

# Creating a System of Quality Measures for After-School: Successful Strategies in Providence and New York City

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SYSTEMS



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Afterschool Investments Project  
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# CBASS Overview

*CBASS is a collaborative formed by the leaders of local after-school intermediaries in eight cities with the goal of changing public policy to catalyze the development of after-school systems nationally.*



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# CBASS Overview

## Why we formed

Partners believe that:

- To achieve better outcomes for kids, communities must create an **integrated system** of high-quality after-school programs that offer a variety of supports
- A collaborative representing **critical mass** of the market can influence the field
- Intermediaries have a critical role to play in **building systems**

Collectively, we want policymakers to view after-school as a critical component of improving schools and essential to creating better outcomes for disadvantaged kids.



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# CBASS Overview

## Building the Field

CBASS works to increase the availability of quality after-school nationwide through three strategic activities:

1. **Share lessons learned** and effective strategies to build stronger systems.
2. **Build the field** through targeted technical assistance to emerging intermediaries.
3. **Shape policy** around a shared set of challenges: programming for older youth, workforce development, accountability measures, effectively serving diverse populations, and strengthening ties between in-school and out-of-school learning.



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# CBASS Policy Initiative:

## Measuring the Success of After-School Programs and Systems

### Rationale:

- After-school has been measured by a narrow set of academic outcomes
- After-school systems are sustained by multiple funding streams, often with differing evaluation priorities and burdens
- Providers' capacity to measure comprehensive program quality elements and youth outcomes are highly variable
- In a system that contains many different stakeholders, it is often difficult to define measures that are embraced by all
- In order to keep after-school from being overlooked by policymakers, partners recognized that the field needed measures that captured the contribution of after-school



# CBASS Policy Initiative:

## Measuring the Success of After-School Programs and Systems

### Policy Goal

To identify and develop standard measurement tools that:

- Hold programs accountable for quality
- Test the productivity and success of programs
- Have the potential to demonstrate after-schools contribution to the successful development of children and youth



**For more information about CBASS, visit:**

<http://www.afterschoolsystems.org/>

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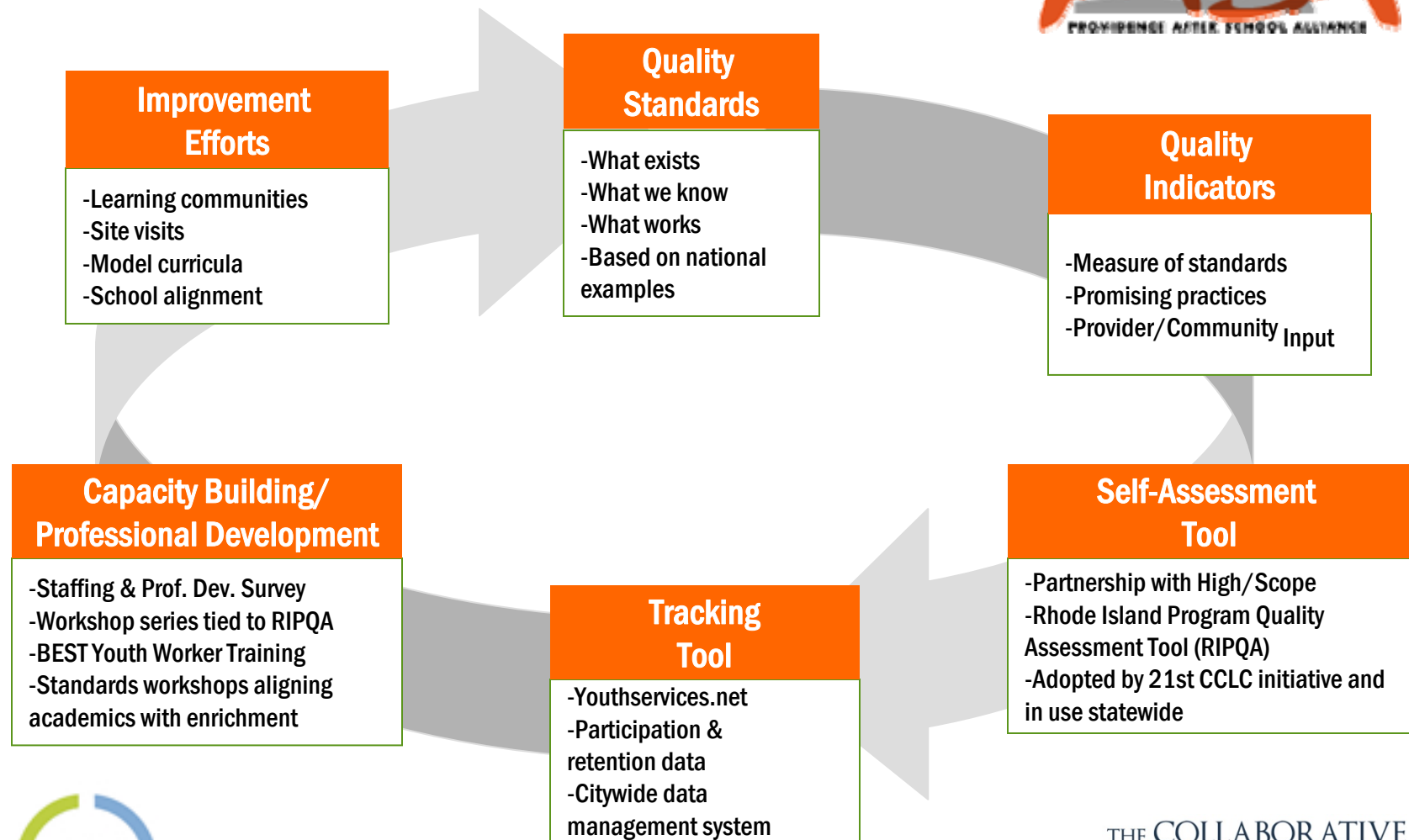
# Implementing Quality Measures:

*Views from the field*



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# Quality Improvement Cycle: PASA's Approach



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# Developing Standards



- Community process involving 25 key stakeholders
- Based on existing standards
- Shared statewide
- 5 core areas
  - Health, Safety, and the Environment
  - Relationship
  - Programming and Activities
  - Staffing and Professional Development
  - Administration



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# Refining Assessment Tool



- Reviewed existing tools
- Identified High/Scope's YPQA as best fit
- Refined tool and created RI specific supplement
- Hired Quality Advisors
- Piloted with variety of organizations
- Refined assessment process
- Implemented statewide – over 50 groups in 2 years
- Required of all 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites



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# Tracking Student Participation



- Identified Cityspan's YouthServices.net
  - Used by majority of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites statewide
  - Inexpensive to implement
  - User-friendly
- Track enrollment and retention system-wide
- Use data as first indicator of quality
- Linking participation data to quality data



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# Challenges and Lessons Learned

## Data Tracking



- Accuracy of data
- Capacity to enter data in real-time
- Data sharing with school department
- Management and oversight is critical



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# Challenges and Lessons Learned

## Quality Assessment



- Quality Advisor model ideal but expensive
- Emphasis on quality improvement for buy-in
- Collect what is necessary, not more
- Lack of funding/capacity to implement changes

For more information about PASA and the quality improvement system, visit <http://www.edutopia.org/new-day-for-learning-two>



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The After-School Corporation works to give all kids opportunities to grow through after-school and summer activities that support, educate, and inspire them.

- Began in 1998 with a vision that New York City would recognize quality after-school as a public responsibility to students and their families
- Founded with a generous grant from George Soros's Open Society Institute
- Helped increase number of NYC children who participate in comprehensive after-school programs from 10,000 to 140,000 youth, 1998 to 2008
- Helped increase annual funding for after-school programming in NYC from \$60 million to \$295 million, 1998 to 2008



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## Comprehensive Assessment of TASC Programs:

### From the start..

- Site Visits
- Participant Tracking using Cityspan (*[Youthservices.net](http://youthservices.net)*)

### Now also...

- PSA Observation Tool
- NYSAN Quality Self-Assessment Tool

<http://www.nysan.org/userfiles/file/nysan/index.html>



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# CBASS Measurement Framework:

*Alignment across multiple cities*



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# CBASS Policy Initiative

## Measurement Framework

### Development of the Framework:

#### 2007

- In collaboration with Policy Studies Associates, CBASS partners identified a small number of practical measures
- Looked at measurement across multiple city systems with particular attention to:
  - Measures with low data collection burden & high reliability
  - Youth, program, *and* system levels

#### 2008

- In partnership with WT Grant Foundation & the Forum for Youth Investment, convened after-school systems builders and youth development researchers to discuss feasibility of implementing measures at scale
- CBASS partners adopted a core set of accountability measures



# CBASS Policy Initiative

## **Outcome #1:**

Implement ten measures with low collection burden at scale

### ***Youth level***

- Daily program attendance

### ***Program level***

- Youth to staff ratio
- Breadth of age-appropriate content and activities

### ***Systems level***

- Number of program slots
- Adoption and use of quality standards
- Use of a participant tracking system
- CBO/intermediary partner agreements and policies in place
- Provision of technical assistance and staff training
- Sustainable financial support
- Engagement of leaders across youth-serving organizations



# CBASS Policy Initiative

## **Outcome #2:**

Implement selected measures that have a higher collection burden with a sample or subset of programs.

### ***Youth level***

- Daily school attendance

### ***Program level***

- Youth relationships with adults
- Youth opportunities for activity choice
- Active, hands-on learning opportunities
- Educational level of director and staff



## CBASS Measurement Framework: *Looking forward*

- Collect data on common quality measures across cities
- Advance national conversation on common measures of quality across after-school programs and systems
- Use framework to help other local jurisdictions strengthen their after-school systems
- Build capacity of after-school systems

