



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Connecting Afterschool Achievement and Afterschool Programming
January 30, 2003

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Speakers:

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KYLE: Hello. This is John Kyle at the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. Welcome to our 16th audioconference. This is January 30, 2003. Check out our website at <http://www.nlc.org/iyef>, and you will find a list of upcoming audioconferences.

We're pleased today to focus on the topic of connecting academic achievement and afterschool programming. How can schools and communities work to make sure that children are able to achieve positive outcomes from their academic programs and how afterschool efforts can be part of that achievement of success?

We have a panel of three folks to help us today, and we're delighted to have them with us. We have Hannah Dillard, who is the director of the Mayor's Office of Education in Columbus, Ohio. Terry Peterson, who was formerly with the U.S. Department of Education, and currently a senior fellow for Policy and Partnerships at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. And, Warren Simmons, who is the Executive Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, based at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

I'd like to get started with you, Hannah. We have lots of folks on the line who are in local communities and working with municipal governments. Where do you see the role of a director of a mayor's office of education in helping to promote academic success, both with schools and afterschool programs?

DILLARD: Actually, it's a very tenuous position to be in. There are always the interests who say that there are no roles for city in school governance and/or the academic venue. And then there are those who say that we must act in all manners to support what does happen academically.

We do have here in Columbus an ongoing initiative of afterschool programs and we are struggling, actually, to work the fine line between the youth groups who think afterschool should be "fun," and the schools who are saying that we must have our kids on task much more because we are under so much pressure for academic excellence and achievement. Therefore, if you want afterschool in our programs or in our school, then we want you to be able to show how

you are increasing academic achievement and more time on task. So the role of the city and municipal government and community in how fine this line is and the relationships developed along this line is very tenuous. But I do think there are ways that the community and municipal government can support continuous, academic improvement in afterschool that translate into the school day.

KYLE: Warren, the Institute for School Reform has worked in a variety of communities across the country. Could you tell us a little bit about your basic mission and how it fits with this connection between academic achievement and afterschool programming?

SIMMONS: Yes, our basic mission at the Annenberg Institute is to generate, share, and act on knowledge that will improve conditions in schools serving disadvantaged youth, particularly in urban communities. We have since 1993 supported the efforts of the 18 communities, urban and rural, that have engaged in the Annenberg Challenge work [The Annenberg Challenge is a public/private partnership dedicated to improving public schools. For more information, call: 401-863-3833 or go to: <http://www.annenbergchallenge.org/>].

Much of that work has gone on in some of the nation's largest cities. And reflecting on the previous comments about mayoral involvement, my experience is somewhat different. In many of the cities that the Institute is involved in -- Detroit, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Diego, Houston -- mayors have more direct authority than they ever have had in school reform, in part as a way to strengthen accountability. These cities have new opportunities for looking across the public systems that impact academic achievement and broader youth outcomes. So there is a growing awareness in many of the cities where I've been that the mayor, as leader, and other community leaders, have to think about school resources and community resources and how you can align them better to produce the results at scale that they're now being asked to produce by the "No Child Left Behind Act."

DILLARD: Warren, if I could just say, I think the key phrase that you use is "the mayor's direct involvement in schools." In Columbus, the mayor does not have any direct control over the schools. It is not even an imminent thought that that should happen. So we do have two governing bodies that have to develop the relationship. And I do think that with the onset of this mayor and with the establishment of his Office of Education, the commitment is there. It's perceived from the community that there is a force that brings some oversight to the school district. But there is no direct control or influence on what happens. And I think that makes a difference.

KYLE: We continue to talk about the differences from community to community. And Terry, I want to let you get started in here with how your work is helping to promote this connection between academic achievement and afterschool programming.

PETERSON: Well, I think Hannah and Warren's last discussion was very important because of the differences in localities. The role of municipal leaders and education leaders changes from place to place. But, we see some evidence that working on extended learning programs creates a really good platform and dynamic for creating new collaborations and relationships among schools, municipal leaders, community and youth-serving groups, and some of the other institutions they impact, like cultural institutions and recreation. Just doing that alone is

important.

It's very important to look at how working together you can do what Warren described. That is to build a critical mass of activity in a community, in a city, and in a bunch of schools, not only to improve academic achievement, but also to meet youth development goals in keeping kids safe off the streets and helping parents have a safe place for their kids while they're trying to work. Those are a lot of objectives, but I think it's important to pull them together. And I think municipal leaders can help do that.

Through my afterschool and community learning resource network, which provides advice both to local, state, and national policy makers, I look at different funding streams and at how you can use your bully pulpit and other means to get people working together. How do you build collaborations and partnerships to move forward with this robust, vibrant way of looking at afterschool and extended learning?

KYLE: You're beginning to enumerate, Terry, some benefits for making these kinds of connections work. Warren or Hannah, do you want to add some of what you see as benefits of having the connections between schools and afterschool programs?

SIMMONS: Yes, let me speak to this issue on the demand side. The recently authorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act -- "No Child Left Behind" -- has put in place some fairly rigorous demands for essentially having the local school districts produce within three years improvements in achievement such that the vast majority of student are reaching high standards, at least by 2013. What we now see from some of the initial assessments of progress, particularly in urban areas, is upwards of 50 to 60% of the students are performing well below standards in 50 to 60% of the schools. In that environment, the challenge is how to take a vast majority of schools and students and get them from where they currently are, which is performing well below standards, to demonstrating within three or four years that they are progressing adequately, according to the adequate yearly progress criteria defined by states.

In the past we left this job to individual schools to sort out for themselves, primarily in isolation from their students. Now, given the "No Child Left Behind Act," I think we understand that we have to work more efficiently and effectively across a community of schools. We have to think about community-based resources, particularly those specified by the Act, and resources provided for mentoring, tutoring, afterschool education, arts programs, library programs, etc. How they can be brought to bear in a coherent, focused and effective way so that schools and entire communities can meet the goals. In many cities, municipal leadership and community leadership are thinking of ways they can define standards locally -- not only academic standards and broader youth outcomes that Terry alluded to and described in part, but also how to build revenue streams, how to build professional staff, and how to focus services on underachieving populations. What we know from existing assessments of afterschool programs is that they have had difficulty attracting and maintaining underachieving or underserved students, particularly adolescents.

KYLE: In Columbus, Hannah, what are the things that you see happening because schools and afterschool programs do get together when they do?

DILLARD: One of the things that we did at the very onset, two and a half years ago, was to look at the entire afterschool picture in the city -- an environmental scan. We identified the need.

We identified current providers and sites. We identified low-performing schools. And then we strategically started talking about where we wanted to start an afterschool initiative that would eventually become citywide and go to scale.

One of the first tasks after doing that was to get community participation, convened by the Mayor, in developing a community-wide accepted standard for afterschool programs. From that we have been able to develop a set of standards for afterschool programs for the entire city. Those standards have now been adopted by the major funders in this community, as well as by the school district.

Based on the standards and the models we put forth – and we’ve always contended that it is a community-developed model and accepted standard – we’ve been able then to move forward with a staff development initiative for afterschool program staff. We’re beginning to work with the school district in terms of developing an academic component for these particular afterschool programs because the academic component needs to align itself with the curriculum that’s happening during the day as well as with our state standards. Another initiative that will be piloted in the spring is aligning the staff development and the curriculum for afterschool.

We’ve systematically moved forward from standards and models into some component pieces in terms of strengthening the capacity of afterschool to meet the needs of children. Where we are now in that process is to begin to talk about how we as a city begin to pool our funds to maximize everyone’s resources relative to afterschool. So we’ve kind of phased it in, and we’re at this particular point in the process.

PETERSON: John, I was just thinking, Hannah really described a good process to work from. And Warren also talked a little bit about some of the nuts and bolts. I’ve looked at a lot of research, and I’ve visited a lot of programs around the country. It seems to me that when you’re working on it the way Hannah and Warren described, you need to keep in mind that you end up accomplishing it. Five things seem to really make a difference in afterschool programs that are linked to the school, but also to the community.

The most obvious one is it helps kids catch up by giving them more intentional learning time beyond the school day to help them with homework. But this can’t be a “drill-and-kill” kind of thing, because then kids don’t show up, as Warren talked about.

So a second piece, in addition to the catch-up, is you need to help kids keep up. They need in this afterschool or summertime, in the partnerships with all these entities, a way to accelerate their educational opportunity. They need to seek a connection to the community and hope for their future by having arts and music involved, having service learning involved, using computers, linking to other cultures and languages, and job shadowing. Linkages to colleges are very, very important in general, but particularly for young adolescents and middle school kids.

The second point is that you actually need to sell it to the kids. The parents and we want them to learn the stuff to pass the tests. That needs to be embedded in a richer, vibrant program, which really can only be built through these kinds of partnerships.

And three other things real quick. Don’t forget the parents and families in this afterschool effort. Afterschool time and weekends are great times to get more parent involvement. The fourth point is to look at ways of keeping schools open right in their neighborhoods -- not just high schools, but elementary schools -- as a way for parents to improve their own education levels, to take computer courses, to take some beginning courses that get them into a technical school or college.

That leads to my fifth point. When you do all this together, you start raising the expectation of a whole school and a community around it. This is a starting point of successful school reform, having high expectations for every kid and a “no excuses” mentality. So I just thought I’d throw that in there of how that fits into this mosaic.

SIMMONS: Let me add something about some of the work that we’ve done in evaluating the Annenberg Arts Projects and some of the research that I’ve seen on afterschool programs. I think it’s important to recognize some very special features that distinguish afterschool from school-based programs. All of us can recall that in school, unfortunately, you get labeled very early on as either someone who is a high performer or a low performer. That label sticks with you. In afterschool environments, you are accepted where you are. You come into an arts program or recreation program, a music program, a technology program, and there is the understanding that you have the skills that you have and you’re supported in developing them. Young people experience themselves as effective learners in afterschool programs in ways that they unfortunately don’t experience themselves in school programs. I think that has to do with encouraging their participation.

Secondly, in afterschool programs there is a clear connection between the basic skills you’re learning and some real world, significant path that those skills enable you to do. Whether it’s learning that music helps you understand that you can be in a studio, or that you can work in a museum behind the scenes. The real world task is clearer to you and presentable to you in an afterschool program, as opposed to all of us taking Algebra for all those years that we did in school, trying to understand where and how we would ever use this in our lives. And I think many of us are still struggling with how and when we have ever used our Algebra or Calculus or Physics in our lives. Those connections are clearer for students. They come to the task at the level that they come to and understand that they can be effective in developing the support.

They have a range of mentors providing a scaffold for them to develop their skills -- people in professions, people in the community with more diversity of experiences and settings. I think that that is lacking in a school environment. It’s something that’s difficult to create in schools. Afterschool programs really give you an advantage in that regard, which therefore not only heightens learning, but heightens motivation and community connectedness for students as well.

KYLE: I want to go back to some of the things that we talked about in the beginning about the roles that municipal officials can play in achieving these things. To take apart some of the comments that Hannah made about, “Well, the Mayor did this convening.” How did that happen? How did that work? How did the community respond to that? Can you give us a little bit more detail about how that worked? You gave us a good overview of what happened and what it led to, but back up a couple of steps as to how he got involved with that and how the community responded to it and how he was able to make that be a successful thing.

DILLARD: His election campaign emphasized his commitment to education. One of those commitments and promises to the community is that he would put forth an afterschool initiative. When he was elected and came to office, he immediately appointed a cabinet position and the Mayor’s Office of Education. As part of that, he wanted to convene a community summit to talk about what afterschool means to this community. It was a call to action. It was a very popular

call. We had over 250 folks who attended that particular day's activity. It was facilitated by the Phi Delta Kappa folks. We were able to bring together a cross-section of the community at his call at this point in time. The response at that particular summit was manifested in terms of his enthusiasm and as a reflection of his commitment made during his campaign that he would follow through. This is an area in which he has some serious interest.

It has not dwindled. That enthusiasm and commitment has not dwindled. He has taken on the role of convener. He has taken on the role of calling to action not only on afterschool, but also on the broader issue of how this community is dealing with our achievement gaps – not only with our major urban school district, but also with 16 school districts that are located within the city's boundaries. He has in terms of leadership put forth, and become the champion for, the education initiative in this community. Up to this point and hopefully going forward, there has been tremendous response to his call. There obviously has been some discussion about what really is the role of a mayor. As we have moved forward these past three years, we have seen the advantage of having a champion – a champion who is knowledgeable about education, who understands the role of education for the community at large and for the growth and development of a city, and who is able to articulate that. We've been able to develop quite a bit of support in the community for that.

KYLE: Warren, you mentioned the variety of cities that you're working with and have some experience in where the mayor was involved or other local officials were involved. Can you describe a little bit about one or two of those?

SIMMONS: Yes, we've been working most recently in New York City, Boston, and Chicago. I see two areas of effort that are now converging. The one that I've been most familiar with is urban communities understanding that their schools aren't up to the standards' reform agenda, and increasingly concerned with not only how you redesign schools so they work better for students, but also how you redesign the school district so it provides support for the building of community and successful schools.

There have been a lot of conversations that we've been part of recently about how you redesign a school district. In that conversation, people are re-imagining the local education agency as a district that supports a portfolio of schools. Some of these would be operated and managed by the traditional district central office. But increasingly, because of charter legislation, many schools are now being operated and managed by community-based organizations, higher education institutions, and even national design models. So school and how it operates and the influences on that are now coming from community-based organizations, higher education institutions, and faith institutions.

I think in that context, mayors and community leaders are trying to figure out not only how you fund those efforts and govern those efforts, but also what value is added to the broader community goals for safety and for spiritual, economic, and social development. That's one side of the issue.

The other side that I'm experiencing in many of the same cities is that mayors and other community leaders have seen that urban revival in the 90's is somewhat jeopardized by the economic downturn. They're concerned about how to continue momentum around the revitalization of low-income communities, how to revitalize housing and economic development. And in that strand of conversation, mayors are coming to understand the importance of providing supports that keep and strengthen the families as well as communities. Education -- both

education provided by schools and education provided by community-based organizations -- is critically important. And so Mayor Bloomberg in New York, Mayor Menino in Boston, and Mayor Daley in Chicago are – in the context of housing, community, and economic development – asking other city agencies what they can contribute not only to cities, but also to community-based organizations in creating healthy supports for children and families. They understand that the school system has to be at the table with the city agencies and the faith leadership.

They use public engagement strategies. Joel Klein [New York City Schools Chancellor] has been out having meetings with community leaders in now ten regional districts. They asked for national models and they look at the community schools work, the Beacon schools work, and some of the recent evaluations done by Public/Private Ventures, and Chapin Hall on afterschool initiatives. They're looking at how they can use their resources from the juvenile justice system, from housing, and from health care to provide a web of support for academic and social development.

[*Beacons* are school-based community centers offering after-school programs, as well as extended programming for children, youth, and families in the evenings, on weekends and during the summer. For more information about the Beacon Schools Initiative in New York City, go to <http://www.nccic.org/ccpartnerships/profiles/beacons.htm> or call 212-676-0453.

Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the effectiveness of social policies, programs and community initiatives, especially as they affect youth and young adults. For more information about Public/Private Ventures, go to <http://www.ppv.org/>, call: 215-557-4400. To view “Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative,” go to <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/ess-multi-choice-summ.html>.

The *Chapin Hall* Center for Children at the University of Chicago is a research and development center focusing on policies, practices, and programs affecting children and the families and communities in which they live. For more information, go to: <http://www.chapin.uchicago.edu/index.html>.]

KYLE: Terry, with the network that you're working with, are you seeing afterschool programs connecting with local municipal officials in some way, or vice versa. And how is that happening?

PETERSON: Right, they're trying to more. I think as has been said, it really takes a reaching out from multiple directions. School folks have to reach out to municipal folks and vice versa. And then there's a whole other sector of youth-serving institutions and faith-based groups that need to be brought in, if can be, to work on this collaboratively and really maximize all of our resources in a community.

The several areas that really come to the fore, just in the nuts and bolts way, tend to be critical for these collaborations and partnerships that keep it going in the long term. One is that it appears to me -- and folks I've talked to also that have studied this find the same thing -- that to have a full-blown afterschool program or transform the school into a community center or a community learning center, you really have to find a way to fund a full-time person, in my estimation, or a full-time volunteer in some cases, to build these ongoing linkages day after day:

to find the tutors, to help teachers find service learning opportunities in the communities, to link parents with schools. That kind of funding is tough to get from any one source. But maybe that's where having municipal leadership with schools is really critical.

A second piece, particularly if kids don't live right next to the school, is the huge issue and problem of transportation for low-income students, which keeps them from participating even in regular afterschool activities and sports. Finding a way to deal with that is quite a challenge. I saw something in a very small town the other day -- they had kind of made my point in general. A Boys and Girls Club had a few kids, and the band had a few kids -- this is middle school aged kids. The basketball team obviously had plenty of kids. The computer club didn't have enough kids, and the community service didn't have enough. And they were all doing their own thing. Finally the community leaders and the school leaders got together and said, "Why don't we just offer all this as a package?" So, kids can be at school -- and sometimes out of school -- in the Boys and Girls Clubs from three to six, and everybody knows where they are. The kids don't play basketball -- they might -- for three hours, but we wouldn't like them to. We might like them to get involved in some other things -- homework help and tutoring and mentoring. Why don't we all work together as a package and really look at it as a type of a three to six-thirty program that's full of enrichment and all the things that Hannah and Warren mentioned? Because of that, so many kids are staying after school that they actually run the main bus transportation for kids in this small town at six o'clock because two-thirds of the kids stay until six. So transportation is really a big issue.

A final one is about partnerships between the libraries, parks and recreation departments, and cultural groups with the schools. You really have to create incentives and capacity building to make these happen. That too is something for a combination of municipal leadership, schools, and non-profits to come together to provide -- to look at how to make those partnerships easy to be built, how to help school folks learn how to reach out, and how to help folks at YMCAs and faith-based groups work with the schools.

KYLE: Hannah, Terry has been talking about some things here, and I am reminded about the structure of some of the afterschool programs that he's seen or knows that are being discussed. As you mentioned earlier, one of the outcomes of the convening that was done was models or standards for afterschool programs. Can you get us to see a picture in our minds about what it looks like in an afterschool program these days that is actively trying to meet those standards that you're talking about in Columbus, or to achieve the kind of connection with a school outcome that educators like to look at? What's actually going on in some of the afterschool programs that might be different? Or what are the hallmarks of structure that you like to see happen as a result?

DILLARD: I'm not sure the model is unlike any that's already happening all across the country. I think if you take a look at the core components of afterschool programs, they're happening all over. What we managed to do here is to get general acceptance from the community that there are certain components that make up a quality afterschool program, and those are just the basic academic-consistent pieces, enrichment, prevention, the recreational socialization, strong family involvement, community partnerships, and nutritious snacks. And they occur in different forms, even in our community, in different parts of the community.

We've been able through private partnerships to transport kids at one of our low-performing middle schools to our Center of Science and Industry (COSI) every evening for the

afterschool program. It is billed as a science and math afterschool program. So from three to six, they have the run of the entire COSI. Again, they do homework. Again, they have nutrition. But their focus is using that particular facility as their laboratory, as their classroom.

A built-in component of that for several of our afterschool programs are regularly consistent visits to our Metropark system to begin to talk about the environment and to begin to relate environmental issues with science and with reading that's actually happening in the school curriculum. I think you'll find all across the country, that the trick to this is to make those basic components of afterschool programs tailored to the group of children and to the community, providing some engagement for family, community, and those kids. So what you have is an array and variations on that particular model.

KYLE: Warren, can you expand on that? Add to what you see as the hallmarks of what an afterschool program that wants to be partners with achieving academic success with the in-school programs. Are there things that stand out as being the things to include and to do?

SIMMONS: On the academic side, I think school-based educators want to see an afterschool program that provides extended opportunities to kids to develop their reading, writing, and mathematics skills in ways that are outlined in local and state standards. In order to do that, people in afterschool programs have to have some access to the kinds of reading/writing/math assignments, goals, content, and knowledge that school people are trying to get at so that they can translate that into the activities they offer for students in their settings. The afterschool programs that are linked to, and in fact operate in, schools have better opportunities for school-based staff and community-based staff to have those kind of exchanges. It's more difficult for the afterschool programs that are fairly far removed from schools. There is very little mechanism for coordination.

I remember years ago, I was on the board of Playing to Win, one of the first community-based computer centers, where we had students working on computers in a public housing project. Unfortunately, because we didn't have access to the kinds of assignments they were working on in school, we couldn't incorporate that in the afterschool work. Nor could we take the more advanced ways that we were using computers in the afterschool environment and use them to help teachers develop their skills and knowledge. So this is not just a one-way sharing of information, but actually having mechanisms where educators in schools could work with educators in community-based settings. They could exchange ideas and exchange an understanding of what the standards are so that they enrich work in both settings.

To have that done, in many cities, mayors are creating this Children, Youth, and Families cabinet where they can actually have city agency leaders come together to do standards sharing, but also assets management. Similarly, in the private sector, health, education, and community-based organizations are forming these private collaboratives as well to do that kind of sharing.

PETERSON: I think that's right on target. I would commend the people to look at the October 23, 2002 issue of *Education Week*, in which the Public/Private Ventures' head researcher who looked at successful afterschool programs over five years lays out what Hannah described very practically as that mix of experiences.

[The *Education Week* article was regarding Extend-Service Schools. To order the Public/Private Ventures study findings, “Multiple Choices After School: Findings from the Extended-Service Schools Initiative,” go to: <http://www.ppv.org/content/orderform.html>. To download the PDF file of the 84-page report, go to http://www.ppv.org/pdf/files/multi%20choice_ess_full.pdf. To download the 13-page Executive Summary, go to <http://www.ppv.org/content/reports/ess-multi-choice-summ.html>. Or, contact Public/Private Ventures at 2000 Market St., Suite 600, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103 or call 215-557-4400.]

It offers a range of interesting, engaging activities -- not just homework, help in tutoring. And about these activities that Warren describes, if you sit people down together, you *can* figure out how to embed some of the critical learning that students need for school. But they also learn a whole set of other experiences.

About two months ago, a number of researchers who look at afterschool programs came together and summarized what they saw as critical. It was something like this. Afterschool programs are most effective when they use projects that deploy skills from the school day based on themes that are of interest to the young people and their families. Then, they tie into this opportunity for students to show off their product or performance or exhibit at the end of, let’s say, a month or two months. The interesting part about that -- when young people have to demonstrate what they’ve learned in some way -- they really try to do their very best, and without having to help them try to do their very best. And that’s, again, a hallmark of a really successful education improvement -- kids and the whole team working to do their very best.

KYLE: The research you mentioned that was reported in *Education Week* on October 23, 2002 was also the subject matter of an audioconference that we did in October 2002. Anybody who would like to see a printed transcript of our audioconference, “Making Afterschool Work – Extended-Service Schools,” could contact National League of Cities at rpd1@nlc.org and get a copy of that, if that was not a call you listened to.

What is your experience with what role the No Child Left Behind Act is playing? What’s difficult about it? What’s easy about it? What’s good about it in terms of this connection between in-school education and afterschool initiatives? Is there a way to use that? Is that a healthy tool?

SIMMONS: What’s good about it is that it does incorporate and encourage schools to use supplemental services -- mentoring and tutoring. It emphasizes the importance of 21st Century Schools, extended supports for learning. 21st Century Schools are schools that emphasize not only academic outcomes but also the service arena, things of that sort.

What’s problematic about it is that these services and supports are entirely focused on mathematics, literacy, and science achievement defined in fairly academic ways, and this progress is measured by standardized tests. And also the criteria for supplemental services I think is a thing we should be discussing in terms of having an adequate resource base to support those services.

The opportunity is that educators are now being asked to consider and are being provided resources to reach out and encourage afterschool supports, particularly for disadvantaged students. One of the concerns is: “Will those supports be narrowly constrained on

mathematics and reading as defined by school-based leadership and as measured solely by standardized achievement tests?" That is a source of concern that I have.

PETERSON: I think that's right. The high expectations of all students over time is a terrific part of the legislation. But getting there is a real long haul and a lot of work, and a lot of people need to be involved. Sometimes the initial reaction, because of that narrow definition that Warren described, is just the opposite of what we're describing here. It tends to get school people to hunker down, to get more narrow, to build less partnerships, to decide to just focus on narrow schools. Well, some of the students need to learn those narrow skills. But, if in the fifth, sixth and tenth grade they haven't learned them, you're going to have to try different ways. You're going to have to get them linked up with real world tasks and people, as Warren and Hannah have described.

I think others in schools are seeing what I think we're seeing here. That is, that there is no way that all students can achieve to these higher standards, and many more students complete high school -- unless you really do capitalize on all the resources, human and financial, both in the school and beyond the school, and use a whole lot more time for learning. That necessitates rallying not only educators and families, but a whole set of community organizations, employers, retirees, and the faith community to help students succeed. Those other groups are going to be more motivated to succeed broadly for students -- keep them out of trouble, have them thinking about going to college or getting a job, being good citizens -- not just reading and math. I think municipal leaders help bridge that divide, focusing not only on what is being expected but also on what can be delivered collectively to really make a difference.

KYLE: We've been talking about afterschool programs kind of monolithically, as if they're all sponsored the same and run the same. I wanted to know if you thought there was any distinguishing characteristics or any differences between afterschool programs that might be more municipally oriented, like those through Parks and Recreation or funded by city dollars or through libraries -- you know, somehow connected to municipal government. Versus those that are sponsored primarily by non-profits, Boys and Girls Clubs, or by faith-based organizations. It would seem to be logical that we would want a connection between any of those afterschool programs and in-school programs. But is there in reality a distinction? Is it harder in one set of those programs than another? Are there different kinds of situations to be dealt with? Or is it pretty much the same, regardless of what the base of your afterschool operation is? Terry, is your network looking at that? Are you able to comment on that?

PETERSON: Well, they're very different. I mean, even within a school district, the programs are very different. They often come down to who's running the program and who's funding it -- those two things. Its obvious Parks and Recreation are going to have a lot more recreation activities, and libraries always tend to have more literacy activities. The school-ones tend to be more basic skill-focused. Arts and culture ones tend to be full of art and music and culture. And I think for many young people, they don't need just *one* of those things. They may be interested in one or two, and we've got to build on those assets. But we may need to fill in some of the areas where they're short. So that's the real power of getting people to sit down together and see each other's organizational strengths, not to displace them. One of the difficulties is that there is kind of a feeling out there, "If I go in and work together, you're going to get rid of my program." There is so much need out there even without "No Child Left Behind."

I was just in Michigan yesterday. Michigan had \$11 million to provide grants, and had \$110 million worth of requests for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. So there's plenty of work to be done. And how can we capitalize on the strengths of these different players and programs and help young people connect to many more of them. Many, many young people because of a variety of reasons can't connect to any, or even one of them. But, how can they connect to all these resources, as well as have a learning component more infused in some of them?

SIMMONS: The afterschool environment is both rich and varied and anything but monolithic. Its richness and variety is both one of its greatest strengths and its greatest challenge. It's a challenge because of, one, on the school's side, there are some very specific accountability requirements that educators face. If you ask yourself on the afterschool side what sort of organizes people's notions of accountability -- when is a program working? Not working? What are the consequences of it working or not working? That's less clear.

Because people are supporting development in so many different areas, the kinds of professionals and support staff working in those kinds of programs also vary widely. On the public side, the funding sources are stable, though far less than adequate. On the private side, people are chasing grant programs on an annual basis, which means variability. So I think what many people are concerned about is how you can create a system of more coherent and focused supports in communities. I think that's why there is increased interest in pushing this up to the mayoral level so that you can talk about standards that can lead to some greater accountability, and talk about some criteria for the quality of professional and support staff. And you can talk about some capacity building supports and some revenue streams that can lead to greater sustainability over time. Without dealing with it at the city level, I think you encourage the continued scatteredness, which educators and schools don't see as an asset for their work.

DILLARD: I would support what Warren has just said. The attempt here has been to bring together all of those diverse community-based, faith-based, and government organizations that do provide afterschool services to children. As a result of the No Child Left Behind Act, what we've been able to do is to ask the school system to address an afterschool venue in a way that says all experiences can be learning experiences for children, and that children's participation in activities afterschool may reinforce the curriculum during the day, but it does not have to replicate what has happened in the classroom in the same manner in which it was delivered in the classroom.

So in our recreation centers -- and we have some city-sponsored afterschool programs in our recreation centers -- we're working with recreation staff via the school district and that staff, that says when you are playing basketball, there is some math. There are some academic strengths that you could put into having fun, to playing basketball, into Double Dutch, into your painting, into your cultural arts pieces. There are some ways to reinforce what's happening in the day curriculum in those kinds of activities. And I think that with the help of the school district taking a broader view of afterschool -- of something other than just a tutorial -- that there are activities and other ways to support that academic piece. I think we're beginning to get buy-in from community-based organizations -- the YWCAs, the YMCAs -- so that we can adjust our staff and can begin to train our staff to align everyday afterschool activities with a curriculum -- a math, a reading, a science curriculum. Children then are being reinforced. They're being taught, they're learning, and sometimes they don't even know it.

PETERSON: I think that's a really great example. A few months ago, I was visiting an inner city arts program where kids went two hours twice a week. They had young people write and read about what they did each time they came to the center. So the first time they came, they probably said, "What am I doing here?" and that was what they wrote about. But by the end of the semester, they were writing about their arts experience, which is really art criticism, which is a very high level of writing and comprehension. The arts center wouldn't ordinarily have thought about including the writing and reading part. And they were a little skeptical initially. But at the end, they thought, "My goodness! Here are these young people not only doing art, but also reflecting on it, writing about it, reading about it, speaking about it." By the way, they made really good achievement gains.

KYLE: One of the questions we received was about figuring out ways to get young people and children to be engaged in an academically-oriented afterschool program. Without me asking that question, you've arrived at an answer. Let me see if I'm getting it right. It's not so much about how you market it to the children. It's how you deliver it so that no matter what you're delivering, you're thinking about the range of outcomes that you'd like to see for children and trying to build that in. So if you're doing cooking with kids or you're doing art with kids, you're thinking about what the various math, social, literacy, and computation skills might be involved with those things and trying to build those in. So, although the child might have signed up for the art class, he or she is going to get these other components because you all as the program operators will build them in. Am I getting it right? Is that what you're trying to explain?

PETERSON: Absolutely.

DILLARD: Absolutely. I think bottom line, the way we've tried to approach afterschool, here is for folks to begin to think in terms of what I want for my own child after school. I have the resources to provide these things for my children after school. We do dance, and we do Little League, and we do art, and we do a little bit of homework, and we have an academic goal and requirement for our own children after school. What we are trying to get folks to understand is that for those that may not have the resources to give children the broadest range of afterschool activity on their own, that we look at them in terms of being our own. Rather than using afterschool as a punishment, begin to provide to these children the kind of resources, exposure, and opportunity that we do our own children. Once we relate to that, and we personalize the services that we offer to our children, we get, I think, some broader thinking then about the possibilities of what afterschool can be like.

KYLE: What kind of work has been done or what kind of work needs to be done – or is it all totally successful at this point – of having the schools and the school authorities believe that working with faith-based afterschool programs is a good idea, that they should be able to have effective partnerships there? Or, have partnerships with the playground-based, parks and recreation-based afterschool programs? Or, the ones at Boys and Girls Clubs? Is there a differential in how schools think about those? Is it generally the same, and, therefore, the challenge for all afterschool programs is to make the kinds of connections you're talking about? Or, are there different challenges for different segments of the afterschool community?

SIMMONS: Well, there are more opportunities now for these challenges because of the changes in what we mean by the local school system. Through the work of the Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and others, it no longer means traditional schools governed by central offices. New, small schools are being created all over the country, and many of them are being run by community-based organizations, such as El Puente Academy in New York, the Met in Providence, Rhode Island. And because of this new thinking about the sponsorship of schools, you have more opportunities now for a direct connection between the services that were almost solely provided after school to thinking about how you connect that and use that as a springboard for designing in-school learning.

I think the other thing that Terry alluded to earlier is when you think about the hallmark of traditional school reform these days, it's about taking the large schools and dividing them up into small learning communities. It's about having these small learning communities focus on themes that are relevant to the world of business and the lives these students have in their communities. It's about organizing instruction around not only acquiring basic skills, but also using those skills to do meaningful projects like writing newspapers or novels, producing movies, writing plays, or performing music. So I think that there's an increasing convergence between how our school-based educators are thinking about learning that dovetails naturally with what afterschool people have been doing all along. Increasingly, they're actually working to sponsor a new notion of what school is.

PETERSON: I think right at the school level, a lot of principals and some teachers really buy into just what we're talking about. But they're gun-shy, to be honest with you, because of accountability legislation. I think by having other leaders in the community outside the school saying, "Hey, yeah, we want our kids to read and write. But wouldn't it be great, too, if they were excited about being involved in the community and doing a service and learning how to be a good citizen? What about the arts and music?" I think that's where having municipal leaders involved gives those allies within the schools the opportunity to come forward and be partners with you. Otherwise, the media and the coverage of the test scores just drive so much. We need to have kids do better at basic skills, but to get to the high levels of learning we want, we have to do what we've been talking about here all day.

KYLE: In terms of looking ahead, I want to ask a closing question about municipal officials and other community leaders, but with a focus on municipal leaders. What can we expect of them? What ought they be focusing on in order that ten years from now, we're talking about the fact that all students are achieving to high standards because of things we've done? What's the advice you would give to municipal officials about things that they should be doing now that they should be carrying on over the next three, five, ten years in order to meet this kind of goal? As you think about your answer to that, also consider whether there is any kind of resource information or website or publication that you'd like to refer our listeners to.

I'm going to remind them that again this is the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families' ongoing series of audioconferences. Our next one is scheduled for February 27, entitled, "Youth service -- teens making a difference in their communities." In March it will be on supporting early childhood success. In April it will be about family strengthening. And in June it will be about financing municipal children's initiatives. You can find registration information and more details about the Institute's activities

at <http://www.nlc.org/iyef>.

Starting with Terry, can you give us some concluding remarks and any resource that you want to refer us to?

PETERSON: Well, I think long term, it's having the mayor and other municipal leaders meeting people across these sectors. Then, actually showing people what great things can happen when folks work together and you work broadly in education, or by visiting terrific afterschool programs periodically and making a big story about that. Making it easy for parks and recreation, libraries and other entities that are under their control to work with schools in a collaborative way and help build a capacity for folks both in the schools and outside to work together.

And finally I saw something in, of all places, Singapore, which does better than anyplace else in the world in education, at least in math and science. They regularly have community-wide showcases of exciting things happening in education, not just for parents and educators, but for the whole community. So you start building what Warren and Hannah described as a bigger understanding in the community of what a real high quality afterschool program looks like, what a high quality school program looks like, and what a really good school/community/family partnership looks like.

SIMMONS: On my end, some of the work that we've been doing at the Annenberg Institute -- and you can look at it by going to our website, <http://www.annenberginstitute.org/> -- says that we have to actually go from afterschool programs to an afterschool system. If you want to deal with equity and results, I think the only way you can get that at a community level is to think about how you build an infrastructure that can create a system. Not one that is a bureaucracy, but one that provides sustainable resources for afterschool activities, that builds a professional staff, that has indicators of success, that reinforces accountability, and that creates the linkages that allow afterschool educators to work with people in higher education and in the K-12 system. I think it is mayors that have the most leverage to do that, as well as people in higher education institutions. I've increasingly seen people coming together to talk about how you build an afterschool system that takes the separate district programs that they now have, applies them where they're needed, and increases the rigor, quality, and consistency of learning for all students in all communities.

DILLARD: I think what I would add is that, first of all, we need for our community leaders -- [city] councils, as well as mayors and other government workers and folks in government -- to really recognize the fact that they do have a role to play in education. That education -- the growth, development, and success of education in each community -- really is an indicator of future growth for that community. Once that awareness and recognition is accepted and owned, then regardless of which peg they'd like to hang their hat on, whether it be afterschool or whether it be broader issues of school reform, their role then becomes one of convening, of being a champion, of advocacy, of beginning to talk knowledgeably about what the issues are, and then, helping to build relationships throughout the community.

I think probably the key piece going forward is to keep mayors involved. With the economic conditions, today, the issue of education can very quickly fall by the wayside. If they're not really tuned in to the role of education in their community and in the growth of their community -- economic growth particularly -- we'll lose the initiative and the momentum. I see

the key piece as the total recognition by the leadership in the community that education is important, valuable, and meaningful to the future growth of our nation.

KYLE: I want to thank all of you for being so gracious with your time and your thoughtful comments. Hannah Dillard, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Education in Columbus, Ohio; Terry Peterson with the College of Charleston and the network of community and afterschool programs in Charleston, South Carolina; and Warren Simmons with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

We at the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families here at NLC are continuing to work on this topic. We have been working directly with fourteen cities during the past two years in enhancing afterschool programs and in improving public schools. A new project and request for proposals will be announced shortly to provide direct assistance to additional cities interested in receiving help in connecting education and afterschool initiatives. Again, the best place to find out about this information is at our website, where it will be posted when it is available, at <http://www.nlc.org/iyef>. Thanks a lot for listening. Goodbye, everybody.