

Greenville County

After School Strategic Plan

2008-2013



Purpose



The purpose of the After School Strategic Plan is to organize support services for children and youth in out-of-school hours into a county-wide effort that assists them in attaining high school graduation.

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Introduction



COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

With almost 70,000 students spread across 800 square miles of both urban and rural terrain, Greenville County's rapidly growing school system will soon be one of the 50 largest in the country. While four out of five students in the county now graduate within four years, the *Greenville County Community Action Plan* sets a goal to have 85% of students graduating within four years by 2010. To accomplish this, many support systems have been identified—including after school*¹ enrichment programs. We know that students who participate in after school programs have higher school attendance rates and receive the additional time and support necessary for academic success. However, there is a lack of cohesion among after school programs in Greenville and many gaps in services exist. Coordinating these programs and identifying opportunities to create new ones that meet community needs will provide Greenville students with the resources to excel and enter high school well-prepared and on-target to graduate.

The work of the After School Strategic Plan Steering Committee was sparked by a group of United Way volunteers who saw the efforts of many local after school programs and identified the expansion of quality programs as an integral component of preparing students for academic success and high school readiness. As such, the plan compliments each of United Way's Helping Youth Succeed goals:

1. School Achievement and Graduation

2. Life Skills and Character Development

3. Juvenile Crime Prevention

Through the process of coordinating efforts, we will provide concrete evidence of the initiative's effectiveness, particularly to support children and youth in the pursuit of high school readiness and success. Greenville's after school programs systematically address the needs of all children, significantly impacting positive indicators of school engagement (e.g., attendance, grades) and graduation rates, while reducing non-school-hour anti-social behavior within the next five years.

Building on the work of *Graduate Greenville* and the major initiatives of the School District of Greenville County (Greenville County Schools) to support the success of all students, the Greenville after school initiative provides access to and support for high quality after school services for all our children and youth. Although the ultimate goal of this project is students' academic success, it is important to acknowledge that many other skills will be developed through after school enrichment activities.

*¹ For the purposes of this paper, after school refers to programs that take place during the hours when children and youth are out of school. This can include morning, afternoon, weekends, and summer. There is a wide variety of activities that take place in after school programs including academic support, athletics, recreation, arts and crafts, and youth and character development.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL OUTCOMES

This document highlights three community-level outcomes that stress the importance of creating a cohesive community structure for after school programs in Greenville. These outcomes address the academic and character development needs of students, particularly at-risk middle school students, which will lead to increased graduation rates and future success.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL OUTCOME #1:

Increase student academic success at each grade level.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL OUTCOME #2:

At-risk youth enter 9th grade prepared to graduate from high school in four years.

LONG-TERM OUTCOME:

All youth graduate from high school in four years.

On one level, the reason for this focus is simple and practical. Data show that students who drop out are significantly more likely to end up unemployed, living in poverty, or going to jail than peers who graduate. On a deeper level, our schools reflect the values of the community. In addressing the drop-out problem, the community has:

- Studied efforts in other communities to decrease drop-out rates
- Expanded summer enrichment programs
- Developed mentoring programs targeting at-risk students
- Launched a campaign to knock on the doors of at-risk students who missed the first week of school to invite them to return.

As the community has delved deeply into these initiatives, its leaders increasingly realize that high school students who are at risk of dropping out are generally more difficult to reach and re-direct than their younger peers. Given this reality, the community has decided to expand efforts to reach at-risk students at younger ages. To do this, the steering committee has identified coordinating programs and offering after school support services for Greenville students, especially for at-risk middle school students, as effective strategies.

National studies show that students who attend or have previously attended after school programs are far more likely to be reading on grade level and achieving at high levels in mathematics while they also are significantly less likely to start down paths toward dropping out. They are less likely to become involved with crime, less likely to become pregnant, and less likely to be inactive and overweight.

Middle school students need different kinds of supports than do elementary school students because they are at an in-between stage—no longer young children, but not yet young adults. They need a balance between strong guidance and freedom in their out-of-school hours. They are ready to direct some of their own activities but need limits as well. They can be a tougher audience, in many ways, than their younger or older peers, choosing simply not to participate if they don't find what's being offered engaging.

The Greenville effort is informed by what has already worked well in other communities, especially programs with a particular focus on engaging students who are falling behind academically or showing signs of being at risk of dropping out. In the spring of 2008, the steering committee visited Charlotte, North Carolina, to learn more about that community's after school initiative in general and their "Partners in Out-of-School Time" (POST) program in particular. Greenville observers saw the critical role that an independent, small non-profit organization can play in coordinating the activities of all agencies.

In Greenville, there are more than 90 community-based organizations and 30 elementary schools providing after school services for young people. These programs generally are quite successful, helping the community's children:

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- **Be safe with adult supervision**

 - **Stay healthy with access to medical services**

 - **Remain on grade level with special tutoring and homework support.**

With over 100 mostly new and renovated schools in the Greenville community, there is a great opportunity to explore investments in year-round programs. After all, public schools are community resources and learning takes place throughout the year both in and out of school hours.

It is time to take the lessons that have been learned providing academic, athletic, artistic, and other kinds of opportunities for some of our children in after school programs and ensure that all children and youth in Greenville have access to quality after school activities.

ACTION AREAS OF THE GREENVILLE AFTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

In studying successful community-wide after school initiatives around the country, we see that in order for efforts to succeed, the entire community must coordinate their work and collaborate to provide key program elements (e.g., transportation for children and youth, professional development for service providers, reliable information for the community). The work must be structured to respond to the needs of every child and youth; to support the ongoing development of a strong community network capable of coordinating the delivery of sustainable, high quality services; and to sustain the overall community buy-in of the initiative.

Greenville currently provides a wide range of after school services for our youth, but these services are not connected or coordinated with one another. To provide the highest quality comprehensive services requires a coordinated county-wide approach.

Following a detailed review of conditions in Greenville, this document outlines three critical action areas to be addressed for Greenville to meet its commitment to develop a model county-wide after school initiative. These **Action Areas** are:

- 1. Capacity:** As the principal coordinating body of after school programs and resources in Greenville, a Network will be created to *build capacity* through *connections* and *advocacy*. Ultimately, the Network will serve to engage program leaders and staff, local organizations, city leaders, families, and the larger Greenville community to ensure broad access to quality after school programs for all Greenville children and youth.
 - a. Access:** By evaluating a *typology of local after school programs*, *mapping* their geographical locations and *coordinating transportation systems and infrastructure*, Greenville will be prepared to provide universal after school opportunities for its children and youth in a manner that responds to community need, especially for the most high-risk students. When implemented, this plan will ensure that children and youth have access to relevant, diverse programs when and where they need them.
 - b. School/After School Relationships:** As we know, one element of high quality after school programs that leads to student success is *building relationships* and *sharing resources* between school leadership and after school staff. When these are aligned, students are better supported during their out-of-school time and accomplish higher results in academic achievement.
 - c. Funding:** Few programs can realistically provide quality, sustainable programming without securing multiple and diverse funding sources, but too often it is difficult to identify these funds. In light of this, the Network will be charged with building a *funding map* of existing and potential revenue resources and creating a *funding database* for programs throughout Greenville. Ultimately, this process will assist in developing strategies to tap into the federal, state, and local resources available to support children and youth during the out-of-school hours.
- 2. Quality:** To determine what quality after school programs look like in Greenville, a *quality assessment tool* and *quality ratings system* will be distributed to programs and trainings will occur to introduce program staff to the best practices contained within the tool. In time, it is the hope of the committee that all programs in Greenville County will use the quality tool to communicate evidence of their impact and seek opportunities for continuous improvement.
 - a. Professional Development:** In concert with the Network, *credentials* for after school staff will be established and information about professional development will be shared through a *clearinghouse of opportunities*. In doing so, Greenville after school staff and stakeholders will have a better understanding of the professional career ladder within local after school programs, along with information about continuing education and leadership development opportunities.

A TWO-STAGE APPROACH

This strategic planning document offers a multi-year, two-stage approach to realizing the goal of having every Greenville parent and community elder know that all of Greenville's children are in good hands at all times.

The plan outlines the work to be done in each of the two Action Areas into two phases. Generally each of the key Action Areas requires:

- Information gathering
- The creation of new products or processes to support program implementation
- The initial implementation to make sure the products or processes are effective
- A larger implementation to take the program to scale
- Data gathering to assess the impact of the product or process and areas for quality improvement
- Communication of the results to the general public.

Stage One (2008-2010)

Develop a data-driven approach that supports rational decision-making and protects against redundancy and inefficiency within and across existing programs throughout Greenville County. Focus on information gathering and creating the infrastructure to respond to the need for after school services for all students, with a special focus on the high school readiness pipeline.

Create a separate non-profit organization, the Greenville After School Network (name to be determined), to launch and coordinate the community's after school initiative and to sustain momentum for the overall initiative. The Network completes the tasks outlined under the key Action Areas.

As Greenville completes planning in stage one, the community launches high impact pilot programs.

Stage Two (2010-2013)

Increase implementation of new programs. Begin preparation to move to scale, particularly with middle-school-aged high-need populations in school-based and community-based programs.

Provide quality, sustainable, universal coverage of after school programming to the children and youth of Greenville by the end of 2013. The community launches a sufficient number of new after school programs, or expands existing programs, so that every school child in the Greenville community has the supports that he or she needs in the out-of-school hours before the end of 2013.

Action Area 1:

CAPACITY

Establishing a Greenville After School Network

CONTEXT

To sustain a formal county-wide network, the community supports the launch of a new small non-profit organization, the Greenville After School Network, to be determined. The Network is not meant to become a large organization. Rather, it will coordinate the work of these larger organizations, school groups, after school programs, churches, and other groups interested in after school issues.

The expectation is that the Network:

- Researches and maintains data on community services and resources
- Determines gaps in current community services and resources
- Develops plans to address these gaps
- Monitors their implementation
- Communicates details and progress to the community.

For this work to happen effectively, the Network supports and expands the existing community network with regular meetings and strong communications (sending e-mail, developing a Web site, convening regular meetings).

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

The Network maintains and monitors key systems developed in stage one of the initiative, communicates regularly with the community about the impact of the work, and develops the needed campaigns to support public relations and fund raising goals.

In stage two, the Network maintains its functions but also considers many initiatives that can secure the long-term viability of after school programming in Greenville, such as the launch of a major fundraising campaign.

STRATEGY: BUILD CAPACITY

Stage One Tasks

- **Develop a steering committee to guide in decision making and planning**
- **Open an office in United Way of Greenville County's Child Care Resource and Referral office**
- **Consider three models for after school networks in use by other communities to coordinate after school initiatives**
- **Develop a job description for the organization's first executive director**
- **Assign co-chairs to the three strategies—build capacity, connections, and advocacy**
- **Identify community leaders to provide mentoring support to this new executive director**
- **Determine a name for the network, as well as branding and a logo**
- **Hire the first executive director.**

Stage Two Tasks

- Establish a permanent steering committee of Greenville partners and have a rotating membership
- Establish a subcommittee structure that addresses each of the action areas identified in the plan
- Set a community wide timeline for increased access to after school programs
- Serve as a clearinghouse of professional development and financing opportunities
- Provide technical assistance to program staff in the areas of quality, professional development, school relationships and financing
- Connect with other state and community networks to share ideas and build best practices
- Build relationships with local and national organizations that research and finance out-of-school systems (e.g., Wallace Foundation).

STRATEGY: CONNECTIONS

Stage One Tasks

- Launch a Web site that describes the mission, goals, partners, and activities of the Network
- Start bi-weekly list-serv communication including key developments, resources, and events
- Institute meetings of after school staff and stakeholders to discuss issues and share ideas
- Plan for two to three forums per year that offer speakers and serve as professional development opportunities as well as a space for after school staff and stakeholders to connect and update one another on their progress.

Stage Two Tasks

- Solicit feedback from programs and community stakeholders to improve Network connections and ensure they are receiving the most useful information
- Maintain and improve the Web site, list-serv, and in-person meetings.

STRATEGY: ADVOCACY

Stage One Tasks

- Establish a network of community stakeholders that will advocate for resources and policy for after school programs in Greenville
- Train and inform community stakeholders on the opportunities that after school programs offer
- Plan for community activities that celebrate and raise awareness of after school (e.g., “Lights on Afterschool” event).

Stage Two Tasks

- Build relationships with municipal, county, and state leadership to raise the platform for after school in Greenville
- Attend and present at local, state, and national events that raise the visibility of after school in Greenville
- Plan and launch a major fundraising campaign to create a Greenville After School Reserve Fund to protect the program’s integrity in hard economic times.

Action Area 1a:

ACCESS

Increasing Access to Diverse Programs Across Greenville

CONTEXT

Basing decisions on the best possible data is an important operational principle underlying this strategic plan. At present, the county does not have comprehensive data on how many of its children and youth have access to after school programs, how many need access to such programs, or the types of services being provided in each region of the county. With a relatively small investment of resources, reasonable and reliable estimates and assessments can inform decision-making.

In time, the Network will line up new potential service providers to fill critical gaps in community services, especially focused on middle school students. Some of the largest after school providers and networks for middle school students in other communities include 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs), Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, YWCAs, Communities In Schools (CIS), parks and recreation departments, schools, churches and community centers, and private providers. Members of the Greenville team that visited Charlotte, North Carolina, were particularly impressed with Citizen Schools program. There may also be successful programs running in some areas of Greenville that can be expanded to meet a diversity of community needs.

In order to get children and families to services that best meet their needs, transportation options must be assessed and coordinated. To supplement school-based bus services, alternative options should be considered, such as contracting with churches that have considerable capacity to carry children. State and local funds should also be explored and data should be collected and presented in a compelling fashion so as to advocate for financing in this area.

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

In stage one, the Network will develop a typology of community programming and a dynamic map of services, explore existing transportation options, and evaluate what can be expanded versus what additional resources should be explored.

In stage two, much more of the work is focused on lining up existing and new service providers both to meet the most critical areas of need and to prepare newer programs to go to scale.

STRATEGY: TYPOLOGY OF LOCAL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Stage One Tasks

- **Coordinate closely with the City of Greenville and their efforts in youth engagement to avoid redundancy, waste, and confusion**
- **Document the types of existing services for students**
- **Assess the quality of existing community resources**
- **Assess whether the community has the right balance of academic, athletic, and artistic offerings, balancing what students want with what schools and the community believe they need**

- **Collect data specifically to support expanded middle school services**
 - Track the number of middle school students at risk of school failure through low grades, attendance, behavior issues, and teacher reports
 - Determine best estimates for the degree of unmet needs for after school services among middle school students by location, risk factors, and extent of services needed. The community will need to know not only the number of students with unmet needs, but also where these gaps are concentrated and how many hours of services a week the children with unmet needs may require.
 - Explore and understand the needs and interests of the county's most at-risk middle school students
 - Understand the needs of any notable sub-groups (e.g., students with special needs)
 - Provide baseline data about how these middle school students are spending their out-of-school time.
- **Conduct surveys to assess the level of community need**
- **Target one or two middle schools to establish after school programs based on the data and feedback**
- **Pilot a collaboration of enrichment partnerships, such as arts, character development, financial literacy, health and wellness, and technology programs in elementary and middle school programs that feed high schools starting with Berea High and Greenville High.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Run effective pilot programs (e.g., Citizen Schools) in school-based or community-based settings in areas with a high need for services to support children at most identifiable risk of dropping out**
- **Evaluate enrichment partnerships and take them to scale to ensure that all programs have multi-faceted learning opportunities**
- **Develop a list of 25 students per school who are most at need of special support services, learning from how high schools created similar lists to support their *Graduate Greenville* initiative. Track these students to determine program success and lessons learned.**
- **Expand or develop programs to provide comprehensive offerings of a variety of programs.**

STRATEGY: MAPPING

Stage One Tasks

- **Document the location of existing services for students**
- **Understand obstacles to youth participating in existing programs (e.g., transportation)**
- **Develop a dynamic map tracking supply and demand for after school services in Greenville that takes into account regional demand in the county, demand of services for special needs children, hours of services during which students need after school services, and many other pertinent variables.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Develop a plan to provide services for all Greenville middle school students**
- **Maintain a dynamic map that tracks supply and demand for after school services in Greenville**
- **Expand the number of programs with a firm plan to service all Greenville students needing after school programs by the end of 2013.**

STRATEGY: COORDINATING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Stage One Tasks

- **Launch a transportation sub-committee with representatives from Greenville County Schools, the Greenville Transportation Authority (GTA), and representatives from large local churches**
- **Choose initial sites for expansion to minimize transportation issues**
- **Work with the county to determine how much of the school system's existing transportation system can be used to support after school programs, looking in particular for areas where the school system's buses are operating below full capacity**
- **Create a map of potential transportation resources, e.g., church buses.**
- **Create a pool of funding that can be used by churches or other transportation options to defray the costs of additional liability insurance and fuel/maintenance expenses necessary to transport school children to after school programs**
- **Engage the community's automotive repair industry in a voluntary program to certify the safety of non-school vehicles to be used in transporting after school children**
- **Explore and create a database of the costs of a variety of transportation options.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Facilitate conversations between the after school community and organizations with potential transportation options**
- **Draft memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for collaboration between after school programs and transportation options**
- **Have an after school representative serve either on the board or as a liaison to the GTA with a stated mission of determining how existing bus service could be used to support after school programs and how slight adjustments in such scheduling also could support after school programming.**
- **Advocate for increased city and school district funding for increasing after school transportation options.**

Action Area 1b:

SCHOOL/AFTER SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Increased Communication and Interaction Between School and After School Programs

CONTEXT

In surveying community stakeholders, many Greenville leaders expressed their concern about how school and after school providers can work together. After school providers need to understand why school district officials across the country—not only in Greenville—often are concerned about the ways in which after school programs can decrease focus and drain resources from a district’s immediate teaching and learning goals.

However, the benefits of a close alignment between schools and after school programs has so much potential benefit for children and youth, especially those at-risk, that school districts need to be encouraged to invest in defining respective roles and responsibilities with after school programs. Ideally, school and after school programs can share data, resources, and relationships with families and students.

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

While stage one is focused on building the relationships and establishing processes and procedures, stage two concentrates on sustaining these relationships and establishing data systems that continue to support the evidence, opportunities, and lessons learned over time.

STRATEGY: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Stage One Tasks

- **Identify a committee to create strategies with recommended communications protocols (i.e., meetings, e-mail, newsletters) for after school staff and school leadership**
- **Encourage after school programs to implement recommended communications protocols with weekly or bi-weekly check-ins with school officials to avoid problems**
- **Encourage after school programs to include school principals in their hiring process**
- **Encourage after school programs to establish an orientation process for new employees that includes familiarizing them with the school routine and introducing them to key school officials**
- **Host a dinner for after school program providers and principals, perhaps by region of the county, to help with relationship building**
- **Identify methods for after school staff to get parental consent so staff can get briefings on the strengths and needs of individual students**
- **Implement workshops, e.g., “Aligning the Learning Day” (NAESP), to introduce school leadership and after school staff to each field and to encourage collaboration.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Develop protocols and processes for after school providers to ask questions of the schools in ways that maximize the amount of information communicated while minimizing the work required of the schools**
- **Create a best practices document with lessons learned to share with after school staff and school leadership**
- **Compile data on student success and the link between school and after school programs to present a compelling case for increased collaboration**
- **Compile and share venues and professional development opportunities for school leadership and after school staff to attend together**
- **Develop professional development opportunities based on feedback from principals and after school staff**
- **Host workshops at schools to engage parents in the choices they have for their children in after school settings.**

STRATEGY: SHARING RESOURCES

Stage One Tasks

- **Support the development of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between principals and after school providers at all locations where an after school program is hosted on a school site or within specific geographic boundaries**
- **Encourage schools and after school programs to develop strategies and share data**
- **Identify the types of resources that schools and after school programs can and should share.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Facilitate the development of a common software system that allows schools and after school programs to track all the major school components in one program including parent and family interactions, attendance, and more (e.g., Odyssey Software)**
- **Advocate for increased funding to help support additional resources for both schools and after school programs.**

Action Area 1c:

FUNDING

Identifying Sustainable Funding Structures

CONTEXT

No single source exists to adequately fund the after school needs of communities. Program sustainability relies on the support of multiple and diverse funding streams that cover the breadth and depth of program costs. This requires a patchwork of funding from a wide range of sources. Fund-raising is a long-term proposition, a commitment that is often outside the reach of program capacity. And yet, a range of federal funding sources, typically administered by state agencies, as well as foundation and local dollars, are available to support after school programs. These programs include:

- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Title I
- Supplemental Education Services (SES)
- Food and Nutrition Funds.

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

As part of the plan proposed here, the Network develops the basics in stage one, understanding how current programs are funded, mapping funding streams, and then pursuing increased support for after school opportunities by fostering national, statewide, regional, and local partnerships, including outreach to the South Carolina After School Alliance and other programs.

In stage two, the planning moves into action through professional development, information dissemination, advocacy, and resource development.

STRATEGY: FUNDING MAP

Stage One Tasks

- **Develop a subcommittee that includes people with expertise with budgeting and after school programming, and people who are providing services within Greenville County**
- **Connect with the South Carolina After School Alliance to identify national and state funding sources**
- **Conduct an examination of existing resources, including “Follow the Money: A Tool for Mapping Public and Private Funds for After-School Initiatives” (The Finance Project)**
- **Examine where funds originate, where they are directed, and what services they support in Greenville at the present time**
- **Assess if current spending aligns with community priorities**
- **Identify sources of additional revenue.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Provide technical assistance and professional development on financing for after school program staff and stakeholders**
- **Share the outcomes of the funding map on the Greenville After School Network Web site and list-serve and connect these to resources that provide further information**
- **Advocate for increased funding for after school programs in Greenville.**

STRATEGY: FUNDING DATABASE

Stage One Tasks

- **Develop a comprehensive listing of foundation, business/corporate, federal government, state government, and county funding opportunities**
- **Create a database that includes the funding priorities of each institution**
- **Align funding priorities with various initiatives in Greenville to determine the best approach for funding requests.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Build relationships with funding institutions to promote increased partnerships and funding requests over time**
- **Submit requests for proposals (RFPs) for funding to a variety of sources**
- **Hire a development director.**

Action Area 2:

QUALITY

Developing and Maintaining Quality Criteria

CONTEXT

It is now widely accepted that after school programming should not simply be more academic learning but rather something that engages children and youth in different ways and that takes advantage of the more informal setting of most programs. The beauty of after school programs is that they generally have more freedom to respond to what is known about the learning needs of today's young people: the need to utilize all five senses and to touch, feel, and manipulate tangible things in exploratory, practical ways.

But without a commonly used standard or benchmark, how can Greenville families, funders, and the community know if a program is providing quality service? To respond to these needs, a sub-committee of the Greenville After School Strategic Plan has designed a quality assessment tool specifically for Greenville that providers can use to assess their own programs.

The community is entitled to information about the overall impact of their after school investment. Programs should be encouraged and trained to use this shared tool and set of indicators that measure the impact of after school programs on student learning and development in a consistent way.

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

In stage one, the quality assessment tool and ratings system is developed, tested, and implemented on a small scale.

As the community-wide system develops in stage two, the Network formalizes its technical assistance and professional development around the quality assessment tool and ratings system and encourages programs to use the tool to create individual action plans. The quality ratings system is used to ensure that all students attend quality after school programs and are on track to enter high school well-prepared for success.

STRATEGY: QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Stage One Tasks

- **Identify a sub-committee to design a quality assessment tool that meets the needs of the Greenville after school community**
- **Study various assessment tools, including NAA, SACERS, and other state and community-based resources**
- **Write and design a quality assessment tool that includes best practices and quality indicators**
- **Pilot test the quality assessment tool**
- **Share the quality assessment tool with local programs for self evaluation**
- **Implement the quality assessment tool for United Way of Greenville County funded programs.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Provide technical assistance on the quality assessment tool**
- **Continue to refine the quality assessment tool to meet the needs of the Greenville after school community**
- **Develop separate data standards for middle school and elementary school students**
- **Encourage all sites to use the Greenville After School Quality Assessment Tool to establish baseline data for the services they provide**
- **Encourage all sites to create a written plan outlining steps they plan to take to improve the quality of their programs**
- **Encourage all sites to develop a written plan for the professional development of employees that is aligned with needs identified by the assessment tool.**

STRATEGY: QUALITY RATINGS SYSTEM

Stage One Tasks

- **Design a quality rating system in conjunction with the quality assessment tool**
- **Implement the quality rating system at United Way of Greenville County funded sites to communicate their progress in improving their program's quality**
- **Use the quality assessment tool at all sites that offer services to middle school students, as these students are poised to enter high school.**

Stage Two Tasks

- **Provide technical assistance on the quality rating system**
- **Continue to refine the quality rating system to meet the needs of the Greenville after school community**
- **Encourage all programs to collect data to measure their impact on middle school students to ensure they are on track to enter high school well-prepared for academic and personal success. Data will include at least three if not more of the following indicators:**
 - Grades
 - Attendance
 - Suspension rates
 - Grade by grade promotion
 - Pass rates on High School Assessment Program (HSAP) exit exams
 - Number of strong relationships with adults reported by middle school students
- **Encourage all programs to conduct and publish the results of both formative self-assessment and summative assessments demonstrating impact on all students, with more resources concentrated on the middle-school initiative**
- **Offer certifications (e.g., colorful logos) that recognize high-quality programs.**

Action Area 2a:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Assessing and Creating Professional Development Opportunities

CONTEXT

While compassion for children is critically important to the success of all after school programs, caring alone is not enough. Designing and administering quality after school programs requires a substantial base of technical knowledge acquired through training and continual professional development of program staff. Administrators, instructors, coaches, advisors, and mentors must have specific knowledge in core competencies if they are to offer quality experiences. Training for after school employees often addresses:

- Safety
- Child and Adolescent Development
- Group Guidance
- Academic Support
- Cultural Competence.

State and local leaders can provide professional development supports, including education and training and ongoing technical assistance, often in partnership with a state or community college program. States can also provide financial incentives, such as scholarships or salary stipends, to providers who pursue further education or credentials in key subject areas. Like child development credentials commonly found across states, school-age credentials, which are focused on the unique skill set associated with the quality provision of school-age care, are now being developed in many places.

ACTION AREA STRATEGIES

The most important role in the first stage is to establish minimum acceptable credentials for after school workers and to make sure staff members are aware of what existing programs are already available, and creating, disseminating, and maintaining a clearinghouse of these opportunities. The South Carolina After School Alliance is a great resource to provide support to local organizations to publicize available state programs.

In stage two, the Network develops a plan, setting goals for highly qualified workers as defined by standards set by the Network and broader Greenville community. Professional development systems are strengthened through advocacy, partnerships, and increased funding.

STRATEGY: CREDENTIALS

Stage One Tasks

- Collaborate with the South Carolina After School Alliance to review state credentials and identify what should be adopted in Greenville
- Create a planning committee to develop a set of standards defining essential competencies for Greenville after school staff
- Develop a timeline and plan for assuring the community that after school programs have highly qualified staff as defined by the planning committee.

Stage Two Tasks

- Develop an assessment tool to measure what Greenville after school employees know and are able to do
- Provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities on credentialing for Greenville after school staff
- Celebrate the accomplishments of after school staff and programs that receive highly qualified credentials.

STRATEGY: CLEARINGHOUSE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Stage One Tasks

- Coordinate with the South Carolina After School Alliance to publicize state programs available to Greenville workers and to build a series of professional development offerings for Greenville workers
- Compile and maintain a list of various professional development opportunities
- Share information regarding professional development opportunities on the Greenville After School Network Web site and list-serv
- Partner with community colleges to discuss training options and to encourage enrollment in these programs.

Stage Two Tasks

- Assess the state's political situation to determine if it is worth joining with other after school groups around the state to lobby for additional professional development opportunities and resources
- Advocate locally for resources to support professional development
- Create a scholarship fund for after school professional development
- In conjunction with the school system, develop at least one and possibly more intensive academic rescue programs designed to focus intensely on the academic improvement of children who are more than a grade level behind entering third grade.

Conclusion



As communities across the United States are becoming increasingly concerned with high school graduation rates and creating systems to educate the whole child, Greenville is well-positioned to lead this movement and create a vision of community success that will do better for our students and be heralded as a model of best practice. With *Graduate Greenville*, we are well on our way to accomplishing this leadership. But we also recognize that students' opportunities for learning and academic support do not end when they leave the school building.

After school programs have numerous benefits that prepare children and youth for success in high school and beyond. Although many programs exist throughout Greenville County, there is no baseline for quality, and many programs are disconnected and unavailable to the students who need them most.

In order to connect programs, provide access to various types of programs in convenient locations, improve relationships between school leadership and after school programs, identify sustainable funding, define quality, and offer professional development, the Greenville After School Strategic Plan Steering Committee recommends the actions stated in this strategic plan. In so doing, we have the opportunity to affect thousands of children and youth to ensure they are well-equipped to achieve their goals and build a stronger community.

Appendix



I. Greenville After School Strategic Plan Outcomes Outline

Community-Level Outputs	Community-Level Outcomes	Community-Level Indicators	Measurement Tool
# of after school programs	Increase student academic success at each grade level	#/% of students promoted to next grade	Greenville County Schools records
# of slots available in after school programs	At-risk youth enter 9th grade prepared to graduate from high school in 4 years	#/% of middle-school-aged students promoted to next grade	Greenville County Schools records
# of students regularly attending after school programs	Long-Term Outcome: All youth graduate from high school in 4 years	#/% of students who graduate from high school in 4 years	
# of after school programs for middle-school-aged youth			
# of slots available in after school programs for middle-school-aged youth			
# of middle-school-aged youth regularly attending after school programs			

II. After School Steering Committee Members

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Jennifer Whittle, Co-Chair
Chair, High School Graduation Council, UWGC

Dr. Penny Rogers, Co-Chair
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Ms. Anne Barr
Program Coordinator, Greenville
County Museum of Art

Ms. Barbara Bass
Director, (Right Steps Diversion) The
Urban League of the Upstate

Ms. Nancy Callahan
Director (Recreation Division) Greenville
County Recreation District, GCRD

Mr. Bobby Caples
Executive Director, Youth Base

Mr. Ned Cochrane
VP (General Counsel) Mt. Vernon Mills

Ms. Jan Cox
Youth Program Coordinator,
Greenville Parks & Recreation

Mr. Karl Daniel
Owner, Empowerment Zone

Ms. Sheila Earley
Assistant Principal, Lakeview Middle School, GCS

Mr. Darrin Goss
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Principal, Lakeview Middle School, GCS

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Project Coordinator, Greenville Hospital System

Ms. Megan Hickerson
School Board Trustee, Area 24, GCS

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Ms. Adela Mendoza
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Ms. Olivia Morris
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Ms. Stephanie Price
Principal, Monaview Elementary School, GCS

Mr. Reimer Priester
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Mr. Matt Reeves
Director, Frazee Center

Ms. Katrina Robinson
Director, Bethlehem Christian Academy After School

Mr. David Russell
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Mr. Greg Scott
Principal, Woodmont Middle School, GCS

Ms. Jill Schneider
President, District 1 PTA

Ms. Susi Smith
Director, Communities in Schools of Greenville County

Ms Diane Smock
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Mr. Ralph Sweeney
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