

**ALLEGHENY PARTNERS FOR
OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT
(APOST QSA)

We would like to thank the following organizations for participating in the interviews and discussions used to develop the indicators in this self-assessment:

Beverly Jewel Wall Lovelace Children's Program
(BJWL) of Family Resources

Boys and Girls Clubs of Western PA

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Hill House Association

Human Services Center Corporation

Manchester Youth Development Corporation

Mount Ararat Baptist Church Community Center

Propel and Heritage Health Foundation 21st CCLC Program

Sarah Heinz House

Schenley Heights Community Development Center

The Pittsburgh Project

Turtle Creek Valley MH/MR

Wireless Neighborhoods

YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh

YouthPlaces, Inc.

YouthWorks, Inc.

YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh

I. Overview of the APOST QSA

WHY WAS THE APOST QSA DEVELOPED?

The purpose of the Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time Quality Self-Assessment (APOST QSA) is to help all out-of-school time staff understand that providing high quality services known to promote student development is a continuous process. As such, the APOST QSA is a resource for out-of-school programs in Allegheny County that serve youth of all ages. Programs should use the self-assessment to identify current weaknesses and strengths in providing high quality afterschool programs to youth participants. Armed with this knowledge, programs then can focus professional development and technical assistance requests to obtain supports in areas where quality practices need strengthening.

HOW WAS APOST QSA DEVELOPED?

The APOST QSA is a comprehensive look at the quality program elements of the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) whose mission is that all children and youth deserve access to high-quality, out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood. PSAYDN promotes sustainable, high-quality, out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families.

PSAYDN's *Program Quality Value Statement* provides principles and ideals that a cross-section of out-of-school time leaders across Pennsylvania identified as important to guide the actions of afterschool programming, regardless of program purpose or ages served. The Statement provides a straightforward framework to define quality for Pennsylvania's afterschool programs and all other individuals, organizations, and entities that have a vested interest in the quality of these programs, including public and private funders, parents, and youth.

The APOST QSA is a uniquely developed self-assessment for afterschool providers in Allegheny County because it uses the basic principles of the PSAYDN Quality Statement and creates indicators for those principles based on listening to the voices of local out-of-school time providers. Specifically, seventeen out-of-school time administrators, program directors, frontline staff, and intermediaries throughout Allegheny County participated in interviews lasting one to two hours to identify their practices based on questions derived from the PSAYDN Quality Statement. The interviewed programs represent a mixture of small, large, inner-city, and county afterschool programs that work with youth in grades pre-kindergarten to 12, offering specific and/or multi-layered services. A thorough review of current afterschool literature and research also was conducted to assure appropriateness of the indicators provided by the interviewees.

II. Using the APOST QSA

PART A: UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The APOST QSA is organized into four elements identified by PSAYDN to ensure quality programming: 1). Structure and Management, 2). Positive Connections, 3). Safety and Health, and 4). Activities.

1). Structure and Management

A quality program recruits, hires, and trains diverse staff members who value each participant, understand developmental needs, and form positive working relationships with youth, parents, colleagues, and other partners. Needs-based training and professional development are provided to strengthen and improve staff skills.

2). Positive Connections

A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, families, schools and communities. Staff model cooperative and respectful behavior toward youth and adults and facilitate activities that foster personal growth and social competence. Cultivating strong partnerships with families, schools, and community organizations expands the program's ability to address and support youth needs, strengths, and interests.

3). Safety and Health

A quality program provides a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all participants. Program policies and procedures ensure that staff are professionally qualified and trained, youth are supervised, and the physical space is suitable for all activities being conducted.

4). Activities

A quality program provides a variety of learning experiences that support the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth and development of all participants. Active involvement in intentionally designed learning experiences provides youth the opportunity to explore their interests, build talents, and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Participation in program planning, real world learning, and service-learning projects promote the development of leadership skills and positive involvement in the community.

PART B: UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOST QSA: HOW IS THE APOST QSA RATING TABLE STRUCTURED?

The structure for each area of the APOST QSA rating tables include:

- **Elements:** The four categories in the PSAYDN Quality Value Statement.
- **Guiding Principles:** The quality outcomes listed under each PSAYDN Quality Value Statement element.
- **Indicators:** Descriptive statements used to elicit the examples of quality practices during the interview process.
- **Performance Levels:** The APOST QSA uses the following rating scale to guide assessment of the quality indicator performance level under each quality program element. At each level, examples are provided based on the interview responses and an assessment of which practices indicated particular levels of quality.

Performance Level 1: Our program needs significant support in this area

Performance Level 2: Our program could use additional focused assistance in this indicator area

Performance Level 3: Our program demonstrates achievement in this area

Performance Level 4: Our program could help and support others in this area

PART C: UNDERSTANDING HOW TO USE THE APOST QSA: HOW DO I USE THE RATING TABLES?

- 1.** Answer the Indicator question based on practices in your program. You can even write your response right under the question in that area of the table.
- 2.** Look at how your peers responded to the question. See which of the provided examples of responses at the various Performance Levels best matches your response.
- 3.** Write the Performance Level rating that best matches your response to the Indicator question under the “Rating” column.
- 4.** Use the “Comments” column to provide any pertinent examples or justification related to your program’s Performance Level rating.
- 5.** At the end of each Element section, add up all your ratings for that Element to get a total score. You also can provide summary comments for the Element section as a whole.
- 6.** Use the “Self-Assessment Summary” form on page 25 to transfer your Element section total scores so you can look at all of your ratings across areas to determine where you may want to focus plans to strengthen your program.
- 7.** Complete the “Continuous Quality Improvement Action Plan” form to highlight plans for how you can strengthen your quality practices. For instance, you might identify professional development opportunities for staff or technical assistance needs that can be addressed via capacity-building organizations in Allegheny County.

Quality out-of-school time programs inspire and promote learning and positive youth development by providing opportunities for autonomy and leadership, caring relationships, connections to the family, community and school safe environments, and engaging activities.

—Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 1: STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle 1: Well-trained, consistent staff and volunteers that represent the community being served

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Implements a standard hiring process that ensures all staff including, paid, volunteers, and interns, have the personal attributes, ability to learn needed skills, and professional qualifications appropriate for their position.</p>	<p>No standardized hiring process in place.</p>	<p>Hiring process in place and clearances required</p>	<p>A standardized selection and hiring practice is in place and implemented in accordance to written job descriptions. Staff hired based on their knowledge, skills and youth development experience. Successful candidate has passed all required clearances.</p>	<p>A standardized selection and hiring practice is in place and implemented in accordance to written job descriptions for all available positions. Job description clear articulates core competencies of the position and includes position title, direct report, required qualifications, job duties and salary range. Staff hired based on their knowledge, skills and youth development experience. Successful candidate has passed all required clearances. The hiring process includes reference checks.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 1: STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle 1: Well-trained, consistent staff and volunteers that represent the community being served

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>2). Strives to recruit a diverse group of staff who reflect the racial, ethnic, gender, family, and community characteristics of the youth participants.</p>	<p>Staff members are recruited and hired without consideration of the diversity and culture of the community.</p>	<p>Staff members are recruited from, hired from and are reflective of the community and surrounding areas.</p>	<p>Staff members are recruited and hired with consideration of the diversity and culture of the community; recruitment efforts target local professionals and referrals from community/partnering agencies, school districts, colleges and universities, and/or current staff.</p>	<p>Staff members are recruited and hired with careful consideration of the diversity and culture of the community; recruitment efforts target local professionals and referrals from community/partnering agencies, school districts, colleges and universities, and/or current staff. The program staff represents a variety of ages, races, ethnicities, academic backgrounds, etc.</p>		
<p>3). Provides paid on-going professional development opportunities including workshops, conferences, etc. to all staff including paid, volunteer, and interns on a quarterly or more frequent basis to address the unique characteristics of youth and families. Examples include working with supporting students' academic success, discussing sensitive issues with parents, working with youth with special needs or disabilities, conflict resolution, and behavior management.</p>	<p>Do not provide or encourage staff professional development.</p>	<p>Staff are required to participate in internal staffing, training and professional development meetings. Staff are encouraged to seek external job-related professional development and/or education opportunities, but no funding or leave time is offered.</p>	<p>Provide a minimum allowance of at least six hours annually for staff to attend job-related professional development and/or education activities. Staff are also provided information about certification programs and education opportunities.</p>	<p>The program places great value in attending conferences, workshops, or other types of training and allows staff to attend paid local, state, and national trainings to develop more skills related to youth development and overall program advancement. Staff are required bring back information from trainings to share with colleagues. Staff are encouraged to seek education and training related to their job, is provided information about certification programs and education opportunities, and the program provides full or partial scholarships.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 1: STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle 1: Well-trained, consistent staff and volunteers that represent the community being served

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>4). Provides all staff including paid, volunteer and interns with an orientation that includes a review of the job description, personnel policies and policy standards.</p>	<p>No clear expectations for staff performance. An employee handbook and job descriptions are not available.</p>	<p>Staff has little awareness of performance expectations. Written job descriptions exist but are not shared or reviewed with staff.</p>	<p>All newly hired staff receive an employee handbook and participate in an orientation outlining job expectations, and program policies and procedures.</p>	<p>All newly hired staff receive an employee handbook and participate in an interactive training that describes the job expectations, and program policies and procedures. The program supervisor meets with each staff member to discuss performance and to set individual professional development goals.</p>		
<p>5). Tracks annual turnover rates of all staffing levels and implements strategies to maintain a consistent workforce and staff-to-participant ratio.</p>	<p>Staff development opportunities are offered infrequently and staff does not feel they are learning or advancing professionally, thus creating a high staff turnover rate. The program does not maintain the staff-to-participant ratio as mandated by state regulations.</p>	<p>Staff development opportunities are offered throughout the year on an irregular basis. Staff sometimes feel they are learning new information, but often do not feel they are advancing professionally. The program tries to maintain the staff-to-participant ratio mandated by state regulations.</p>	<p>Staff development opportunities are offered regularly throughout the year and the trainings topics are designed with input from the staff, thus they feel like they are learning and advancing professionally. The program always maintains the staff-to-participant ratio mandated by state regulations.</p>	<p>Staff development opportunities are scheduled regularly throughout the year and the trainings are designed collaboratively with all staff levels. The staff is encouraged to continue participating because the trainings are scaffolded. Staff are learning new information and provided opportunities to advance professionally within the organization. The program always meets the staff-to-participant ratio mandated by state regulations, thus keeping the youth engaged in the program at all times.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 2: POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Guiding Principle 1: Positive relationships between and among youth and staff

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Has staff that respect and communicate with one another and youth; and are role models of cooperation, behavior, conflict resolution, and positive adult relationships.</p>	<p>Participants are not taught to develop and maintain positive relationships, nor are these skills modeled by staff.</p>	<p>Participants are not taught and seldom see modeling of respect and positive communication and relationships.</p>	<p>Staff are generally cooperative and respectful of one another. A majority of the staff informally practice positive team and communication strategies and try to make time to connect with the youth individually.</p>	<p>Staff are always cooperative, respectful of one another and work through conflicts. Staff has adequate professional development to teach, model, and support positive behavior, cooperation and respect among youth.</p>		
<p>2). Provides team and relationship building activities to all staff including paid, volunteer, and interns on a quarterly or more frequent basis. Examples include having staff lunches, team meetings, staff outings/ retreats, etc.</p>	<p>Staff rarely works as a team and they do not take the initiative to work together to better serve the participants.</p>	<p>Staff works as a team in order to better serve the participants without formal organizational support.</p>	<p>Staff works as a team in order to better serve the participants. The program offers team relationship building for staff through professional development trainings and/or by providing work related functions, such as staff meetings, and occasional staff lunches.</p>	<p>Staff works as team and develop strategies for utilizing each other's skills to better serve the participants. The program has a staff committee to plan team-relationship building opportunities for staff including regularly scheduled staff outings/retreats, monthly meetings, and/or a peer mentoring program for new staff.</p>		
<p>3). Has clearly defined behavior policies and discipline procedures that are communicated to youth participants, their families, and staff through parent, staff, and youth handbooks, orientations, and/or meetings.</p>	<p>Formal written behavior policies and discipline procedures do not exist.</p>	<p>Program has written behavior policies and discipline procedures. Most participants and parents/guardians are made aware of behavior expectations following a behavioral incident.</p>	<p>Program has written behavior policies and discipline procedures. All participants are proactively made aware of the behavior expectations and are encouraged to follow them.</p>	<p>Behavior expectations are created jointly by participants and families. All participants sign a behavior conduct form and know who to address if there is a concern. Feedback on behavioral issues is proactive and reciprocal.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 2: POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Guiding Principle 1: Positive relationships between and among youth and staff

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>4). Staff implements consistent rewards and consequences for participant behaviors.</p>	<p>No system for rewarding or applying consequences for participants' behaviors.</p>	<p>Inconsistent system in place for rewarding or applying consequences for participants' behaviors. Each staff person addresses the participants' behaviors in their own way.</p>	<p>System for rewarding or applying consequences for participants' behaviors according to the expectations listed in the program's behavior policy. Each staff person addresses the participants' behaviors in a consistent way, in accordance with documented policy.</p>	<p>System for rewarding or applying consequences for participants' behaviors according to expectations listed in the program's behavior policy that defines, good behavior and behavior in need for improvement. The participants are aware of the behavioral expectations and staff always reference the policy to ensure consistent application of rewards and consequences.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 2: POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Guiding Principle 2: Strong partnerships with families, schools, businesses, and other community stakeholders

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Staff provides partners and stakeholders (parents, youth, community agencies, schools, business, funders) with regular updates about program events, activities, and achievements in a variety of formats such as through a program website, newsletters, scheduled meetings, flyers, and/or via emails.</p>	<p>Program works independently from other community agencies and does not have clearly defined stakeholders. No resources or information is shared.</p>	<p>Program occasionally works with other community agencies, but with very little interaction with stakeholders. Limited sharing of resources or information with partners and/or stakeholders.</p>	<p>Program often collaborates with other community agencies and its stakeholders through sharing information about the program regularly via scheduled meetings, email, and newsletters.</p>	<p>The program regularly and consistently collaborates with other community agencies and its stakeholders both formally and informally through a variety of formats. This has a positive impact on the program to reach community and program goals for youth and families.</p>		
<p>2). Obtains input from stakeholders (parents, youth, community agencies, schools, business, funders) about program performance through a variety of ways such as parent/youth surveys, parent meetings, community advisory boards, focus groups, etc.</p>	<p>Input is occasionally received through informal conversations with youth, families, and with stakeholders to assess program activities; input is generally not reflected in program activity.</p>	<p>One main input method is implemented to gather ideas on adding new additions to the program.</p>	<p>Program employs several methods (surveys, advisory meetings, focus groups, etc) regularly to gather input from some stakeholders. The information is reviewed and used to make improvements in the program design.</p>	<p>Program employs several methods (surveys, advisory meetings, focus groups, etc) regularly to gather input from multiple stakeholders, which are invited at different points to reflect, plan, and participate in continuous program improvements that align with the program goals.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 2: POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Guiding Principle 2: Strong partnerships with families, schools, businesses, and other community stakeholders

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>3). Accesses resources within the community by seeking support from and building relationships with local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials.</p>	<p>Program's relationship with local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials is not clearly defined.</p>	<p>Program has built and maintains at least one or two relationships with local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials who has provided small or one time resources and/or monetary support.</p>	<p>Program has formal connections with several local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials. Community partners are aware of and support the program by giving occasional goods, services, and monetary gifts through annual program campaigns or service-learning partnerships.</p>	<p>Program is closely connected and maintains strong, ongoing, relationships with local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials. All staff are well versed in the program's mission and goals and cultivate relationships to obtain support and resources from local businesses, colleges, universities, community leaders, and elected officials. The resources and/or monetary supports are targeted towards specific program areas.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 2: POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

Guiding Principle 3: Opportunities for youth to contribute to the well-being of the community

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>1). Offers youth participants opportunities to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions about deciding on service-learning and community projects, some of which include formal and informal conversations, surveys, and youth councils.</p>	<p>Participants have no opportunity to express their ideas about selecting service-learning and community service projects.</p>	<p>Program occasionally provides opportunities for participants to express their ideas about selecting service-learning and community service projects.</p>	<p>Program is designed to encourage participants to express their ideas about selecting service-learning and community service projects.</p>	<p>Staff ensures that programming includes meaningful and relevant youth-driven service-learning and community service projects.</p>		
<p>2). Offers youth opportunities to engage in their community through service-learning and community service projects such as planting a community garden, neighborhood clean-ups, volunteering with the elderly, peer mentoring, etc.</p>	<p>Participants have no opportunity to engage in their community through service-learning and community service projects.</p>	<p>The program occasionally engages participants in their community through service-learning and community service projects.</p>	<p>Program regularly engages participants in their community through service-learning and community service projects. The program collaborates with the community and community-based organizations to discuss possible service- project opportunities.</p>	<p>Program engages participants in their community through service-learning and community service projects, which are incorporated into the regular program schedule. The program regularly collaborates with the community and community-based organizations to discuss possible service- project opportunities, and these partners contribute various resources for the project.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 1: Safe and accessible environment

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>1). Provides emergency procedure trainings, and staff and youth know what to do in case of a general emergency.</p>	<p>Program has no formal safety plan.</p>	<p>Program has developed a written safety plan, but it is not posted or shared.</p>	<p>Program has developed a written safety plan that is posted and shared with participants, staff, and families via respective handbooks.</p>	<p>Program has written policies and procedures, which are updated annually to ensure the health and safety of youth participants and staff. The plan is communicated to staff, parents and youth. Staff are trained during their orientation on safety procedures and incident reporting requirements, and they are prepared to handle an emergency.</p>		
<p>2). Conducts all required fire/safety drills at a minimum of four times year.</p>	<p>Fire and safety drills are never conducted.</p>	<p>Fire and safety drills are sometimes conducted, but are not conducted properly or frequently enough to meet requirements.</p>	<p>Fire and safety drills are conducted regularly and meet all requirements.</p>	<p>Fire and safety drills occur more frequently than the requirements mandate. Staff members assess the outcomes of fire drills for continuous improvement.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 1: Safe and accessible environment

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>3). Has youth participant files that include emergency contact information, medical release forms, allergy and health information.</p>	<p>Emergency and medical forms are incomplete or not current. Forms are filed in a location that is inaccessible to staff.</p>	<p>Program requests emergency and medical forms and receives them from each participant. Forms are kept on file, and most staff know where to access them.</p>	<p>Program requests emergency and medical forms and receives them from each participant. Forms are kept on file, and all staff are told where the records can be accessed. Staff asks families to share updates to the medical records as necessary.</p>	<p>Program requires emergency and medical forms and receives them from each participant. Forms are reviewed by staff and special health needs are flagged; forms are then kept on file. Staff members are informed of relevant special health needs of participants, such as food allergies. Medical and contact forms are reviewed on an annual basis.</p>		
<p>4). Provides adequate safety and security which may include having security guards, cameras, and alarms, sign-in/sign-out procedures, staff identification shirts or badges, and proper staff/student ratio according to the age group of students.</p>	<p>No security is provided for the program.</p>	<p>Security is informally handled by staff. Staff must monitor the safety of program participants. Participants are always supervised by an adult.</p>	<p>During staff orientation, staff are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. Participants are always supervised by an approved adult according to documented regulations and program policies.</p>	<p>During staff orientation, staff are taught how to ensure the security of the program, including keeping participants safe and monitoring external guests. Staff are required to wear visual identification at all times and the program participants must sign-in and sign-out during program hours. Participants are always supervised by multiple, approved adults according to documented regulations and program policies.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 1: Safe and accessible environment

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>5). Requires that all staff including paid, volunteers, and interns have approved Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Records Checks, and FBI Clearances updated yearly.</p>	<p>Program does not require all staff to have approved Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Records Checks, and FBI Clearances.</p>	<p>Program requires all staff to have approved Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Records Checks, and FBI Clearances; however there is no preemptive updating.</p>	<p>Program requires all staff to have approved Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Records Checks, and FBI Clearances. Staff are randomly selected to have their clearances updated.</p>	<p>Program requires all staff to have approved Child Abuse Clearances, Criminal Records Checks, and FBI Clearances. All front-line and administrative staff must get their clearances updated yearly. Clearances are paid for by the agency.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 2: Clean & well maintained facilities

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Has indoor/outdoor equipment and space that meets state and local health, safety and cleanliness requirements.</p>	<p>Program space is rarely or never cleaned. Facilities, equipment, and other materials are not checked to ensure that they are safe and free from hazards.</p>	<p>Program space is cleaned when staff members have the time to do so. Facilities, equipment, and other materials are occasionally checked for safety.</p>	<p>Program space is regularly cleaned by program staff and custodians or a professional cleaning staff. Facilities, equipment, and other materials are routinely checked and maintenance is performed when necessary.</p>	<p>Program space is regularly cleaned at the end of each day. Facilities, equipment, and other materials are frequently checked and maintenance is performed when necessary. An assigned staff person routinely conducts a walk-through of the program space to ensure that all aspects of the space are clean and safe. Cleaning supplies and emergency supplies are accessible for emergency situations.</p>		
<p>2). Has policies and procedures regarding the use and maintenance of the indoor/outdoor area facilities and for regularly checking safety repairs.</p>	<p>No written policy or procedure in place regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment.</p>	<p>Written policy or procedure in place regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment.</p>	<p>Written policy or procedure in place regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment. Has defined staff roles, and/or identified contractors that are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment.</p>	<p>Written policy or procedure in place regarding the upkeep and maintenance of the indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment. Has defined staff roles, and/or identified contractors that are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance indoor/outdoor area facilities and equipment. Staff members are trained on the maintenance procedures and how to use emergency supplies.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 3: Programming and environments, which promotes fitness, good nutrition, and healthy choices

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Has access to enough equipment, supplies, and space that is appropriate and suitable for physical activities that meets the needs of all youth. For example, there is adequate space to incorporate all projects described in the SPARK or CATCH physical activity curriculums.</p>	<p>Program does not have adequate space and/or equipment for the activities offered at the site.</p>	<p>Program has enough space and is adequately equipped for a number of activities offered at the site. The selection of activities varies slightly, but is dictated by space and material restraints rather than enrichment or engagement of students.</p>	<p>Program space allows staff to run activities that use varied spaces and different types of materials and equipment. Enough open space is available to offer a range of sports and other physical games.</p>	<p>Program space allows staff to run a variety of activities that use varied spaces and different types of materials and equipment. There is enough space, including fields or other open spaces, to offer most sports and other physical games.</p>		
<p>2). Provides healthy nutritious snacks and/or dinner in accordance state and federal guidelines. Program utilizes partnerships with outside business or companies such as Good Apples, Nutrition, Inc, Gordon Food Services, Food Bank, etc. to provide snacks.</p>	<p>Participants may choose to bring their own snacks/light meal, but food is not provided by the program.</p>	<p>Snacks and/or a lunch/dinner is provided on some days. The options are based on what is readily available that day.</p>	<p>A snack/and or lunch/dinner is provided everyday with a consideration of healthy and compliance with Allegheny County food program.</p>	<p>Healthy, nutritious snacks and/or lunch/dinner is provided daily in accordance with Allegheny County and USDA nutrition guidelines offering at least one item from each of the following food groups: dairy, protein, fruit and vegetables, and grain. Special health needs such as food allergies are taken into consideration. Youth are offered opportunities to learn about healthy eating through program activities such as cooking, mentoring, and life-skills classes conducted by trained staff.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 3: SAFETY AND HEALTH

Guiding Principle 3: Programming and environments, which promotes fitness, good nutrition, and healthy choices

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
3). Offers youth participants the opportunity to engage in daily moderate- to-vigorous physical activity that is molded by staff.	Program offers unstructured recreation and sports.	Program offers structured recreation, sports, and physical activities.	Program offers regularly structured recreation, sports, and physical activities, such as SPARK that are supervised by staff.	Program offers daily structured recreation, sports, and various physical activities that engage all youth. A trained staff person or professional contractor is also fully engaged in the activities.		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 1: Activities, which are intentionally designed, are age-appropriate, develop skills, promote learning, and foster positive youth development

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>1). Activities are intentionally planned to align with the clear mission statement and goals of the program and to promote the development of all youth.</p>	<p>Program’s mission and goals are unclear, and the activities do not align with the mission.</p>	<p>Program has a written mission statement and goals. Activities that reflect the program mission are prioritized, but some activities that do not reflect the mission are offered.</p>	<p>Program has a clear, written statement of mission and goals. The program’s mission serves as the foundation for all selected activities.</p>	<p>Program has a clearly written mission statement with directly aligned goals to achieve it. The program mission serves as the foundation for all activities developed and selected. Activity and lesson plans include explanations detailing how the activity supports the program mission.</p>		
<p>2). Addresses the academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of the participants which incorporates a variety of age-appropriate instructional strategies to help youth participants build and master skills and content.</p>	<p>Activities are not selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. There is no evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.</p>	<p>Activities are selected with some consideration of the age and skill level of the participants. Staff members are unaware of youth developmental stages. There is some anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year.</p>	<p>Program focuses on aspects of youth’s strengths and needs, including academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. Activities are selected based on the age and skill level of the participants. Staff consider youth developmental stages when planning activities. There is some research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can often select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.</p>	<p>Program focuses on aspects of youth’s strengths and needs, including academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. Participants are broken into small activity groups so activities can be selected and tailored based on the age and skill level of each participant. Staff consider youth developmental stages when planning activities and monitor participants’ development across stages. There is significant research-based and anecdotal evidence that participants develop new skills during the program year. Participants can always select from a number of activities that expose them to new concepts and skill-building opportunities.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 1: Activities, which are intentionally designed, are age-appropriate, develop skills, promote learning, and foster positive youth development

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>3). Staff including paid, volunteers, and interns receive training to help them effectively implement age and skill appropriate activities and equip staff to understand youth's interests, talents, life experiences, and developmental needs.</p>	<p>Staff are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, but do not receive training in this area.</p>	<p>Staff are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and have access to printed information about youth developmental stages. Limited training on youth development is offered.</p>	<p>Staff are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and receive printed information about youth developmental stages during staff orientation. Trainings on youth development and activity planning are held throughout the year.</p>	<p>Staff are expected to plan suitable activities for participants, and receive printed information about youth developmental stages during staff orientation. Staff members participate in trainings prior to the start of the program year, which are conducted by trained content professionals or in collaboration with school district partners. The trainings cover youth developmental stages, age appropriate activities, academic learning standards, afterschool curricula use, and lesson planning.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 2: Activities, which contain varied content, learning strategies and combine different academic, recreational, and cultural elements

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Offers structured, engaging experiences that address the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and creative domains of youth development.</p>	<p>Program activities are narrow in scope and focus only on one or two aspects of youth needs, such as academic or physical.</p>	<p>Program includes several aspects of youth needs but is not designed to fully address all of them. Some participants are disengaged in the program because it does not address their individual needs.</p>	<p>Program offers daily opportunities in the areas of recreation and fitness, academic support, life skills, and personal growth and development on the scheduled program calendar.</p>	<p>Program offers daily opportunities in the areas of recreation, health and fitness, academic support, life skills mentoring, and arts and cultural activities that are scheduled daily on the program calendar and led by a trained staff person and/or a youth leader. Youth participants have the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of activities and formats that meet their interests and help promote their development.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 3: Activities, which are youth-centered, are responsive to youth interests, and actively involve youth in program development, planning, and implementation

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>1). Encourages youth input and participation in program activity planning, field trip selections, and implementation by having youth provide formal and informal opportunities to evaluate activities, be involved in the decision making process, and have opportunities to lead activities.</p>	<p>There are no opportunities for youth to be involved in decision-making, to contribute to the direction of programming, or to express their interests. Youth are assigned to activities and tasks rather than given choices.</p>	<p>The youth are seldom asked for their opinions and ideas for enhancing activities. Although staff understand the importance of providing young people choice, it is not done consistently.</p>	<p>Youth are encouraged to provide feedback on the program. Staff provide opportunities for youth choice by administering monthly surveys on program options.</p>	<p>Youth are always encouraged to provide feedback on the program. All staff provide multiple opportunities for youth to express their ideas, concerns, and opinions through monthly youth council meetings, quarterly youth surveys, regularly scheduled focus groups or as needed. The youth are included on the program planning committee and leadership team. Staff have follow-up conversations with youth to tell them how their feedback was addresses.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 3: Activities, which are youth-centered, are responsive to youth interests, and actively involve youth in program development, planning, and implementation

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>2). Integrates opportunities for the development of youth personal responsibility, self-direction, and leadership throughout the program.</p>	<p>Staff schedule participants' activities with no leadership opportunities or areas of responsibility for youth. Staff make decisions and solve issues for youth as they arise.</p>	<p>Staff decide and schedule most activities with youth providing input on an occasional and informal basis. Staff members make most decisions for youth, but occasionally ask a few youth to speak or lead an activity.</p>	<p>The program has created a youth leadership team to provide input and feedback and assist with activity selection. Participants can often choose from a variety of leadership roles and opportunities in the program.</p>	<p>An adult and youth leadership team plans, implements, and assesses all aspects of the program. Youth receive extensive leadership training and have meaningful voices, roles, and participation. Youth feel ownership of the program and know that they play a significant role in their success and the success of the program. All activities and projects encourage youth to discover their strengths and set and achieve personal goals with support from peers and the staff.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 4: Activities, which promote understanding and respect for youth's and others' cultures

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES				RATING	COMMENTS
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4		
<p>1). Environment, activities and policies reflect positive regard for the youth, families and their cultural backgrounds and promote positive interactions.</p>	<p>No formal policies are established to build relationships with arts, cultural, and other community organizations to enhance program activities. The program offers some site-based arts and cultural programming. Staff members are of participants' cultures.</p>	<p>The program is aware of arts, cultural, and community organizations to enhance programming and occasionally takes advantage of a community-based opportunity to expand upon on-site programming. Staff are sometimes aware of participants' cultures.</p>	<p>The program has built relationships with several arts, cultural, and community organizations and regularly enhances on-site programming with related community opportunities. These opportunities provide youth with new experiences and learning opportunities. Staff are aware of and demonstrate respect for participants' cultures.</p>	<p>The program has built strong partnerships and regularly collaborates with arts, cultural, and community organizations. Staff work with community organizations to develop and enhance programming for youth and their families. Expanded on-site and off-site opportunities are provided. Families, youth and staff are regularly surveyed to assist with program design and activities. Arts and cultural programs educate and promote the strengths of the population being served as well as educate on the strengths and contributions of other populations. Staff are aware of participants' cultures, and are mandated to attend trainings on cultural sensitivity to learn more to ensure that they are respectful of the participants, families, and culture.</p>		

QUALITY PROGRAM ELEMENT 4: ACTIVITIES

Guiding Principle 4: Activities, which promote understanding and respect for youth’s and others’ cultures

OUR PROGRAM	PERFORMANCE LEVEL EXAMPLES					
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4	RATING	COMMENTS
<p>2). Offers youth opportunities to explore, share, and celebrate their heritage and culture with others. Examples include attending cultural plays and field trips, having special celebrations, and participating in interactive cultural arts lessons.</p>	<p>Activities are mostly planned without consideration for the culture of the participants.</p>	<p>Activities are often planned with consideration for the culture of the participants.</p>	<p>Activities are always planned with consideration for the culture of the participants. The participants’ cultures are often clearly highlighted through activities, therefore allowing participants to showcase themselves throughout the year.</p>	<p>Activities are always planned with consideration for the culture of the participants. The participants’ cultures are often clearly highlighted through activities, therefore allowing participants to showcase themselves throughout the year. The program is designed with the community to celebrate the cultures in the community and to expose participants in positive ways to a variety of cultures.</p>		
TOTAL SCORE FOR THIS SECTION:						
COMMENTS:						

**ALLEGHENY
PARTNERS
FOR OUT-OF-
SCHOOL TIME**

**QUALITY
SELF-ASSESSMENT**

SUMMARY

SECTION	YOUR SCORE	NOTES
Structure and Management : Well-trained, consistent staff and volunteers that represent the community being served	/20	
Positive Connections: Positive relationships between and among youth and staff	/16	
Positive Connections: Strong partnerships with families, schools, businesses, and other community stakeholders	/12	
Positive Connections: Opportunities for youth to contribute to the well-being of the community	/8	
Safety and Health: Safe and accessible environment	/20	
Safety and Health: Clean & well maintained facilities	/8	
Safety and Health: Programming and environments, which promotes fitness, good nutrition, and healthy choices	/12	
Activities: Activities, which are intentionally designed, are age-appropriate, develop skills, promote learning, and foster positive youth development	/12	
Activities: Activities, which contain varied content, learning strategies and combine different academic, recreational, and cultural elements	/4	
Activities: Activities, which are youth-centered, are responsive to youth interests, and actively involve youth in program development, planning, and implementation	/8	
Activities: Activities, which promote understanding and respect for youth's and others' cultures	/8	

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN FORM

As part of the self-assessment process, an action plan to strengthen our quality practices might include:

QUALITY AREA	ACTION PLAN
Structure and Management	
Positive Connections	
Safety and Health	
Activities	

References

The following reports, assessment tools, and websites were used in the creation of the Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time Quality Self-Assessment:

1. California After-school Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool and Guide
2. Harvard Family Research Project www.hfrp.org
3. Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools, Yohalem, Wilson-Ahlstrom, Fischer, Shinn. (2007) Impact Strategies.
4. Missouri Afterschool Program Self-Assessment
5. New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) Program Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool <http://www.nysan.org/>
6. Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network www.PSAYDN.org
7. Practitioner's Guide to Building and Managing Quality Afterschool Programs Guide; National Center for Quality Afterschool
8. Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool: Planning for Ongoing Program Improvement (2005)
9. SEDL www.sedl.org/afterschool
10. Utah Afterschool Program Quality Assessment and Improvement Tool
11. Youth Program Quality Assessment, Adams, Brickman, McMahon. (2005) High/Scope Education Research Foundation.