



## Expanding Out-of-School Time Opportunities for Philly Kids:

### Recommendations for the 100<sup>th</sup> Mayor

Philadelphia has an incredible resource that any city administration has yet to fully tap for the city’s 322,000 children. In neighborhoods, schools, recreation centers, and libraries across the city, hundreds of caring adults support the learning and development of children and youth in afterschool and summer programs – out-of-school time (OST) programs, for short – that young people love and parents trust.

Extensive research shows that engagement in OST programs yields significant benefits. Children and youth perform better in school, gain valuable work experiences, develop socioemotional skills, and are more likely to complete high school. Parents feel good at their jobs because they know their children are safe and supported while they are at work. In other words, OST programming is a way to improve educational outcomes, create economic opportunity, and makes neighborhoods safe.

**Yet, only 25,330 kids participate in afterschool, summer programs, or youth employment tied to the City. That is less than 10% of Philadelphia’s kids!**

City Entity	Number of children and youth served	Location of services
Office of Children and Families (OCF)	6,100	13 priority zip codes, community schools, and 10 additional schools selected by the District
Parks and Recreation	6,000 in the summer, 2,000 in afterschool activities	
School District	3,230	60 schools
Free Library of Philadelphia		
Work Ready	8,000	

**Children and families want more OST activities, and there are many more OST providers ready to meet the demand.** With strategic investments, an eye towards city-wide coordination, and strong leadership, the next mayor can grow the number of children, youth, and families served, make better use of existing resources, and spearhead groundbreaking programs that prepare children and youth for exciting futures.

## **Learning from the best: Los Angeles and Boston**

Los Angeles and Boston are national models for how cities can leverage OST programs to address deep-seeded inequity. Students in Los Angeles OST program are less likely to commit juvenile crime and more likely to finish school. They also become mentors and community leaders, often returning to work in the same OST program that nurtured them.<sup>i</sup>

Boston's OST programs have closed the academic achievement gap between wealthy and high-needs neighborhoods. Their students participate in a nationally-recognized summer program that affords students opportunities to continue learning and engage local universities, cultural institutions, and businesses – all while having fun.<sup>ii</sup>

Behind these accomplishments are strong OST intermediaries, entities with strong government backing tasked with building a vibrant sector that coheres around common frameworks, best practices, and a desire for large-scale planning. Intermediaries

- Convene leadership in government, business, philanthropy, and the provider community with the purpose of improving the quality of programs and expanding access to families,
- Leverage separate funding stream to support programs that meet shared city-wide goals,
- Ensure disparate stakeholders are lock-step in the implementation of programs,
- Unify metrics for need and success
- Train OST providers in cutting-edge practices to deliver the best possible programming.

For the last 15 years, national experts point to intermediaries as a key ingredient for vibrant OST systems.<sup>iii</sup>

### **LA's Best: how OST intermediaries improve sector quality**

With the mission to “provide a safe and supervised afterschool education, enrichment, and recreation program for children ages 5 to 12 in Los Angeles,” LA's Best offers free academic year and summer programming to 25,000 students in 200 schools where neighborhoods have the fewest supports and greatest need. Throughout the school year, LA's Best students have nutritious meals, homework help, and the chance to participate in a wide array of enrichment activities whether that be in STEM, literacy, the arts, sports, or health and wellness. LA's Best

summer programs mirror the academic year to complement learning. Operating out of elementary schools, Monday to Friday, to 6 pm, for 7 weeks out of the summer, LA's Best uses activities and field trips promoting experiential learning to enhance academic achievement.<sup>iv</sup>

To ensure that all LA's Best sites are prepared to deliver quality services, the intermediary provides professional development to staff so that they can better address issues affecting students across the board. Staff regularly participate in trainings on topics that not only improve program management but align with LA's Best values for cultivating student self-esteem and self-leadership. Staff also have access to online resource hubs where they share innovative activities and insights.

Because of its emphasis on professional development, LA's Best can recruit from the communities they serve. Two thousand-plus LA Best's staff draw from the programs' surrounding communities and 25% of them are LA Best's alumni. Their professional development infrastructure helped staff meet student needs. Seeing how the pandemic affected their students in unforeseen ways, LA's Best trained all staff on trauma-informed care and helped staff incorporate socio-emotional learning in their activities.<sup>v</sup>

### **Boston Beyond: how OST intermediaries can boost academic performance through partnerships in Government and the School District**

Founded in 2005, the OST intermediary Boston Beyond has served as the hub for the city's OST ecosystem. Working closely with the Mayor's Office and the school district, Boston Beyond aimed to create a broader safety net that complemented regular school to close the academic achievement gap between students in wealthy and poor neighborhoods. Realizing that each stakeholder in the OST ecosystem had limited reach, the intermediary convened government and school leaders, businesses, philanthropy, and providers around common goals, clear roles, and a timeline that allowed for seamless execution of programs. To date, Boston Beyond has leveraged over 300 programs and schools in their network to bring afterschool and summer learning opportunities to over 20,000 students across grade levels and neighborhoods every year. They have also established standard metrics that not only guide provider work but measure collective impact.

Boston Beyond's "fifth quarter program," Summer Learning for All, is especially notable. In 2010, Boston Beyond and the Boston School District launched an effort to turn the city into a classroom that reinforced key skills identified by college admissions and human resource professionals. The center of gravity charged with building the OST system citywide, the intermediary deployed partner strengths at every level of the vision's execution. Boston Beyond gathered input from the city and school administration on need, leveraged philanthropic partnerships for funding, coordinated providers, and helped programs gain access to invaluable hands-on learning opportunities from universities, museums, and employers. Boston Beyond also introduced a partner portal to collect common data points like student profiles, participation

rates, and staff and student surveys. In ten years, Summer Learning for All grew to serve more than 15,000 students in 160 programs and has expanded to expressly address the needs of special needs students.<sup>vi</sup> Summer Learning for All now replaces traditional summer school for the city and is lauded by the National Summer Learning Association as a national model.

## **Build Philadelphia’s Public-Private Partnership to Expand Youth Opportunity**

The pieces to create a coherent OST system that ensures more access for children and youth are there, but the coordination with a common agenda is not. Because Philadelphia wants to engage kids, no less than four city agencies administer extracurricular programming for children and youth:

- Office of Children and Families (OCF)
- Parks and Recreation
- Free Library of Philadelphia
- School District of Philadelphia (multiple offices)
- Work Ready via Work Ready intermediary

To increase access and to improve the quality and coordination of extracurricular programming, the mayor must:

### Stimulate public and private partnerships to support the expansion of OST opportunities for children and youth

Currently, the City’s Office of Children and Families allocates prevention dollars to fund OST seats. To some extent, the source of funds limits the types of programs the administration can offer and fundamentally those funds are far too limited to meet the need. To grow the number and type of free programs for children and youth, the mayor must direct the maximum amount of prevention funds for this purpose and augment those funds with general fund dollars increase the number of available options for youth.

In addition to money for additional programming, the mayor must encourage a public and private partnership in the form of an OST intermediary to organize and grow the OST sector. For comparison, the investment in LA’s Best is a total of \$6.4M, of which \$3.9M provides capacity building services, training, and support for the OST community and about \$2.5M covers administrative operating costs. These funds are drawn from federal, state, city, and private funds.

### Leverage city and school facilities for afterschool, evening, and summer programming

A sound way to increase OST access for children and families is to make sure the city’s youth-friendly spaces – recreation centers, libraries, and schools – offer ample programming. Schools, in particular, can be open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm as well as during breaks. If open and made available for OST providers to run programming, children, youth, and families can access more opportunities for enrichment, whether that is a club, sport, or simple evening hangout spot.

Designate GPEC as the intermediary charged with facilitating the public-private partnership efforts to improve access, equity, and the quality of out-of-school academic, enrichment, and employment opportunities for youth.

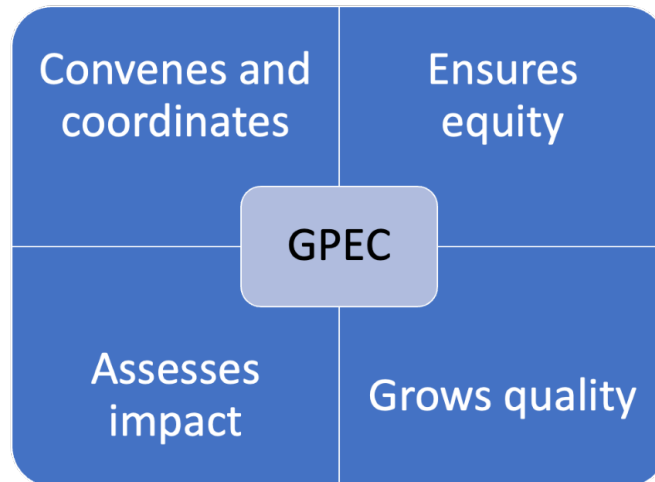
Close collaboration between the City, School District, and OST providers is key to the successful rollout of extended school hours and year-round school. In other cities that have attempted similar initiatives, an OST intermediary has facilitated the communication and execution of all stakeholders needed to implement plans.

### **Philadelphia can do the same, if not more**

Philadelphia needs a more coordinated OST sector so that every family has access to quality afterschool and summer programming and every teen has the opportunity to gain summer work experience.

An intermediary that takes on system-building efforts can expand the sector’s reach, and the **Greater Philadelphia Extracurricular Collaborative (GPEC)** is uniquely positioned to build the intermediary.

Convenes provider community and works with Office of Children and Families, School District, Parks and Recreation, Free Library to ensure smooth deployment of OST programs year-round.



Works with city, PHMC, philanthropy, and providers to develop funding opportunities that direct resources to neighborhoods with highest need.

Develop standard metrics that help the city and providers measure impact and determine future planning.

Provides professional development for OST providers across sector to facilitate effectiveness and engagement with families and children.

GPEC is a network of OST providers and supportive funders aimed at building a robust OST sector in Philadelphia and its surrounding regions. Founded at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, GPEC convened OST providers as municipal and program needs pivoted quickly to share information and best practices. Since then, GPEC has continued to convene OST providers around common needs at the School District and City level. It has also organized events that can build provider capacity like Funder Meet and Greets.

Although funding stream tends to determine the networks and resources an OST provider can access, GPEC works with all providers regardless of their funding and areas of specialty. GPEC therefore understands the perspectives that can help the city and school district build an OST system that engages all stakeholders.

As a permanent entity, the intermediary can reverse the on-and-off nature of the city's past system-building efforts to provide stability so that relationships grow, timelines and stakeholder meetings are consistent, and long-term projects take root, grow, and continue, long after any one mayoral term.

Prospective board of directors for OST intermediary	
City	OST <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet-level education officer overseeing OST</li> <li>• Parks and Recreation, Commissioner</li> <li>• Free Library of Philadelphia, Executive Director</li> <li>• Office of Violence Prevention, Director</li> </ul> Youth employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Commerce, Director</li> </ul>
School District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent</li> <li>• Office of Student Life</li> </ul>
Operational partners	OST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHMC</li> </ul> Youth employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philadelphia Works</li> <li>• Work Ready intermediary</li> <li>• Business and corporate partners like Wells Fargo, Citizens Bank, and Aramark.</li> </ul>

### Other stakeholders to consult

- PHMC
- Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN)
- JEVS

### Conclusion

We need to boost supports if Philadelphia wants families in every neighborhood to become self-sufficient. Parents need to know that their kids are cared for and safe beyond school hours so that they can work. Students need to be engaged in activities they love outside of school so that their academic, socioemotional, and job skills are reinforced.

The next mayor can expand OST activities for children and families to meet the needs of children, youth, and families. Extending school hours and year-round school will increase access. Funding OST programs with city dollars will too. But, to make sure city resources are effectively utilized and schools have the quality programming they need for extended hours, the next mayor should establish an OST intermediary that builds the OST sector. As the only entity

in Philadelphia working with all providers across funding streams, GPEC is uniquely positioned to carry out the intermediary's functions. Only then can plans for expanded access be effectively executed with ample stakeholder buy-in and quality assured.

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The following groups contributed to the writing of the memo: After School Activities Partnership, Greater Philadelphia Philanthropy Network, Greater Philadelphia YMCA, Norris Square Neighborhood Project, North 10, Play On Philly, Philadelphia Youth Sports Collaborative, and Sunrise of Philadelphia.

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i "Impact," LA's Best, 2023, <https://lasbest.org/our-purpose/impact/>.

ii "Big Mission = Big Impact," Boston After School and Beyond, 2023, <https://bostonbeyond.org/about/impact/>.

iii Collaborative for Building After-School Systems, "Making the Connections: A Report on the First National Survey of Out-of-School Time Intermediary Organizations," Wallace Foundation, May 2012, <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Making-the-Connections-Report-First-National-Survey-of-OST.pdf>.

iv LA's Best, 2023, <https://lasbest.org/>.

v "2021-2022 Annual Report and Executive Summary," LA's Best, 2023, <https://report2021.lasbest.org/>.

vi "Summer Learning: The City is Our Classroom," Boston After School and Beyond, 2023, <https://bostonbeyond.org/approach/opportunity/summer/>. See also: Carrie Jung, "Boston Public Schools expand summer school programming with more 'enrichment' activities," WBUR, July 2023, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/07/17/boston-public-schools-summer-school-programming>. Jennifer Sloan McCombs, et. al., "Ready for Fall? Near-Term Effects of Voluntary Summer Learning Programs on Low-Income Students' Learning Opportunities and Outcomes," RAND Corporation, 2014, <https://bostonbeyond.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAND-Ready-for-Fall.pdf>.