What Constitutes a Quality After-school Program?

• Flexibility with Structure
  ✓ Established schedule
  ✓ Opportunities to choose
  ✓ Registration and Attendance

• Safe Environment
  ✓ Use a variety of building and ground space
  ✓ Adult supervision
  ✓ Attentive to safety, health, and nutrition issues

• Variety of Activities
  ✓ Address academic, social, emotional, recreational needs
  ✓ Structured and unstructured activities
  ✓ Activities varied and age appropriate - choices
  ✓ Project-based, skill building activities

• Intentional Links to the School Day
  ✓ Expand and enrich – not duplicate – school activities
  ✓ Communicate with administration, guidance, teachers
  ✓ Balance connection to & independence from school day

• Well Prepared Staff
  ✓ Committed and caring
  ✓ Positive role models
  ✓ Staff who connect with youth
  ✓ Professional development opportunities

• Development of Social/Life Skills
  ✓ Evidence-based prevention programs
  ✓ Collaborative learning, peer tutoring, character education
  ✓ Culturally relevant and diverse programs
• Family and Community Involvement
  ✓ Effective partnerships among family, community, & school
  ✓ Involvement in design and implementation
  ✓ Family focused activities
  ✓ Service learning/Community service

• Outcomes and Evaluation
  ✓ Drives program quality
  ✓ Accountability

• Youth Involvement
  ✓ Involved in program design
  ✓ Build sense of ownership
  ✓ Develop responsibility

These quality elements were adapted from a number of sources including: National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Policy Studies Associates, Inc, and Harvard Family Research Foundation.

**Shared characteristics of high-performing after-school programs...**

• A broad array of enrichment opportunities.

• Opportunities for skill building and mastery.

• Intentional relationship-building.

• A strong, experienced leader/manager supported by a trained and supervised staff.

• The administrative, fiscal, and professional-development support of the sponsoring organization.

From: Policy Studies Associates, *Shared Features of High-Performing After-School Programs*