

**The William T. Grant Foundation:
Contributions to the After-School Field
2003-2011**

**A report to the William T. Grant Foundation
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The author wishes to thank the many researchers, policymakers, advocates, practitioners, and funders whose candid and detailed comments were invaluable to this report.

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BACKGROUND

The William T. Grant Foundation has a long history of investing in research intended to productively influence policy and practice to improve the lives of young people. From 2003–2011, the Foundation aligned almost all of its grantmaking for program development, communications, and advocacy around improving the quality of after-school programs. Grants made during this period involved three strategies:

1. Produce useful research findings;
2. Build the capacity of researchers to do high-quality/relevant work and the capacity of practitioners and policymakers to recognize and use the same; and
3. Communicate and advocate to better connect research, policy, and practice.

In addition to \$20.9 million in grants spread across the three strategies, Foundation staff convened grantee meetings, wrote articles, and made presentations. Having contributed to and witnessed the notable progress in the after-school field in the past decade, the Foundation is now moving away from this singular focus on improving the quality of after-school programs for its program development, communications, and advocacy work. Instead, it will devote grants and staff time in those areas to understanding how to improve the connection between research and practice. It will continue to fund research and to make William T. Grant Scholars and Distinguished Fellows grants related to after-school.

A review of the Foundation’s grantmaking and staff work on the quality of after-school programs from 2003–2011 will help trustees and staff learn about the effects of their strategies during this time and inform the Foundation’s future work. While not a primary goal of the review, the Foundation may decide to share these lessons with other funders at a later time.

Guiding Questions

1. Did the Foundation’s grants, work with grantees, and allocation of staff time make a difference? Were grantees able to produce useful research findings and/or increase their capacities to do high-quality and relevant work? Did practitioners and policymakers recognize and use the research? Were grantees able to better connect research, policy, and practice? Was the research used to effectively communicate and advocate on behalf of the after-school field?
2. How do grantees and others who are influential in the after-school field see and evaluate the Foundation’s work?
3. What is the Foundation’s profile compared to other public and private funders who worked in after-school?

Review Methodology

Information was gathered from Foundation materials and interviews with grantees and non-grantees who are influential in the after-school field. A total of 31 interviews were conducted with researchers (8), regional and national foundation staff (4), national or regional practitioners (8), national or regional advocates (6), and national or state-level policymakers (5).¹ Interviews were also conducted with the Foundation's President, Dr. Bob Granger, and Nicole Yohalem, a consultant to the Foundation, who were the two most involved with the after-school strategy.

Interviews were conducted by phone between February and early April; one interviewee responded via email. Questions asked of participants were:

- How do you think the after-school field has evolved in the past decade? What were the policy and practice debates and issues 10 years ago? What are they now? (What has caused this shift if one has occurred?)
- What research studies or publications have been useful to after-school policy and practice in the last decade? Who are the key researchers? Who are the key intermediaries connecting research, practice, and policy? What research studies have been most useful to your organization? Can you give an example of how such studies inform your work?
- What are the main questions facing the after-school field at this time? What further questions should researchers address?
- In the past decade, foundations have been involved in funding research, advocacy, program development, and service delivery in the after-school field. Which foundations stand out as influential to you during this period? Are there specific initiatives, reports, or other work from foundations that has been/are particularly useful or effective for making change?
- What influence has the William T. Grant Foundation's after-school funding for research, synthesizing research, and/or advocacy had on the field? What is the Foundation's reputation in the after-school field? What messages do you associate with the Foundation's work in after-school, if any? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of the Foundation's work? What should the Foundation do more of? Less of? Was the Foundation a useful voice in the after-school field?

Nineteen of the interviewees or their organizations had received a grant from the Foundation over the last 10 years. Grant recipients were also asked about their experiences as an applicant and a grantee, the strengths and weaknesses of the Foundation as a funder, and how the Foundation compared to other funders. Grantees were also asked to describe how the Foundation contributed to their work and what it could do to better support grant recipients in the future.

THE AFTER-SCHOOL FIELD NOW AND THEN

¹ Appendix A lists the names and organizational affiliations of interviewees. Interviewees were told that their comments were confidential and therefore statements in the report are not attributed to individuals. In some places in the report, the type of person interviewed was mentioned to give context for the comment.

The William T. Grant Foundation defined the after-school field as programs for academic and other enrichment activities or services provided to school age youth ages 5–18 during the approximately three hours immediately after the school day.

Work in after-school was not organized as a field when the Foundation decided to make it its strategic focus. It is important to remember that enrichment and recreational programs for children and youth have been around for at least a hundred years before the “after-school” nomenclature was developed. Previously, these programs were not formally recognized as having much more purpose than providing a safe place for children, especially for working parents, or preventing youth from getting in trouble.

Generally, a field has a body of knowledge, funding, policy, and advocacy in support of the work, professional workforce, and standards of practice. The field contains both organizations that provide services or programs directly related to the target of the work. In this case, that includes school-age children and youth and organizations, often called intermediaries, which provide the infrastructure to support the delivery of services. These functions might fall into the categories of quality standards, financing, knowledge development, workforce development, policy, and advocacy.

As one interviewee said, after-school programming was a movement before it became a field. Commonly thought of as igniting the movement toward field “status” was the launch of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), a federal funding stream that specifically defined after-school programs as a combination of academic enrichment and recreation provided in the after-school hours at a school building. The most noticeable change according to a policymaker-turned-practitioner is how 21st CCLCs put schools at the center of the conversation whereas community-based organizations were previously more likely associated with after-school programming. Even with the 21st CCLCs funding for school-based programming, community organizations are key partners in delivering services.

A second defining moment came with the 2003 release of the first study of the effects of the 21st CCLCs programs conducted by Mathematica Policy Research.² The negative findings described in the report outraged program providers and advocates. Critics eschewed the findings because the study was seen as having tested for outcomes not within the capacity of the programs (despite the funding parameters to focus on academics). The study brought together diverse actors around defining the goals of after-school programs, their design and implementation, and the need for appropriate evaluations.

² U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st-Century Learning Centers Program, First Year Findings*, Washington, D.C., 2003

Some contend that the after-school field is contained in the larger field of out-of-school time (OST), which includes enrichment, recreation, and other programming after school, in evenings, on weekends, during school vacations, and in the summer. And still others argue that both after-school and OST fit within the larger youth development field, which has been defined as promoting positive youth development outcomes for adolescent development.³ Regardless of how the parameters for the after-school field are defined, its goals fit within a broader concept of child and adolescent development—work that promotes a range of positive developmental outcomes.

Interviewees agreed that “after-school” is now a field. Over the last 10 years, steady progress has moved the field away from just getting programs in place to defining quality, measuring outcomes, better coordination with the school-day and its academic focus, and increasing accountability. However, several people noted that the field still does not have the rigorous research and evaluation results that are convincing to policymakers. The results of studies to date seem lacking in one of two ways. First, the few studies completed on large-scale programs are not viewed as sufficiently rigorous. Second, the more rigorous studies are done on relatively small programs, making the results more difficult to generalize.

California is the best example of state-level commitment to after-school programs because of the state funding authorized with the passage of Proposition 49. Multiple efforts have created or strengthened local, regional, and state infrastructure to work on advocacy and quality.⁴ Strong city-based intermediaries exist in New York City; Providence, RI; Chicago; San Francisco; and several other cities along with visible municipal support (e.g., in Boston and Chicago).

The field continues to debate some of the same questions, albeit with a different frame. What is the focus of the time in a program? What is the purpose of the programs? What are the differences and similarities when comparing expanding the school-day, learning time, or enrichment opportunities?

Uncertainty still plagues the field in several ways. While “after-school” as a term is commonly understood, it has been difficult to weave an effective agenda for political support. Even with the improved programming and increased data, funding for after-school is still discretionary and is threatened every budget year.

The 21st CCLC funding hit \$1 billion, but is being targeted for change as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary School Education Act (ESEA). In the course of recommending additional funds—which looks unlikely—and determining

³ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, Eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

⁴ A more detailed analysis of California’s after-school initiatives will be provided in an upcoming report from Sam Piha.

requirements for its use, a fissure has emerged in the field. This split is characterized as a fight between those behind the status quo of school-based after-school programs and those who want to expand the use of the funds to support strategies that extend the school-day for more academic instruction. As one observer noted, the meta-analysis conducted by Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg⁵ is cited by both sides, but little other research is being utilized to make their respective cases.

About five years ago, thinking about the school day and what new school design looked like became more of a focus in education circles. The burgeoning emphasis on blended learning and expanded learning time as part of school reform efforts threatens to subsume the after-school field. One policymaker suggested that the lowest performing schools are recognizing the need to look for “anytime, anywhere learning” while encouraging self-directed learning in order to engage students. To be successful requires combining the best attributes from education and out-of-school time approaches. Five people suggested that the after-school field needed to stop making distinctions based on the time of year or time of day and instead focus on developing the whole child—whether in school, community, or family. Interviewees suggested that the term “after-school” is “past its prime.”

Providers are often still afraid of outcomes, evaluation, and accountability. As long as the field, local community leaders, and funders allow substandard programs to continue, then the policy/advocacy difficulty will continue because the advocates will not be able to confidently guarantee the achievement of important outcomes. That means that the need for evaluation—such as the recent William T. Grant Foundation-funded evaluation of Higher Achievement—is even greater.

A range of ideas was proffered for moving the after-school field forward:

- Coordinate funding across different programs and services;
- Improve alignment with school curricula and common core standards;⁶
- Work harder to get schools interested or incentivized to share school data and work cooperatively with community organizations.
- Develop better data systems to give after-school organizations and advocates useful and timely data for decision-making;
- Address access and equity issues across different age groups, cultural and ethnic groups, and diverse neighborhoods; and
- Address key workforce issues, such as low wages and part-time workers, lack of a career ladder or education/training pipeline; attracting qualified candidates and retaining them in the field; and ongoing training needs. A basic problem is the lack of solid information about the adults who work in the field.

⁵Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

⁶ The common core standards were developed by a coordinated effort between the National Governor’s Association and Council of Chief State School Officers to create standards for “a common understanding of what students are expected to learn.” www.corestandards.org

Finally, the field has not figured out how to go to scale with quality. As one practitioner opined, it is a loss for the kids and the community if quality is not the focus. Notable efforts around the scale issue exist in California; through local intermediaries such as The After-School Corporation (TASC) in New York and the Providence After School Alliance (PASA) in Providence, RI; and in larger youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America and Children's Aid Society.

FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTION TO THE AFTER-SCHOOL FIELD

Coming into the after-school field at a historical moment, the Foundation combined focus, persistence, credibility, and expertise to influence organizations and build and communicate knowledge. Both grantees and non-grantees alike attributed positive impact of the Foundation's grants to their organizations or to an individual's work as well as to the field in general. The Foundation clearly articulated its interests in building bridges and evolving its own infrastructure to support new strategies across research, practice, and policy advocacy.

William T. Grant Foundation-funded research has a long shelf life. Several interviewees suggested that current and new researchers will build off of this research and get better at studying programs made stronger by what was, or will be, learned from the earlier studies. While people could not necessarily identify the Foundation as the funder of specific research (unless it was their own), they consistently recognized it as the primary source of philanthropic funding for quality research in the field. Two researchers noted that while larger amounts of money are available through the National Institutes of Health or National Science Foundation, that funding was not easy to access for work in this arena.

The Foundation's astute recognition and promotion of a new standard for research opened the door for more researchers to enter the field. In addition, its research investments have "helped consolidate issues" or "highlighted gaps in knowledge." Three topics were mentioned as examples: what transpires in diverse after-school settings, how to improve program quality, and program participation. Equally important to many practitioners, advocates, and policymakers, the Durlak-Weissberg meta-analysis was evidence of how the Foundation could bring value to the field beyond funding for primary research.

Focus and Persistence: 10 Years and Counting

When the William T. Grant Foundation entered in 2003, the field had already gotten a huge boost from the 21st CCLC funding, which was then tempered by the results from the Mathematica study. The fact that the Foundation took on this underdeveloped field and stayed the course for nearly 10 years was mentioned by many respondents. With few exceptions, foundations are seen as rarely having such staying power.

The Foundation supported mixed-method research with scientific merit, which had previously been difficult to come by. Hard data produced from this mixed-method research gave added credibility to a field that typically had only limited or suspect data. The Foundation helped propel discussions about the importance of settings and making settings viable for study, and “recognized that kids exist in program and community contexts.” As one practitioner stated, the Foundation supported “systems building work and the value of youth development or healthy development” beyond academics. The Foundation also supported work that could link contributions from after-school participation to school outcomes.

One advocate considered the Foundation’s biggest contributions to be the increased knowledge about what it takes to improve quality, including more clarity about participation and dosage. Two interviewees made similar points about the Foundation’s interest in thinking differently about the outcomes anticipated from participation in after-school programs and how the quality of those programs influences their abilities to deliver on such outcomes. In addition, the Foundation is seen as the early funder for a few key researchers such as Reed Larson and Jacquie Eccles. These researchers influenced others to take up this area, both by their interesting studies and by mentoring younger researchers at their universities.

Credibility and Expertise: Setting a New Standard

The Foundation is credited with setting a new standard—three people referred to it as “the gold standard”—for evaluation and research studies in the field. The Foundation was willing to explore a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, and its commitment did not waver in the face of the methodological challenges facing the field. As one researcher put it, “Dr. Granger helped people understand how rigor can be achieved in a study designed without” the use of random assignment.

The Foundation staff are “tremendous thought partners” and “don’t let groups off easy about their chosen methodology.” One grant recipient said that he got top-notch advice from the Foundation staff about his proposed methodology and in return worked extra hard to hire the right kind of staff/expertise to meet the Foundation’s standards.

New researchers especially benefited from the Foundation’s flexibility. Seed grants and fellowship programs helped young faculty members or new scholars enter into the field, gave them credibility within universities, and helped them connect to more tenured researchers in different places. The Foundation also opened doors to scholars and young faculty of color. The Foundation’s willingness to consider research methods and topics not usually favored in more traditional university settings and to provide technical feedback at the beginning and throughout the process was invaluable to these new scholars.

Building Bridges and Relationships: The “Coolest Club Ever Made”

The Foundation recognized that research does not usually translate to practitioners' issues on the ground and therefore needed "bridging dialogue" to translate research results into practice and policy. Dr. Granger, more than other foundation presidents, used the power of the Foundation to bridge the sectors in the field and make knowledge more easily accessible to wider audiences by supporting synthesis such as the Durlak-Weissberg meta-analysis or the dissemination strategies of the Forum for Youth Investment (FYI), Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP), and the American Youth Policy Forum.

Dr. Granger was able to balance the field's striving for impact with what is realistic given the state of knowledge, research methodology, and the field. His openness to consider diverse points of view, including the wisdom of practitioners, showed in his ability to "speak the languages" of the research community and the practice community. Dr. Granger is credited with nurturing talent and learning across the field because of his ready accessibility.

Grantees lauded the well-rounded approach of Foundation staff. They made introductions between direct service organizations and respected researchers, effectively used email blasts and the website as sources of information, committed to public speaking opportunities, and were accessible to applicants and grantees in need of advice. All of these aspects made researchers and others in the field want to join the "coolest club ever made" because it recognized the interrelatedness of their labors.

It was apparent in the interviews that one strength of the Foundation was its drive to underwrite research-driven policy, not policy-driven research. This was seen as vital to the Foundation's reputation as an honest broker of information. To create and support bridges between research and policy and between advocacy and practice, the Foundation:

- Established professional networks to share knowledge, helped researchers learn to talk to different audiences, and promoted the value of work between research and practice. Grantee meetings were an effective strategy. Every grantee mentioned the value of these meetings both in terms of knowledge shared and relationships fostered with those from different areas of the field.
- Funded efforts to synthesize information in a way that enables more people to access the research findings. Several people also mentioned Dr. Granger's writings as an important contribution related to these efforts.
- Supported national and local intermediaries to build organizational capacity for better-informed advocacy and policy development. The Foundation was willing to take a risk that this kind of funding could strengthen the infrastructure in the field.
- Helped organizations do what they were trying to do instead of making them start a new project in order to receive funding. This also helped build organizational capacity. Two examples are funding for the Weikart Center to test its Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) tool in different settings and

the grant to the Partnership for Children and Youth in California to participate in national advocacy around the reauthorization of the ESEA.

LIMITATIONS OF THE FOUNDATION'S APPROACH

Asking people who benefit from a foundation's investments to critique those investments is always a risky task. But these interviews yielded several meaningful comments about where the William T. Grant Foundation was seemingly less effective.

First, the Foundation did not sufficiently use its credibility to inspire other funders to support more research and evaluation in the field. It is still seen as the only foundation with this interest, although the Spencer Foundation in Chicago was mentioned as having comparable interest in the education field. One commenter said that while the Foundation was very visible in the after-school field, it was less connected to funders in the field. And while it wasn't the Foundation's fault *per se*, other funders often used the William T. Grant Foundation's work as "an excuse not to take on a research agenda." The increasing interest of funders in research results could be better used as leverage toward more research dollars or funding partnerships to support research and evaluation. The evaluation of Higher Achievement is an example of such a partnership.

Second, some investments around communications and national advocacy were limited in their effectiveness from the point of view of some grantees and others in the field. For a national advocate such as the Afterschool Alliance and a few local advocates (e.g., the Partnership for Children and Youth in California) with a sole focus on after-school issues, the Foundation's investments had two benefits. First, grants helped increase the organizations' capacities to meet with policymakers and develop issue-specific materials. Second, the growing research base funded by the William T. Grant Foundation helped them make a more compelling case about the benefits of after-school programs to those policymakers.

In cases in which national child advocacy organizations with a more general focus tried to increase their use of after-school research and evaluation, interviewees found that the research results were not sufficiently rigorous. Compared to other arenas such as early childhood and juvenile justice, these groups could not get a foothold for the after-school field (or OST or youth development) with policymakers at the state or national level. A more impressive finding than "after-school helps kids be productive and safe" was truly needed. Head Start, Nurse Family Partnerships, and Boys and Girls Clubs evaluations were given as examples of the type of results that can influence these audiences.

Organizations with public officials as their main constituents also found that the research was not compelling and the results were not communicated by researchers or advocates appropriately for these audiences. Advice included ensuring that information is available on an as-needed basis ("whenever a policymaker called"), creating short documents that clearly spell out the knowledge base and the benefits to taking a specific action, and hiring experienced communications staff to work with

policymakers. This last point was made as a contrast to organizations that assume that any executive director can talk effectively to a policymaker or advocate. The American Youth Policy Forum was named by two people as an example of using research effectively for educating public policymakers (i.e., Congressional staffers) on youth development issues. The other positive reference was to the Afterschool Alliance—acknowledged as effectively representing the field’s issues in policy and funding dialogues.

Third, dissemination to local practitioners did not appear to be a major priority or the groups that the Foundation funded to reach this audience had limited success. As one person put it, “practitioners may be interested in the research results, but they are more interested in findings that evolve into tools, training, or program models that they can use in their programs.” Several people mentioned, in general, the tools found on the Forum for Youth Investment (the Forum) and Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) websites.

FOUNDATION INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND PRACTICE

What did people value for themselves and see as value for the field? Two overarching themes emerged: the value of increased and more reliable research knowledge and the value of “learning how to learn” about the after-school field through the use of mixed research methods.

The Durlak-Weissberg meta-analysis, Deborah Vandell’s studies, and Weikart Center’s YPQA were highly valued by more than a third of respondents. Karen Pittman and the Forum were recognized for creating usable tools, providing technical assistance to help make system changes, and making knowledge more accessible through its publications and website. HFRP, under the leadership of Heather Weiss, was noted for its research briefs on specific topics such as after-school programs for older youth or parental involvement. The work of Jacque Eccles, Reed Larson, and Deborah Vandell was cited as fundamental to making the case for the field. Larson’s work on settings and participation was especially useful for helping to define quality. The YPQA was acknowledged as key to improving quality at the local level, in part because it allowed local programs to control the process for improvement.

The Forum, Search Institute, YPQA tool, and the Durlak-Weissberg meta-analysis also contributed significantly to the growing use of common language when describing the field and its contributions, outcomes, and quality practices. Only one person mentioned the Afterschool Matters evaluation funded by the Foundation. No one named the recent evaluation report or findings from Higher Achievement as useful for their work, though it is one of the rare impact evaluations in the field.

Key Researchers and Research Organizations

Few people named a specific paper or research study. The majority referred generally to the body of work of key researchers or to intermediaries that synthesized or translated that work for other readers. Also, with a few exceptions, people acknowledged that they were not always sure if the William T. Grant Foundation funded the work they spoke about or not.

The table below lists the people or organizations⁷ named in the interviews and the description of the works' importance.

Researcher or Organization	Times Mentioned	Contribution
Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg*	12	Meta-analysis
Deborah Vandell *	11	Understanding of program features and metrics, measures for non-academic outcomes
Weikart Center* (Charles Smith)	11	YPQA tool and technical support for program improvement; helped field become more professional because it set standards for quality
Public/Private Ventures*	20 percent or less	Benefits of extended learning time
Policy Studies Associates*	"	TASC evaluation
Jacque Eccles*	"	Why kids become and stay involved; National Science report on community youth development
Reed Larson*	"	Qualitative work on what kids do in settings
Gil Noam	"	
Bart Hirsch*	"	
Child Trends	"	Effective syntheses of research findings
Richard Lerner	"	Defined the five C's of positive development
Abt Associates	"	Mass 20/20 evaluation
MDRC	"	Example of turning evaluation (Career Academies) into policy; rigorous studies influence federal departments
Chapin Hall Center for Children	"	Past studies
Robert Halpern*	"	Apprenticeship models and teen programs

⁷ *Received funding from the Foundation

Universities of Illinois, Wisconsin, California-Irvine	"	Best examples of university-based research
Wayne Osgood (Penn State)	"	Juvenile justice studies

A few people also mentioned research from other fields utilized in their work:

- Education (e.g., charter schools, Tony Bryk’s work on schools as organizations, Bank Street College)
- Research on the brain and meta-cognition (Carol Dweck at Stanford University) and from neuroscience and psychology about how kids learn
- Research from the community schools and Beacons initiatives as well as early-childhood education

Key National Intermediaries

Name of Organization	Times Mentioned	Contribution to the Field
Forum for Youth Investment*	11	Accessible documents, policy implications, technical assistance
Harvard Family Research Project*	11	Translators of research into usable forms via summaries on website; ability to connect different studies on particular topic
Afterschool Alliance*	9	National advocacy/federal policy
National Institute on Out of School Time*	6	Based on past work on professional development
United Way Worldwide	10 percent or fewer	Emphasis on youth impacts/changing local United Ways’ emphasis to youth outcomes
Search Institute	"	Common language
American Youth Policy Forum*	"	Profiles successful programs and shares research with policymakers
AIR/Learning Point*	"	Influencing federal policymakers
National Center for Time and Learning	"	Research on learning in schools; advocacy for federal and state policy to support extended day

Key Local Intermediaries

The organizations listed below were acknowledged for building provider capacity, addressing local policy and funding issues, strategies for quality implementation and evaluating local programs. The Foundation’s support helped build that capacity, and in the case of Chicago’s Afterschool Matters, helped fund an evaluation. These intermediaries are seen as examples of best local practices and willingly share the results of their work and their strategies with others through conference presentations, websites, and publications.

- TASC (NYC)*
- PASA (Providence, RI)*
- Afterschool Matters (Chicago)*
- L.A.'S BEST (Los Angeles) *

COMPARING THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION TO OTHER FUNDERS

The differences between the work of the William T. Grant Foundation and most other funders in the after-school field can be split into those of style and those of substance. The most common comparison was between funders such as William T. Grant Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott and Wallace Foundations, which have provided consistent funding over long periods of time. The more common style of foundations is to change funding priorities every three or four years. Another frequent comparison was made about Dr. Granger's willingness to speak to diverse audiences about the "realistic effects of after-school." The point was made that most foundation presidents, if they talked at all about the after-school field, did so in service to their own initiatives or funded programs.

The basic substance of the Foundation's investments was seen as focused on research and evaluation—even when the interviewee knew about the funding for policy, practice, and advocacy. People generally credited the Foundation with having a broad interest in the field. Other funders typically had (or have) a more specific programmatic focus, and while they may support evaluations of their own initiatives, they do not typically fund other research or evaluation. Many respondents seemed to think that most national funders and many of the more sophisticated regional funders want to influence practice and policy. The difference was that William T. Grant Foundation's starting point was its research agenda, while others primarily started with a policy or practice improvement agenda.

At the national level, the Charles Stewart Mott and the Wallace Foundations have each been funding the field for more than 15 years. The Mott Foundation was most often noted for its funding to establish statewide networks on after-school programs, a missing part of the policy/advocacy infrastructure to carry a collective message about after-school programs to local or state policymakers. Mott is also credited with using its position as a funder to influence national policy and its willingness to start or support national intermediaries such as the Afterschool Alliance and Foundations, Inc. to address gaps in the field. A few people mentioned Mott's willingness to support reports, including *New Day for Learning: A Report from the Time, Learning, and After-school Task Force* (2007), as a tool to expand thinking about policy within the field.

The Wallace Foundation was most often recognized for its work on building city systems for out-of-school time, which included after-school programs. It also funded one of the early after-school related evaluations—the evaluation of the Making the Most of Out of School Time (MOST) initiative carried out by Chapin Hall and the Erikson Institute in Chicago in the mid-1990s. One practitioner also mentioned the cost

calculator for programs developed with Wallace funding, while another pointed to Wallace's strong emphasis on data and quality.

Interviewees compared the William T. Grant Foundation's interests to several other philanthropic efforts.

- The Packard and Irvine Foundations in California, the Robert Bowne Foundation in New York City, and the Nellie Mae Foundation in Boston are examples of regional funders supporting direct service programs and evaluation studies related to their after-school interests.
- The Packard Foundation also funded advocates to build a case for state funding in California and has been a regular supporter of Vandell's research.
- The Met Life, Annie E. Casey, Packard, Noyce, Irvine, and McKnight Foundations were examples of funders that contributed to local efforts to try research-based practices and supported options for partnerships between schools and community-based organizations.
- The Noyce Foundation has steadily increased its support for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) in out-of-school time and has successfully forged partnerships with other funders to support this area of youth programming.
- Another example of a funder with a very specific focus is the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which invests in high-quality, large-scale programs (or taking programs to scale) with a focus on planning support, evaluation, and long-term organizational development.
- The Ford Foundation has a recently developed a focus on extended learning that is seen as having some potential to overlap with the after-school field. This might be even more likely now that Ford hired the former director of New York's statewide after-school network to be its new program officer.
- The Atlantic Philanthropies was cited by two interviewees as having started important efforts in the field only to leave it when a leadership change ended funding in this program area.
- One practitioner lamented that the Gates Foundation has not been swayed by the evolving research to support after-school. A different person noted that Gates is involved in some local efforts to build school-community partnerships as part of an education reform agenda.
- Finally, a couple of people mentioned Grantmakers for Education's Out-of-School Time Funder Network as a conveyor of research and evaluation information to other philanthropies. Whether the Network as a group has any appetite for supporting more and better research in the field is an unanswered question.

ADVICE FROM THE FIELD

Not surprisingly, interviews expressed concern about after-school programs getting "lost" in the process of changing the Foundation's focus. Dr. Granger is seen as the

Foundation's after-school voice, and a critical voice in the field, and his shift to other areas of interest is a threat. The worry is also that he will not be as available to speak on the issues or nurture applicants or grantees, and that there is no one else on staff who will be able to step into this role if needed.

One researcher asked if the Foundation has created a pipeline of researchers who are networked and mentored or are mentoring others to stay in the field. The implication is that this is an important outcome of the Foundation's work and efforts should continue to shape this, including making repeat grants to those who can preserve and grow these connections.

While some interviewees were concerned that the field's success not be dependent on contributing to the school-day/academic goals, others thought that there were opportunities to look at blended learning or extended time as ways to better support the range of developmental outcomes. It is crucial that new knowledge be coupled with effective implementation strategies if policy advocacy and improved practice are to occur.

Research Topics for Future Support

Interviewees provided a long list of ideas for new or expanded research or evaluations that might complement the Foundation's previous work. Continuing to look at a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods was stressed by several people. The research and practice communities should acknowledge that youth development affects children and youth over a very long time. New work should include room to do a few longitudinal studies and ensure that elements of quality are present before studying interventions.

The next frontier for research was described as building "complementary learning across the learning environments" and learning more about the combination of family, school, and community settings that contribute to the whole child.

- Evaluate extended learning time and summer initiatives to test designs. (The Wallace Foundation is already involved in some of this work.)
- Evaluate connection between non-academic outcomes and academic success and how/whether different types of programs (e.g., arts and sports) contribute.
- Wade into school reform to influence the redefinition of learning environments that incorporates what has been learned about after-school and youth development.
- Study different groups of youth related to participation and the quality of programs available (e.g., rural, minority, LGBT, and high school youth). Who is drawn to programs and who is not?
- How does technology help with flexibility and variety in learning?
- What is the impact of health/physical activity on learning?
- How do after-school programs build cultural competence?

- What are attributes of the choice of programs and voluntary nature of the settings?
- Look for connections between parents and family involvement with outcomes from program participation.
- Design different interventions across different places and track different ways of working to continue building knowledge about settings, including the voluntary nature of after-school program participation.
- What are effective strategies for improving program quality so that organizations can show impacts?
- What measures, other than test scores or other school achievement measures, can be used?
- Compare quality improvement instruments to determine effectiveness.
- More study is needed on the after-school workforce. What are best strategies for improving it? How can we learn from knowledge about teacher effectiveness? Who are the people in after-school, OST-, and ELT-related endeavors, and what skills are required to have the highest chance of impacting youth? It is critical to substantiate the importance of training to improve staff skills and better define the relationship between adult knowledge and skills to quality programming.
- Update the Chapin Hall study that looked at the availability of youth programs in communities with low and high wealth. Does the prevalence of remediation programs in low-income communities compared to enrichment programs in high-income communities still hold true? What are the implications for policymakers and funders?
- How does after-school and out-of-school time connect to the current dialogue on “collective impact?”
- Can the common core standards for grades K–12 and curricula being used to build social-emotional development be linked in order to promote a more effective overlap between school and after-school?

An interesting idea emerged in these discussions—namely, to develop a way to help organizations determine their readiness to participate in rigorous research/evaluation studies. It seems clear that some researchers may not be knowledgeable about helping nonprofits think through the necessary requirements (e.g., data) or assets, and the nonprofits are not able to make that assessment without a better understanding of what is required. Is there a way to create a checklist about these requirements and help researchers and practitioners use it?

Building Communications Strategies

Many interviewees were attentive to ideas for better communication in the field and across disciplines. Paying attention to strategies appropriate for specific audiences was a common concern. For policymakers and advocates, the question seems to be winnowing the research findings to the most simple and universal message. The most effective groups should be ready to pounce when opportunity arises. In other words,

when a legislator asks about a topic, the advocates should be ready with easily digestible information or will lose the opportunity. Advocates need credible information that “if you do X, you will get Y” for outcomes that they care about.

Who are the trusted sources for different sets of policymakers, and how can their capacities be increased? The National Governor’s Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, Council of Chief State School Officers, National League of Cities, MDRC, Urban Institute, and CLASP are a few potential targets for creating better strategies for getting information to policymakers. Funders that support effective policy communications are the Annie E. Casey Foundation (e.g., annual KidsCount reports), Casey Family Programs, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

In several interviews, the issue of getting information to the practitioner level was cited as an ongoing struggle. Those same people suggested that the Foundation might make better use of local intermediaries and/or larger youth-serving organizations to spread the word and tools coming out of the research. Another option is to build on the statewide networks funded by the Mott Foundation to support information-sharing at conferences or in newsletters or websites. A third partnership might be the National Collaboration for Youth or its member agencies, typically the largest youth-serving organizations in the country (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Communities in Schools, YMCAs).

Local or regional intermediaries, the United Way, and local foundations are vehicles for communicating results as well as practice tools for local practitioners. The concern remains that program sites are not developing programs on the basis of science but still rely on outdated program guides and/or incomplete personal experiences. Building practitioner capacity to use data in decision-making, design, implementation, and evaluation of impact should be a high priority. The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS) was suggested as a place where conversations among the more sophisticated intermediaries could be useful in developing strategies for working with local program operators. More tools such as the YPQA are needed if the translation of research to practice is going to be implemented locally.

Among the research community, the Foundation should persist in efforts to connect to the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and research networks such as the American Educational Research Association as a means to encourage communication among researchers. A common problem noted by both researchers and others was that few researchers learn how to write for or talk to audiences outside of the research community. Helping researchers gain those skills is useful, but there will still be a need for groups such as the Forum, HFRP, and NIOST to translate for their constituents.

One researcher pressed for increased sharing of knowledge not only within the field, but also across disciplines. Another suggested the creation of a “think tank” as a neutral communicator of what is known. The Pew Charitable Trusts’ and the Packard

Foundation's development of the National Institute for Early Childhood is an example of such a strategy.

For the funding community, the Foundation could share its experiences and weigh in on how other funders can support research or ways to better communicate knowledge. There is often a desire among grantees to see one funder "make" other funders support similar things. While some interviewees mentioned that the Foundation did not do enough to influence its colleagues, there is a limit to how much other funders would have taken on such a strong research focus. Suggestions included sharing the pertinent results of this review within the field and convening funders, including the larger education funders such as the Gates, Broad, and Spencer Foundations, to discuss areas of potential convergence. These conversations could help break the "artificial dividing line" between learning in school and learning after school.

The next area of advice focused on communications. Two people singled out an interesting gap in the field's communication strategy, that is, the lack of a highly visible spokesperson for the field or set of ambassadors who are influential with policymakers and are visibly supporting the after-school work. Arnold Schwarzenegger had played this role both before and during his governorship in California. Colin Powell's involvement with the development of America's Promise is another example of a high-profile champion.

For the Foundation, one person strongly recommended that it continue to build its reputation as a reliable source of knowledge. This may involve developing more in-house communications capacity at the Foundation or alternatively finding an effective partner organization to carry out this type of work. It also implies a responsibility to promote only those strategies or programs with a research base or evidence of effectiveness and push strategies for increasing programs effectiveness.

Keeping Dr. Granger Involved/Involving Others

Whether the Board anticipated this or not, the value Dr. Granger brought to the after-school arena has been priceless. He speaks and writes authoritatively about the field. He is trusted across the research-practitioner continuum. And he is a calming presence in "sticky-issue" debates. If the Foundation continues to focus on issues that blend research-policy-practice communications, then assuring Foundation staff have skills similar to those of Dr. Granger is paramount. The non-researchers expressed concerns that other staff will not be as flexible in their views or abilities. The researchers interviewed appreciated Dr. Granger's ability to understand their lives and work because he was "one of them" before coming to the Foundation.

Foundation Grantmaking Approach

Grantees generally found the Foundation had clear expectations about how to apply for grants. One specifically cited the online application as making the process much easier. Two people commented on how difficult it was to get through the grant review

process—one submitted a request three or four times before it was approved. But they also recognized that Foundation staff could be very instructive about what was needed to make a successful request. Two people, however, contradicted that sentiment. They stated that they never understood why a request was turned down, and that they did not receive enough detail about the prerequisites for getting through each stage of the review process.

One researcher noted that the RFP demanded clear thinking, had useful reference to help people learn, and guided smart thinkers to test their thinking about the next stages of work needed. Once in the “club,” everyone said that working with the Foundation was a positive experience. They reported strong learning relationships with staff and opportunities to meet productively with other grantees or researchers in the field. In fact, there was unanimous agreement that the meetings were a strong benefit of being a Foundation grantee. Praise was uniformly high for Nicole Yohalem’s leadership in designing and running these network meetings.

CONCLUSIONS

Change at a foundation is often experienced as a hardship by its constituents, especially when the type of funding seems unique in the philanthropic universe. Where will we go now to find such funding from those benefitting from foundation support? In the case of the William T. Grant Foundation, this cry comes from a broader audience that acknowledges the unique place the Foundation has held both through its grants and its approach to the after-school field. So it comes as no surprise that many people are interested in the transition plan at the Foundation, both for the focus of its work and for leadership and staff.

Additionally, respondents expressed a sense that the after-school field is too limited and is being or should be absorbed or integrated into the growing emphasis on how kids learn in multiple settings and times. This makes it even more important for the Foundation to clarify its future work so that it does not signal dissatisfaction with the after-school work or indicate that work in the field is complete.

The Foundation has two obligations. First, it should be as transparent as possible about the transition, its focus, and timing. This does not mean, however, that grantees, partners, or the field at large needs to know every single detail about the Foundation’s inner workings. Questions raised during the interviews suggest that there is incomplete or incorrect knowledge about the transition.

Second, it should consider ways to disseminate its learning from the years of work in after-school and suggest implications for the future for after-school and allied fields. This might include taking advantage of strategic opportunities to speak at meetings or conferences and convening certain groups to discuss areas of common interest.

Finally, the message (even taking into account that the interviewees likely started out with a bias in favor of the Foundation) is that the Foundation successfully influenced

after-school by increasing knowledge about the field through its emphasis on high-quality research and evaluation and by building bridges between key actors in the field (researchers, advocates, and practitioners). If the Foundation's future ventures take the experiences of the last 10 years to heart, the outlook for the next decade should be even more positive.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

(Listed alphabetically)

Dr. Dale Blyth	University of Minnesota
Dr. An-Me Chung	The MacArthur Foundation (formerly at Charles Stewart Mott Foundation)
Mr. Stephen Clermont	Every Child Matters
Ms. Jennifer Davis	National Center for Time and Learning
Ms. Nancy Devine	The Wallace Foundation
Dr. Joseph Durlak	Loyola University-Chicago
Ms. Lucy Friedman	The After School Corporation (TASC)
Mr. Michael Funk	California Department of Education, Afterschool Division
Ms. Jodi Grant	Afterschool Alliance
Ms. Jennifer Harris	Arkansas Department of Education (consultant)
Mr. Cliff Johnson	National League of Cities
Mr. Ted Lempert	Children NOW
Dr. Reed Larson	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Mr. Brian Lee	Council for a Strong America (formerly called Fight Crime: Invest in Kids)
Dr. Joseph Mahoney	University of California, Irvine
Ms. Jennifer Peck	Partnership for Children and Youth
Mr. Sam Piha	Temescal Associates
Ms. Jane Quinn	Children's Aid Society
Dr. Elizabeth Reisner	Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
Ms. Miriam Rollin	Council for a Strong America (formerly known as Fight Crime: Invest in Kids)
Ms. Dara Rose	The Wallace Foundation
Ms. Jody Rosentswieg	Raikes Foundation
Ms. Hillary Salmons	Providence After School Alliance (PASA)
Dr. Sandra Simpkins	Arizona State University
Mr. David Sinski	AfterSchool Matters
Dr. Charles Smith	Forum for Youth Investment/Weikart Center
Dr. Robert Stonehill	AIR/Learning Point Associates
Mr. Richard Tagle	Higher Achievement
Ms. Lorraine Thoreson	Michigan Department of Education
Mr. Jack Tweedie	National Conference of State Legislatures
Dr. Heather Weiss	Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP)