

# Building a System to Promote Healthy Youth During Out-of-School Time in Greater East St. Louis

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## Background

The development of a community-wide out-of-school time system presents a promising approach to child and youth well-being. This poster examines the development of a collective effort to address academic and health disparities among school-aged youth throughout the East St. Louis School District 189. This work ultimately seeks to improve population-level youth outcomes related to academic success, physical health, and social-emotional well-being.

## Approach

To achieve these outcomes, partnering organizations seek to develop system-level: 1.) *Access*, 2.) *Infrastructure* and 3.) *Supports for continuous improvement*. In the following table, specific outcomes for each area of system-level development are outlined (Every Hour Counts, 2014).

System-Level Development	System-Level Outcomes
<i>Access</i>	Increased program slots in underserved areas
<i>Infrastructure</i>	A coordinating entity that includes public and private partners and a shared vision among partners
	Program standards and evaluation tools
<i>System Supports for Continuous Improvement</i>	Coordinated training and technical assistance provided to partners

## Progress & Lessons Learned

### Access

- Hired 39 new staff
- Served 1,286 unique youth in out-of-school programs during the 2016-17 school year
- Identified gaps in access to out-of-school time programs, using district and program data
- Identified need to assess barriers to program participation and transportation



### Infrastructure

- Developed a shared vision (key to developing a sustainable system)
- Mobilized resources for dedicated coordination staff
- Began to align program and school district data
- Expanded youth voice and leadership practices

### System Supports for Continuous Improvement

- A computer-based reading assessment allowed out-of-school providers to gather data on reading performance
- Training in a character development curriculum was implemented across providers

- Program quality improvement practices were made to strengthen service provision
- Program-level evaluation has progressed to consideration of system-level evaluation

*“For this go around, this year, we’re doing better by taking it a step at a time and making sure that all staff are properly trained before really jumping into something.”*

-Out-of-School Time Provider

## Conclusions & Future Directions

This community-based effort across organizations to develop an out-of-school time system has documented progress towards improving outcomes for youth served in greater East St. Louis.

The out-of-school time providers have considered their work at a youth, program, and system-level.

Use of the Every Hour Counts Measurement Framework has:

- Facilitated system-level thinking
- Directed efforts to improve outcomes for children and youth in out-of-school time

Through intentional investment in the capacity of service providers to collaborate in delivering high-quality programs to more youth, the workforce of youth development professionals is improving in East St. Louis School District 189.

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