

# DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Lessons Learned From a Districtwide Evaluation

Glover Community Learning Center, Ohio • November 2009

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day  
Practice: Evaluate Program

### Highlights

- The Akron after-school program has been evaluated by an independent evaluator to measure impact and find out how the program can be improved.
- Analysis of student outcomes clearly showed that the Akron after-school program improved students' academic outcomes.
- Parent surveys and focus groups were used to align the program with needs of families. For example, when results showed that parents wanted the program to support homework in addition to academic intervention, the program added an option of a homework club.

### About the Site

Glover Community Learning Center  
Akron, OH

### Demographics

48% Black

30% White

94% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

7% English Language Learners

16% Special Education

Glover Community Learning Center operates the district's after-school program to help students progress academically at school. The school's approach includes the following:

- Students receive daily academic interventions followed by enrichment classes of their choice.
- The program director aligns the after-school instruction with the school curriculum.
- School-day and after-school teachers collaborate to identify students' needs.
- Students attend small classes aligned with their ability level.
- The district continually refines the program based on student data and feedback from parents.

## Full Transcript

Desiree Bolden: I am Desiree Bolden. I am the afterschool coordinator for the Akron Public Schools, and we are located in Akron, Ohio.

Teacher, to students: What digraph does it make?

Student: Nothing.

Teacher: Oh, okay, well take me to a word that has a digraph in it, please.

Bolden: We are very classic urban. We have all the categories that fit under urban. We have high poverty. We have low income. We have transitional neighborhoods. We have urban flight. We have all those components that impact academics, and it impacts families and their children and their test scores and the challenges that come with all of that. And as a school district, we see the data on state tests, we see the data on district assessments. We know our kids and we know what they need. So that's the easy part because we are data driven. We know where the gaps are and that's where after-school comes in, that's where extended learning comes in, the intervention and the enrichment.

2002 was the first round of evaluation, and it was kind of a rudimentary snapshot of this is how many kids attended. And I didn't have a lot of money, so I couldn't support big, full, blown-out evaluation. But I wanted a foundation because at the time, I knew that if I didn't have a qualifier, if I didn't have something that said that I was impacting kids academically, I totally firmly believed at the time that I would not be successful. So I did everything I could to secure funding to pay an outside evaluator. And then, the next year, I got more funding. So then I was able to increase what they did, and that's when they took all the assessments, the state tests, the district assessments, their attendance, building by building, and looked at, versus kids who did not attend, how they fared. And what we showed that first year when we did all

the assessments was so exciting. I was just like, “Oh my gosh.” It showed that after-school kids did better on state tests than non-after-school kids. In extended learning in the Akron after-school program where we had observation groups, we had interviews, we did satisfaction surveys. They were able to offer input on their experience in the program—whether they worked in it or whether they were parents. The students themselves were surveyed and we designed surveys, obviously, to fit the age group. And those came back and all part of the picture of what after-school looks like, what we say we are doing, is it really happening based on their responses to the program.

One of things that parent surveys came back with [was] that kids still had homework. So they couldn't understand why their child who stayed after school was still coming home with homework. And so what I realized is that as an outreach that we didn't communicate to parents that intervention is not doing homework, and so there was a whole education piece of parents that I had never even, I mean, I thought I had communicated, but obviously by the surveys that I got back that I didn't. And that here was a piece, an opportunity to share with them what intervention meant. And then what I did is I instituted homework clubs so that during the enrichment time, parents who were concerned that their children were still bringing home homework could opt out of enrichment and choose homework club. In our system, we have been tracking the last five years of students who attended Akron after-school, and their length and time, and what grade level they were in each year that they are in tracking. So I am very excited about that so that at some point, we are going to have a long history and can look at a longitudinal study and see where they are at and see the impact.