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ResearchBRIEF
Youth Community Connections
Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance

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Developing Tomorrow's Workforce

Quality afterschool programs are a crucial tool in preparing the next generation.

WE NEED TO BETTER PREPARE OUR YOUTH FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

Young people face increasing challenges as we move forward into the 21st Century economy.

- ◆ The number of reliable replacements for retiring workers is much lower than it was 20 years ago
- ◆ College labor supply grew by only 1.75% in 2000, as compared to 4.5% in 1977.
- ◆ About 20% of the workforce in the United States displays reading and math skills that are below adequate. This rate is far higher than our competitors around the world.
- ◆ 80% of jobs in today's workplace are "skilled" positions compared to 20% in 1950.
- ◆ It is reported that increased global competition is leading to workplaces that are decentralized and malleable, requiring independent and multi-skilled laborers.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE IMPORTANT REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

In today's economy young people are finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs, and often find themselves having to compete with more experienced adults. The result is much lower youth employment rates. The 36.8% summer employment rate in 2005 was among the lowest since 1948.

- ◆ Entrepreneurship programs provide young people with direct experience in the business world. They can introduce them to important economic concepts and teach them how to effectively handle money.
- ◆ Afterschool programs provide opportunities for young people to gain experience in and exposure to several different careers that youth might not otherwise be exposed to.
- ◆ Job Programs provide youth with direct employment experience that will help them secure employment in the future, as well as providing the chance for advancement if they decide to stay in the field.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PREPARING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Afterschool programs can have significant impact in preparing our youth for the workforce with relevant skills and knowledge for the future. They provide youth with hands-on opportunities to apply skills they learn during school hours.

1. **Inquiry:** Fostering a curiosity and desire in young people to explore new areas and develop new skills
2. **Technology:** Exploring and becoming familiar with current technologies
3. **Science, Engineering, and Math Skills:** Practicing vital skills to enhance mastery
4. **Decision making and daily living:** Learning important time management skills and practicing decision-making
5. **Interaction with others:** Working with diverse groups of people and teaching them how to work together to reach goals
6. **Positive Attitudes and behaviors:** Teaching young people about the importance of attitude in the workforce, about being on time, and having the confidence to solve problems they encounter

MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM

The Minnesota Youth Program provides employment, training and academic advancement services to more than 2,500 low income at-risk youth across the state.

- ◆ 67% entered with a basic skills deficiency and 56% entered with a disability.
- ◆ At the end of the program 78% had achieved their Work Readiness or Education goals, and 66% remained in school or received their Diploma/GED.
- ◆ The return on investment (ROI) for each state dollar spent on the program was \$3.56.

Sources

- ◆ Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development brief
- ◆ Minnesota DEED Youth Program 2007 Annual Summary
(<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/youth/myp.htm>)
- ◆ Afterschool Act Issue Brief #25 July 2007
- ◆ Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief #19 August 2004
- ◆ "The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children"
- ◆ Minnesota Youth Program outcome data (<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/youth/myp.htm>)
- ◆ Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief #19 - "Afterschool: A Natural Platform for Career Development" (July 2007)
- ◆ Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief #25 - "Afterschool Programs: Helping Kids Compete in Tomorrow's Workforce" (July 2007)
- ◆ Brief provided by DEED
- ◆ National League of Cities, "Teens Experiencing More Difficulty Finding Summer Jobs." (http://www.nlc.org/ARTICLES/articleItems/VOLUME30_NO1/TeensSummerJobs.aspx)