



Extended-Day Enrichment Programs: Supporting Educators' Work in the Face of Staff Shortages

The saying "It takes a village to raise a child" reflects children's need for support from an entire community. While schools and families form the central partnership for children's well-being, they also rely on an extended system of partnerships to give students everything needed to thrive academically, developmentally, and socially.

THE BEST PARTNERSHIPS ARE BUILT ON TRUST AND A SHARED MISSION.

That includes sharing information that advances that mission. This whitepaper will discuss the potential impacts of teacher shortages and the ways that enrichment programs can alleviate problems for students, faculty, and administrators.

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INTRODUCTION

The Current Situation



Schools have faced challenges filling staff positions since before COVID-19, but the pandemic has intensified the struggle. In 2021, an [Education Week article](#) reported that only 5% of surveyed administrators reported no school staffing shortages.

What makes the problem especially challenging is that the shortage includes not just faculty but also substitute teachers.

According to [The Hechinger Report](#), during the 2018-19 school year, schools were unable to find the substitute teachers they needed about 20% of the time. In 2022, some schools were so desperate that they asked for [help](#) from parents, police officers, firefighters, and even the National Guard.

The flow of teachers out of school buildings may not subside anytime soon. Another [Education Week article in 2021](#) revealed that almost a third (32%) of National Education Association members were thinking of leaving the teaching profession earlier than planned. That included 25% of veteran teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

THAT OUTFLOW IS HAVING WIDE-RANGING IMPACTS ON STUDENTS AND THE EDUCATORS WHO REMAIN.

ONLY
5%

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EducationWeek®

32%

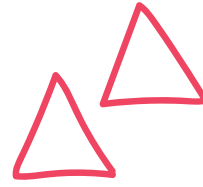
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EducationWeek®





Negative Impacts on Student Learning



Because teachers are working to help students recover from the learning gaps caused by the initial wave of the pandemic, every learning opportunity is especially precious. However, the staffing shortage has drastically reduced those opportunities.

To make up for the lack of personnel, educators have had to juggle more responsibilities (e.g., filling in as substitute teachers). Teachers are also filling in for many non-teaching staff members, such as cafeteria workers and bus drivers, who did not return to their positions because of the pandemic.

But this means those teachers are giving up their planning periods, free periods, and office hours. All that sacrificed time affects the quality of instruction they can deliver and their ability to be there for students who need help with homework.

Additionally, teacher absences or shortages have forced many schools to increase class sizes. Taking time to integrate those extra students into the classroom routine often leaves teachers with much less time for actual instruction. Plus, the increased student-to-teacher ratio reduces opportunities to check on each student's progress as they're working and provide feedback and assistance in the moment.

THE TEACHER SHORTAGE HAS EVEN AFFECTED SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

In June 2022, the Washington Post reported that schools across the nation had to cancel summer classes due to the lack of teachers.

Those summer programs would have enabled students who were performing below their grade level to keep developing their skills and knowledge. Other students would have been able to retain more of what they had learned during the semester and maybe even advance in their studies.

INSTEAD, THOSE STUDENTS EXPERIENCED "SUMMER SLIDE" AND THEIR LEARNING GAPS STILL EXIST.

As a result, their teachers will spend at least the first few weeks of the new school year in review, losing time crucial for learning recovery.





Negative Impacts on Students' Emotional Wellbeing

STAFFING CHALLENGES ARE ALSO FORCING MANY SCHOOLS TO DEPRIORITIZE OR CANCEL ACTIVITIES THAT STUDENTS NEED OR ENJOY.

Those reduced activities include athletics, after school care, homework help, and library time, among others. The lack of homework support and library time can hamper students' ability to complete assignments and reinforce learning, resulting in their feeling frustrated and discouraged. The absence of all the activities can cause students to feel less connected to their school.

Additionally, when teachers leave, students with whom they'd formed a close connection may feel abandoned. Fear of other teachers departing can cause those students to "close off" emotionally to protect themselves. And since remaining teachers are snowed under with work, they may not notice those students' emotional state. If they do notice, the teachers may still be too overwhelmed to reach out effectively.

But without positive relationships with teachers, those students are more likely to lose their motivation to learn. Being closed off can also cause students to feel as if they are not really a part of the class. Those emotions will eventually manifest as problematic behaviors (e.g., not paying attention in class, acting out, or fights with other students).

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Negative Impacts on Educational Equity



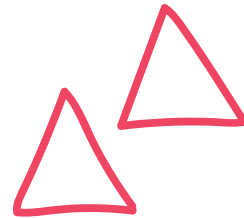
As previously mentioned, schools are struggling to find even substitute teachers to fill vacancies. Such circumstances force principals to prioritize classes containing students with the highest need and ask staff to take in students from the other classes or supervise classes that are outside of their expertise. But since all classes have students at varying ability levels, this approach means some students who need additional support will fall further behind.

Additionally, staff shortages are disproportionately affecting districts in high-poverty areas. That disparity is not new; back in 2019, the NEA was already [discussing](#) the high rates of teacher departures in high-poverty areas compared to high-income areas. But the pandemic caused those staffing issues to intensify.

The *Hechinger Report* has [cited findings](#) that the pandemic's disruptions have caused low-income students to lose ground on academic learning three times faster than high-income students.



**Teachers reported
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Negative Impacts on Teachers

The teachers who have remained at their schools are doing their best to meet the teaching (and even nonteaching) needs within their building. As noted, many are sacrificing their lunch breaks and planning periods to cover unsupervised classrooms as well as filling in for nonteaching duties.

But those extra duties, plus the loss of breaks and prep time, means those teachers are spreading themselves very thin.

And as mentioned, this is happening at a time when they need to help their students address the learning gaps caused by the disruptions of the pandemic. It's not surprising that the RAND Corporation's [2021 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey](#) found that teachers reported “frequent job-related stress and symptoms of depression” at higher proportions than the general adult population.



SOLUTIONS

How Extended-Day Enrichment Programs Can Help



While enrichment programs cannot solve the problem of staffing shortages, high-quality programs help educators by supporting students' learning recovery and social-emotional growth.

Districts can choose from programs that encompass a variety of academic subjects, focus on a particular subject, or offer electives such as music, foreign languages, or STEM.

Educators can also find program options for the time of day that would best suit their school: before classes begin, at lunchtime, or after school. Schools can even find vendors with options for summer and other non-school day programs.

High-quality enrichment programs usually offer a combination of academic support services and group sports and fitness games. The physical activities not only keep students active and healthy but also help them burn off energy so they can stay engaged in their learning. The programs also include opportunities for socializing, free choice activities, and child-led projects.

Support for Academic & Social-Emotional Learning

Enrichment programs provide additional hours per week of academic enrichment and social-emotional learning. Plus, program services such as homework assistance will relieve some of the burden on teachers. Students with homework receive dedicated quiet time so they can focus on their work, and the program's educational staff will be on hand to help students think through the assignments.

High-quality programs are so effective that the Afterschool Alliance reported that over two-thirds (68%) of participating children show improved homework completion and class participation.

68%

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Afterschool Alliance



In addition, a [program evaluation study](#) led by the University of California, Irvine found that regular attendance for over two years yielded gains in math test scores “of up to 20 percentiles” in comparison to non-attending students.

Likewise, a Reading Roadmap [review](#) found that children regularly attending after school programs were 26% more likely to finish the year at or on track for grade level reading than their non-attending peers.

An additional benefit is that program staff have the time to consistently reach out to students. In fact, a [2020 Search Institute study](#) found that 70% of young people reported having strong developmental relationships with program staff in out-of-school time (OST) settings such as after school programs.



Many high-quality enrichment programs offer access to an inclusion specialist to help educators and parents place children with special needs. The program’s staff reviews each situation to determine if the setting meets the child’s needs and then collaborates with the inclusion specialist, the family, and school staff (with permission from parents) to support each child.

The study also reported that “close to 2 in 3 (68%) youth who reported strong relationships... had higher self-rated social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills.”

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has also confirmed after school programs’ positive influence on social-emotional learning. It found that students who participated in high-quality after school programs experienced [improvements in skills](#) such as self-management, social awareness, decision-making, and personal responsibility as well as goal-striving mastery.

- + **SELF-AWARENESS**
- + **SELF-MANAGEMENT**
- + **RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING**
- + **SOCIAL AWARENESS**
- + **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**
- + **DECISION-MAKING**
- + **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- + **GOAL-STRIVING MASTERY**

The Afterschool Alliance and the Wallace Foundation, a nonprofit focused on educational equity, [reported](#) that an increasing number of families, particularly low-income families and families of color, can’t enroll their children in enrichment programs due to transportation challenges. Schools and districts can solve the issue by partnering with programs that will operate on school campuses.



The alliance and foundation also cited program costs as another major barrier to enrolling children. Fortunately, schools can opt for programs that offer families multiple financial options.

EDUCATION LEADERS CAN LOOK FOR PROGRAMS THAT:

- ✓ Accept state and local childcare subsidies
- ✓ Partner with state agencies to offer other forms of financial aid
- ✓ Offer discounts such as:
 - Sibling discounts when parents register two or more children
 - Military or free/reduced lunch discounts
 - School district employee discounts
- ✓ Demonstrate a history of consistently staffing programs, and scale to meet changing needs

Support for Administrators

While administrators have focused on the needs of students and staff, the staffing shortage has left them overwhelmed as well. The good news is that many high-quality enrichment programs offer services that can help education leaders solve administrative challenges.

For example, some enrichment programs offer the option of taking over recess management, allowing educators who were sacrificing time to help with this task to return to their regular duties. And schools whose staffing shortages caused them to completely cut recess can bring it back.

Since they help students with academic work, program staffers can provide regular updates to administrators, teachers, other school staff, and the PTA/O.

High-quality programs will even have staff members attend district, school, and community meetings and events so they can align their work with a district's strategic focus areas. All of this means that school administrators will have the time to focus on their priorities.

Some enrichment programs offer the option of **a customized implementation and roll-out plan**, so school administrators don't have to do all the work associated with spreading the news about the program. The program staff will host open houses, handle customer service and public relations, and even develop custom program websites.



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Building Flexible & Sustainable Funding Models

Title funding has consistently been an option for increasing equitable access to enrichment programs. Stimulus bills including the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) have also provided funding for extended-day enrichment and summer camp. In order to ensure sustainability and continued access, districts should be looking for enrichment partners who can provide flexible funding models to ensure both short and long-term access to programs.

PARENT-PAID

Parents pay for their children's enrollment



DISTRICT-PAID

Districts fund or partially fund student enrollment with a mix of federal, state, or local funds



HYBRID

A combination of funding options





& Your School District

PARTNERSHIPS

How Right At School Can Help You

a place to
**BE A
KID!**

As the official after school provider of AASA, the School Superintendents Association, Right At School is committed to working with schools and districts to provide the most effective program model for their students. We are dedicated to building strategic partnerships with district leaders, cultivating strong family engagement, and reinforcing educators' systems of student support.

While Right At School can't cure the staffing shortage, we can alleviate some of the symptoms (e.g., learning disruptions, lagging student achievement, etc.), making life easier for school leaders and staff as well as more enriching for students.



Right At School is the official after school provider of AASA.

Right At School can ease the burden on educators and provide high-quality programming to help students receive the educational support they need to accelerate learning.

Our extended learning programs provide up to **20 additional hours per week** of academic enrichment and social-emotional learning so students have more opportunities to improve core competencies by practicing essential skills.

- We can provide extended learning programs before and after school.
- We can offer electives, non-school day programs, preschool, summer camps, etc.
- We communicate and interact regularly with teachers, school faculty, staff, and PTA/O to support successful outcomes for students.
- Our extended-day enrichment curriculum has built-in dedicated time for homework support.
- We can provide recess management.
- Students see the same friendly, trusted educators daily, so they experience emotional consistency.



The Right At School HR team hires quickly and all the hired educators must meet strict qualifications and state-level requirements.

- Educational requirements
- Background checks
- First aid and CPR certifications
- Mandated Reporter

+20

hours per week of academic enrichment and social-emotional learning

ALL OF THIS MEANS THAT AS AN ADMINISTRATOR, YOU'RE ABLE TO FOCUS ON YOUR TOP PRIORITIES.

Plus, we can help you build a teacher pipeline and support your efforts to achieve equity among your schools.

WE CAN:

- ✓ **Hire a local team** to manage enrollment, billing, payroll, parent communications, marketing, training, implementation, program evaluation, and more
- ✓ **Serve every school** in the district where there is demand and scale up to accommodate all families who need care, so there are no waitlists
- ✓ **Accept state and local childcare subsidies**, offer discounts for students eligible for free or reduced lunch, etc.
- ✓ **Share revenue** with your district, e.g., in the form of scholarships for low-income families

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS' WORK IN THE FACE OF STAFF SHORTAGES



Let's get started!

Call us at **855-AT-SCHOOL** or visit our website to schedule a chat with a member of our partnership team.

RIGHTATSCHOOL.COM

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