

Baltimore County After-School Opportunities Program

FY2005 Report

Prepared for the
Baltimore County Local Management Board

by

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Summary

Background

The Baltimore County Local Management Board (LMB) supported six after-school opportunities during FY2005. The YMCA of Central Maryland provided three programs for middle school youth at Loch Raven Academy, Southwest Academy, and Stemmers Run Middle Schools. The Department of Recreation and Parks provided two programs for special education youth at Battle Monument and Ridge Ruxton Schools. The Baltimore County Public Library provided a program for high school youth at the Woodlawn Public Library. The six sites had a combined capacity of 200 youth and involved 294 at some point between September 2004 through May 2005. The library program, with a capacity of 40 youth, enrolled only 29 youth during the fall, had an average attendance of only 14 youth, and was closed in early January.

The programs had different environments in terms of staff continuity and youth characteristics:

1. Loch Raven had a site director and many staff returning from last year; its youth were 29% male, 95% African American, and 22% of these attended last year;
2. Southwest Academy had two site directors during the year, neither with experience from previous years; its youth were 50% male, 96% African American, and 22% had attended the previous year;
3. Stemmers Run had three site directors during the year; its youth were 27% male, 24% African American, and 24% had attended the previous year;
4. Battle Monument had a site director and many staff returning from last year; its youth ranged in age from 6 to 20 years, 55% were male, 23% African American, and 59% attended last year;
5. Ridge Ruxton had a site director and many staff returning from last year; its youth ranged in age from 8 to 20 years, 48% were male, 8% African American, and 76% attended last year;
6. Woodlawn Library had a new site director who did not meet expectations; its youth were 38% male, 93% African American, and 48% attended last year.

Attendance

The YMCA and library programs had a capacity of 40 youth each and the Recreation and Parks programs had a capacity of 20 youth each. The LMB had an attendance target of 75% capacity in the proposal it submitted for funding, although it placed an attendance target of 80% capacity on each of the contracting organizations:

- The YMCA programs had an average attendance of 76% capacity, meeting the target the LMB had given to the state but not its contractual target;
- The Recreation and Parks programs had an average attendance of 90% capacity, meeting both targets;
- The library had an average attendance of 34% capacity during the fall, substantially below either target and contributing to its closure.

The after-school programs provided youth with opportunities to spend time in adult-supervised

activities. The programs had different amounts of success in reaching their supervision targets, affected both by attendance and the number of program days:

- The YMCA programs supervised 25,923 youth hours, 97% of the targeted 26,784 hours;
- The Recreation and Parks programs supervised 12,231 hours of youth time, 110% of the targeted 11,126 hours;
- The Baltimore County Public Library program supervised 1,779 hours of youth time, 12% of the targeted 15,264 hours.

Outcomes

YMCA of Central Maryland

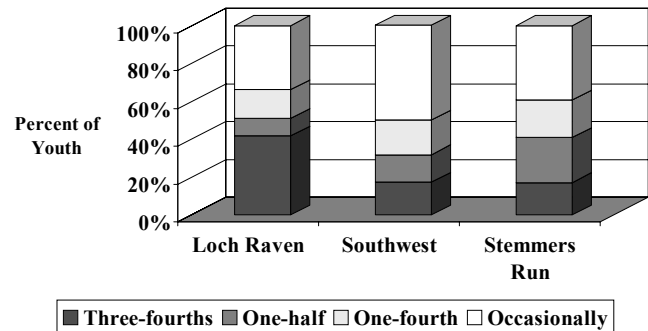
Many youth did not participate in the program the full year.

- Loch Raven enrolled 64 youth during the year, and 42% attended three-fourths or more of the program days
- Southwest Academy enrolled 79 youth, and 17% attended three-fourths or more of the time
- Stemmers Run enrolled 71 youth and 17% attended three-fourths or more of the time.

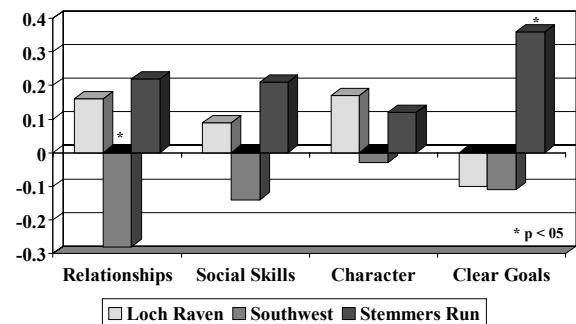
The after-school programs affected boys and girls differently, and different sites had different affects on developmental assets:

- YMCA youth increased slightly in all four assets, but significantly increased only on a single indicator of setting goals for themselves
- Boys reported greater social skills than girls on the pre-program survey, but dropped to the same level as girls on the post-program survey
- Boys reported the same level of character as girls at the beginning of the program, but decreased in this asset while girls increased
- Loch Raven youth increased some in three assets; Southwest youth declined in all four assets and Stemmers Run youth increased in all four assets
- The YMCA program director felt the programs were strongest in developing social skills.

FY2005 YMCA Attendance



Asset Change in YMCA Youth

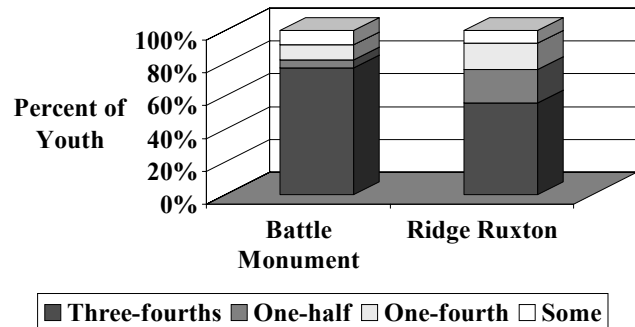


Recreation and Parks

The youth and their families liked the after-school program, although the impact of the program was not measured quantitatively.

- 77% of the youth at Battle Monument and 56% at Ridge Ruxton attended more than three-fourths of the possible program days
- Those with less frequent attendance were generally scheduled for only a few days a week to allow others to attend the remaining days
- Staff saw youth developing in all areas, but especially in social skills to bridge across age and ability levels
- Cooperation and involvement of parents were excellent
- One parent requested an interview with the evaluator so she could tell how the program benefitted her son.

FY2005 Recreation and Parks Attendance



Recommendations

1. Build in as much organizational and personnel continuity as possible to minimize start-up time and changes in mid-program.
2. Promote the next year's program when possible at the end of the school year to encourage youth to return the next year, and enroll more than capacity as soon in September as possible to maximize the number that will be in the program the whole year.
3. Continue a pre- and post-program survey so pre-program survey findings can help staff tailor the program to meet different needs of different youth and post-program differences can help assess the impact of the program.
4. Use multiple ways and perspectives to measure program outcomes: stakeholders may define success differently, desired outcomes may not be seen immediately, and it is difficult to measure what would have happened without the program.
5. Plan program monitoring with buy-in from stakeholders, make monitoring as least intrusive as possible, and provide positive feedback to reinforce strengths while recommending program improvement.