Instrument with Frequencies

NEW JERSEY AFTER 3 Participant Survey Spring 2010

Dear Student:

To help make this program better, we are surveying students to learn about their experiences in it.

This survey is voluntary. If you do not want to fill out the survey, you do not need to. However, we hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out because your answers are important.

This survey is private. No one at your school, home, or afterschool program will see your answers. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect your participation or place in the program in any way. If you have any questions about the survey, you can ask an adult for help.

Thank you for your help!

1. What grade are you in? (Fill in one circle.)

3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
23.8	20.1	18.1	12.6	14.8	10.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0

(n=453)

Section 1: Your Experience in This Program

2. How important is this afterschool program to you? (Fill in one circle.)

<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
3.1	14.0	25.6	57.3

(n=422)

3. Please describe the choices and activities in this afterschool program. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Do you get a chance to do a lot of new things in this program? (n=454)	4.0	29.5	28.9	37.7
b. Do you get a chance to do things in this program that you don't do anywhere else? (n=455)	15.6	24.4	32.7	27.3
c. Do you get to do activities in this program that really make you think? (n=444)	10.1	24.5	25.9	39.4
d. Do you get to make a lot of choices about the activities you do in this program? (n=441)	17.7	26.8	24.3	31.3
e. Do the activities in this program interest you? (n=442)	7.2	21.5	20.8	50.5
f. Do you get to do activities in this program that help people in your community? (n=447)	17.9	24.2	25.3	32.7

4. Please describe how you think this afterschool program has helped you in school. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Has this afterschool program helped you finish your homework? (n=469)	3.4	11.5	19.4	65.7
b. Has this afterschool program helped you do well on tests? (n=465)	17.8	16.6	27.3	38.3
c. Has this afterschool program helped you solve math problems correctly? (n=459)	9.2	18.3	27.5	45.1
d. Has this afterschool program helped you read better? (n=465)	21.1	12.9	19.4	46.7
e. Has this afterschool program helped you write better? (n=455)	24.4	13.2	21.8	40.7
f. Has this afterschool program helped you get good grades in school? (n=459)	13.7	15.7	25.3	45.3
g. Has this afterschool program helped you feel better about school? (n=448)	12.9	18.8	24.1	44.2
h. Has this afterschool program helped you use a computer to do homework? (n=454)	43.2	16.3	14.1	26.4

5. Please describe your experiences at this afterschool program. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Do you get to lead group activities like coaching a sports team or helping other youth in the program with homework? (n=460)	32.2	23.9	20.4	23.5
b. Do you get to help staff in the office with things like answering the phone or taking attendance? (n=459)	59.0	17.9	12.6	10.5
c. Do you get to help plan activities or events? (n=462)	40.3	24.2	21.0	14.5
d. Do you help with meetings with parents or others? (n=451)	62.7	12.6	8.2	16.4
e. Do staff members ask you for ideas about the program or activities? (n=450)	29.3	27.8	17.8	25.1

6. Please describe how you feel about this afterschool program. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Do you feel like you belong in this program? (n=461)	9.1	18.4	17.8	54.7
b. Do you feel like your ideas count in this program? (n=458)	18.3	22.9	26.6	32.1
c. Do you feel like you are important in this program? (n=450)	14.2	18.0	22.7	45.1
d. Do you feel safe in this program? (n=450)	4.7	14.2	14.2	66.9
e. Do you feel like you are doing well in this program? (n=455)	5.5	13.2	22.4	58.9
f. Do you feel happy to be at this program? (n=449)	8.0	16.7	19.4	55.9
g. Do you feel like the things you do make a difference at this program? (n=450)	19.6	17.6	26.2	36.7
h. Do you feel like you can help others in this program? (n=451)	9.1	17.3	27.1	46.6

7. Please describe the adults in this afterschool program. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Do the adults at this program let you know that they care about you? (n=462)	15.8	17.7	20.3	46.1
b. Do the adults at this program try to keep their promises? (n=451)	12.2	20.0	28.6	39.2
c. Do the adults at this program try to be fair? (n=452)	10.0	19.9	18.8	51.3
d. Do you feel like you can talk to the adults at this program about things that are bothering you? (n=449)	13.8	17.1	21.6	47.4
e. Do the adults at this program treat you with respect? (n=445)	7.9	13.0	18.4	60.7
f. Do the adults at this program tell you when you do a good job? (n=443)	7.2	14.4	25.7	52.6
g. Do the adults at this program listen to you? (n=438)	8.4	20.3	26.9	44.3
h. Do the adults at this program encourage you to try new things? (n=443)	7.7	16.3	19.6	56.4

8. Please describe the other students in this afterschool program. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. Do you get to know other students in this program really well? (n=453)	7.1	16.6	24.7	51.7
b. Do you trust the other students in this program? (n=451)	16.0	29.0	30.2	24.8
c. Do you have a lot of friends in this program? (n=443)	3.6	12.2	21.0	63.2
d. Do you like the other students in this program? (n=447)	3.6	26.6	34.0	35.8
e. Do you have a good time doing activities with other students in this program? (n=440)	4.5	18.0	24.1	53.4
f. Do you get along with other students in this program? (n=441)	4.8	27.7	32.2	35.4
g. Do you get to work with other students in this program as part of a team? (n=442)	7.2	17.9	27.6	47.3

Section 2: Your Experiences with Life in General

9. Please answer the following questions about your eating and exercising habits. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. In the evening, when you get home, do you drink milk? (n=458)	40.0	26.2	16.2	17.7
b. In the evening, when you get home, do you drink soda? (n=458)	18.1	28.6	19.2	34.1
c. In the evening, when you get home, do you eat fruit or vegetables? (n=444)	12.8	27.5	23.9	35.8
d. In the evening, when you get home, do you eat potato chips or candy? (n=444)	16.4	31.8	17.1	34.7
e. In the evening, when you get home, do you watch television or play video games? (n=440)	7.7	22.0	20.9	49.3
f. In the evening, when you get home, do you use the computer to play games or surf the Internet (not for homework)? (n=452)	27.0	21.9	19.9	31.2
g. In the evening, when you get home, do you exercise or play for 30 minutes or more, where you are sweating and breathing hard? (n=454)	17.6	20.9	22.5	39.0

10. Please describe how you treat others. (Fill in one circle in each row.)

	No, never	Yes, some of the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, always
a. When you see that someone else is sad, do you ask if you can help them? (n=460)	9.6	25.4	25.4	39.6
b. When you see that someone else is sad, do you say something nice to them? (n=461)	6.3	22.8	25.4	45.6
c. When you see that someone else is mad, do you help them stay out of a fight? (n=452)	13.7	22.3	25.2	38.7
d. When you see that someone else has a problem, do you help them try to solve it? (n=457)	11.4	26.9	26.5	35.2
e. When you are mad, do you tell an adult why you are upset? (n=445)	19.3	25.4	22.7	32.6
f. When you are mad, do you tell other kids why you are upset? (n=453)	27.2	25.4	23.2	24.3

11. If you could go as far as you wanted in school, how far would you like to go? (Fill in one circle.)

<i>Go to high school</i>	<i>Graduate from high school</i>	<i>Go to college for a while</i>	<i>Finish college</i>	<i>Get more education after college</i>
2.2	2.2	3.1	46.1	46.3

(n=445)

Thank You!

Appendix C
Parent Survey Instrument with Frequencies

EVALUATION OF NEW JERSEY AFTER 3 YOUTH PROGRAMS Parent Survey—Spring 2010

Dear Parent or Guardian:

New Jersey After 3 has contracted with Policy Studies Associates, Inc. (PSA) to conduct a one-year evaluation of the Trenton Afterschool Partnership. To help make this program better, we are surveying parents to learn about their experiences with it.

This survey is voluntary. If you do not want to fill out the survey, you do not need to. However, we hope you will take a few minutes to fill it out because your answers are important.

This survey is private. No individual responses or names will be included in any reports and your responses will not be shared with anyone outside of the evaluation team at PSA. You DO NOT need to write your name anywhere on this survey. Please answer all of the questions as honestly as you can. If you are uncomfortable answering a question, you may leave it blank.

This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers, and your answers will not affect your child's participation or place in the program in any way.

Thank you for your help!

When you have filled out the survey, please return it to a staff member or send it back to the program with your child by **June 4, 2010**.

NOTE: If you have more than one child attending this afterschool program, please answer these questions based on your oldest child attending the program.

1. How important is this program to you? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
0.0	3.2	7.9	89.0

(n=317)

2. How important is this program to your child? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>Not at all important</i>	<i>A little important</i>	<i>Somewhat important</i>	<i>Very important</i>
0.0	2.5	12.0	85.5

(n=317)

3. Why did you enroll your child in this afterschool program? How important were each of the following reasons? **(Circle one response in each row.)**

	<i>Not a reason</i>	<i>A small reason</i>	<i>A big reason</i>
a. My child wanted to enroll (n=307)	6.5	18.6	74.9
b. I needed childcare (n=311)	14.5	19.9	65.6
c. I believed the program would help my child do better in school (n=313)	3.8	12.1	84.0
d. I wanted my child to get help with homework (n=312)	8.0	17.9	74.0
e. I wanted my child to participate in new types of activities (n=310)	1.6	14.8	83.5
f. I wanted my child to gain more confidence in himself/herself (n=310)	9.0	15.2	75.8
g. I wanted my child to develop better personal/social skills (e.g., get along with other kids better, follow directions, listen to adults) (n=312)	5.8	17.3	76.9
h. It was a way for my child to be with friends (n=313)	16.0	29.7	54.3
i. I wanted my child to be safe after school (n=312)	2.9	8.3	88.8
j. The program is affordable (n=310)	5.8	10.0	84.2

4. In your opinion, what types of activities are most important in this afterschool program? **(Circle one response.)**

Homework help	Academic enrichment <i>(for example, tutoring, literacy, math or science projects)</i>	Arts <i>(for example, art, music, drama)</i>	Sports and physical activities	Social development <i>(for example, leadership development, healthy behaviors)</i>
18.2	38.7	4.7	9.5	28.9

(n=253)

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's progress as a result of participating in this afterschool program? **(Circle one response in each row.)**

As a result of participating in the program...	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
a. My child is doing better in school overall (n=313)	1.6	4.8	47.0	46.6
b. My child is getting the academic help he/she needs (n=311)	0.6	8.0	43.7	47.6
c. My child is more confident (n=311)	0.3	7.7	44.7	47.3
d. My child is making new friends (n=311)	0.0	5.8	40.8	53.4
e. My child is behaving better at home (n=307)	2.9	14.3	44.0	38.8
f. My child talks to me more about what's going on in school (n=311)	2.3	5.1	38.6	54.0
g. My child is safer in the out-of-school hours (n=312)	1.3	5.8	29.2	63.8
h. My child is able to join activities that she or he would not be able to attend outside of this program (e.g., art classes, sports, tutoring) (n=311)	1.9	6.1	30.9	61.1

6. Overall, how would you rate this afterschool program? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
0.0	2.2	8.9	26.3	62.7

(n=316)

7. How many hours per week do you work? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>I do not work for pay outside the home.</i>	<i>Less than 10 hours</i>	<i>Between 10 and 19 hours</i>	<i>Between 20 and 34 hours</i>	<i>35 or more hours</i>
11.6	5.8	4.8	18.3	59.5

(n=311)

8. Do you attend school? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>I do not attend school.</i>	<i>I attend school part-time.</i>	<i>I attend school full-time.</i>
70.0	17.4	12.6

(n=310)

9. Please describe the extent to which this afterschool program fits your needs. **(Circle one response in each row.)**

	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>A little</i>	<i>To some extent</i>	<i>To a great extent</i>
a. Do the program hours fit your needs? (n=312)	1.0	0.6	3.5	17.3	77.6
b. Do you miss less work than you used to because your child is in this program? (n=304)	18.1	25.0	5.6	8.6	42.8
c. Has this program allowed you to seek additional opportunities (e.g., enter the workforce, enroll in school, earn a promotion)? (n=306)	16.0	9.8	10.1	19.0	45.1
d. Are you able to work more hours because your child is in the program? (n=308)	16.9	10.1	5.2	18.8	49.0
e. Has the program made it easier for you to keep your job? (n=306)	13.4	4.2	4.6	15.7	62.1
f. Has the program made it easier for you to go to school? (n=300)	43.0	4.7	4.7	13.0	34.7

10. What does your child usually do from the end of the school day until about 6 p.m.? Please circle the number of afternoons a week, on average, that your child does each of the following things. **(Circle one response in each row.)**

After school ends my child goes to...	<i>Number of Afternoons a Week</i>					
	<i>Never</i>	<i>One</i>	<i>Two</i>	<i>Three</i>	<i>Four</i>	<i>Five</i>
a. This afterschool program (n=305)	2.3	1.6	1.6	2.6	5.2	86.6
b. Another program where there is a planned activity (such as sports practice, scouts, or music lessons) (n=284)	62.3	8.8	7.7	5.6	2.8	12.7
c. My home or another home where there is an adult (n=286)	44.4	8.7	8.0	7.7	4.9	26.2
d. A place where there is no adult (n=282)	83.3	1.8	1.8	2.8	3.2	7.1

11. In what ways, if any, has the availability of this program helped you and your family?

12. Please describe what you like most about the afterschool program.

13. Please tell us what you think could be done to improve the program.

Thank you for completing this survey.

OPTIONAL QUESTIONS

We would also like to know a few things about you so that we can better understand the families participating in the New Jersey After 3 programs. Please answer as many of the following questions as you are comfortable answering.

14. What is your relationship to the child for whom you answered this survey? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Step-parent</i>	<i>Grandparent</i>	<i>Aunt/ Uncle</i>	<i>Brother/ Sister</i>	<i>Other</i>
75.1	13.5	1.1	4.3	2.8	1.1	2.1

(n=281)

15. How old are you? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>18-25 years old</i>	<i>26-35 years old</i>	<i>36-45 years old</i>	<i>46-55 years old</i>	<i>Over 55 years old</i>
8.2	52.9	29.6	7.5	1.8

(n=280)

16. Which best describes your race or ethnicity? **(Circle one response.)**

- a. Black (Not Hispanic).....61.3
- b. Hispanic/Latino.....30.3
- c. Asian or Pacific Islander..... 0.7
- d. Native American or Alaskan Native..... 0.0
- e. White (Not Hispanic)..... 4.7
- f. Other..... 2.9

(n=274)

17. What is your highest level of education completed? **(Circle one response.)**

<i>Some high school</i>	<i>High school degree/ GED</i>	<i>Some college</i>	<i>Associate degree</i>	<i>Bachelor degree</i>	<i>Master degree</i>	<i>PhD</i>
12.4	37.1	30.2	11.3	5.8	2.9	0.4

(n=275)