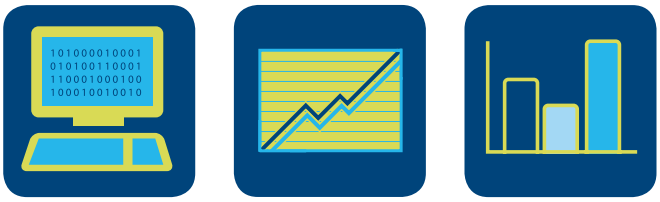
INTRODUCTION



Linda Lanier, executive director of the Children's Commission in Jacksonville, Fla., didn't rely on a good-luck charm to ward off deep cuts to her 2012 budget.

She had something much more powerful – a color-coded community map that plots the percentage of elementary-school students who are not promoted to the next grade and the percentage who attend an after-school program 30 days or more. While the map showed high rates of after-school participation and low non-promotion rates in Jacksonville's inner city, it painted a far grimmer picture of the city's Westside neighborhood, where few kids go to after-school programs and many repeat a grade.

Lanier, whose commission spends $10 million a year to support more than 60 after-school programs and summer camps, isn't deterred by the lopsided results. The healthier promotion rates in the inner city, she says, can be achieved on the Westside in part by reinvigorating out-of-school time (OST) programs there—as long as she has the money to do it. "Every year I have to convince 19 City Council members of the value of our work," she says. "I really used this map to defend my budget this year." Her strategy worked: The city council trimmed her 2012 budget by only five percent, which came as a big relief during a time of severe municipal belt-tightening. By reallocating investments, Lanier will open three new after-school programs on the underserved Westside.

Lanier's map is powered by accurate, timely information that, when analyzed, tells a compelling story about the city's OST progress so far and the work that remains. In the OST field, everyone needs reliable data to make effective decisions that will improve access to programs, enhance their quality and increase participation in them. Public and private

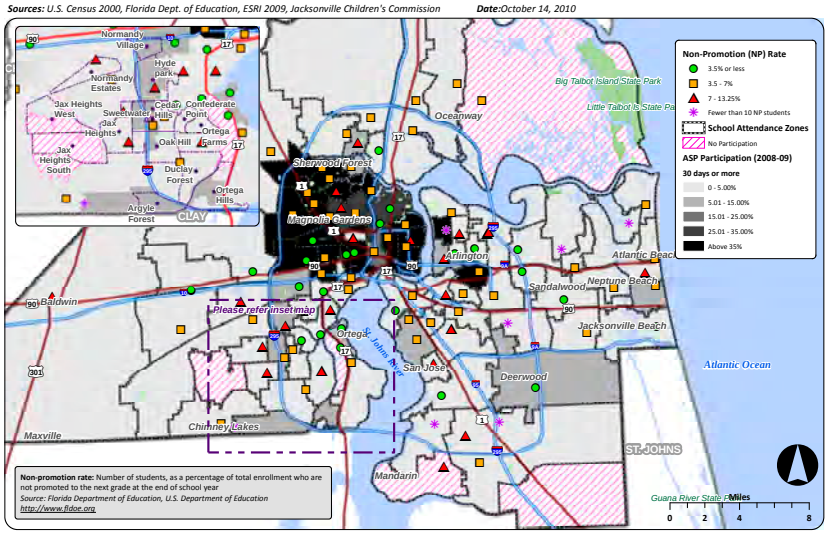
The Wallace Foundation

This is one of **six tip sheets** on using data to improve access to high-quality after-school and summer programs. The tip sheets are meant for staff members of city agencies, mayors' offices, "intermediary" groups, program providers and youth advocates.

Map C-7: Elementary School Non-Promotion Rates and After-School Program (ASP) Participation for 30 Days or More - Duval County, FL

This map displays the percentage of students who are retained and not promoted to the next grade in elementary schools and percentage of students in respective schools attending after-school program (ASP) for 30-days or more in Duval County, FL. Data is for school year 2008-09

Sources: *U.S. Census 2000, Florida Dept. of Education, ESRI 2009, Jacksonville Children's Commission* ***Date:*** *October 14, 2010*



funders demand good information to determine which programs to support and where. The organizations that run programs need it to create after-school activities that engage children and teens. Parents and youngsters want information so they can pick the program that is right for them. And all concerned need the data to get a handle on what benefits accrue from good after-school programming. With that in mind, efforts are under way in a number of cities to collect OST data, generate meaningful reports and equip decision-makers with the knowledge they need to make sound choices.

Behind this push is an important trend. Increasingly, communities are knitting together the OST work of after-school program providers, schools, government youth agencies, funders and others, creating what amounts to citywide OST systems. The hope is that with coordination will come better, more widespread after-school and summer-learning opportunities, especially for kids who need them most. The task of coordination falls in some cities to a nonprofit, in others to a government agency. But no matter where they are based, coordination leaders need to collect and use data if they want to maximize the chances that emerging urban OST systems will be a go.

It's hard work fraught with challenges. Turf wars can derail efforts to collaborate and share data. Youth development workers, as well as city and school personnel, may lack current software, Internet access and data-entry skills. High turnover can require ongoing computer training. For program and system leaders alike, there may be little time or in-house expertise to analyze the data and few resources to hire someone who can. Still, OST system builders say hurdles like these can be overcome, and that in the end, data-driven decisions can lead to higher-quality programs that benefit children's well-being and development beyond school hours.

The tip sheets that follow explore four ways that cities can use data to advance their OST efforts: to support advocacy, evaluate program quality, improve accountability, and map

the supply and demand for programming. A fifth tip sheet examines data-sharing arrangements and strategies that cities are using to see if OST participation affects children's progress in school. Links to sample documents and a reading list offer further information for each topic. All these materials are meant to assist people charged with or interested in building better OST systems – from staff members of city youth agencies, program providers and "intermediary" organizations to parents and after-school advocates.

There's a valuable by-product when cities start to collect information on OST programming: Relationships grow stronger between the various partners who play a role in improving learning opportunities for children. When a city's youth agency and school district share data to analyze results of after-school participation, they're breaking down walls and supporting each other's work. When parents are invited to a focus group about after-school programs, they feel like their opinions matter. When providers have a say in how OST quality is defined and measured, they know their work is valued. Jim Chesire, who helps lead the OST system effort in Chicago, sums it up nicely: "What's more important than data on the dashboard is how that information binds relationships and the actions taken as a result."

Other Tip Sheets in the Series:

All in Favor: Using Data in Advocacy Work • From Good to Great: Using Data to Assess and Improve Quality • Made to Measure: Using Data to Improve Accountability • 'X' Marks the Spot: Using Data to Map Needs and Supply • Fair Share: Data-Sharing Strategies That Work

For further reading, please visit: www.wallacefoundation.org

The Wallace Foundation is a national philanthropy that seeks to improve education and enrichment for disadvantaged children. The foundation has an unusual approach: funding projects to test innovative ideas for solving important social problems, conducting research to find out what works and what doesn't and to fill key knowledge gaps – and then communicating the results to help others.

Wallace has five major initiatives under way:

- School leadership: Strengthening education leadership to improve student achievement.
- After-school: Helping selected cities make good out-of-school time programs available to many more children.
- Audience development for the arts: Making the arts a part of many more people's lives by working with arts organizations to broaden, deepen and diversify audiences.
- Arts education: Expanding arts learning opportunities for children and teens.
- Summer and expanded learning time: Giving children more hours to devote to learning.

Wallace's work in after-school programming

Typically in the world of after-school programming, the many varied programs for youngsters and the government agencies and private organizations that fund them operate in isolation from one another. In 2003, Wallace began working in five cities to help coordinate the after-school workings of these institutions, in the hope this would lead to systems supporting better programs and increased access to them citywide. A 2010 RAND Corporation report that studied the initiative found the cities' efforts had provided "a proof of principle" that after-school systems hold promise. Wallace today is funding after-school system efforts in nine additional cities, and in a separate Chicago initiative, Wallace is trying to help after-school providers and funders overcome a little-recognized barrier to offering more and better services – weak financial management.

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Design by José Moreno

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Edge Research conducted market research that helped guide the topic selection and format of these tip sheets.