

Advancing Access to Quality Out-of-School Time Opportunities in Brookline

Research Results & Recommendations



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This project is supported by a grant from the Brookline Community Foundation. BCF shines a spotlight on community needs, inspires philanthropy and awards strategic grants to build a more vibrant, engaged and equitable Brookline. To support this mission, each year BCF makes grants that address needs and opportunities in the community, encourage collaborations and partnerships to better serve the town and our residents, and strengthen local non-profits.

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Dear Colleagues,

We want to start by acknowledging the many people who have made this report possible. This report, emerging from the Brookline Community Foundation's focus on expanding opportunities for youth and its long history of funding out-of-school time (OST) programming and capacity building for providers, is the latest development in our commitment to advancing the community's understanding of and response to the critical role that OST experiences play for children and families in Brookline.

While we recognize the important role of the Brookline Community Foundation in providing much-needed funding for OST work, we realized that our support could have more impact if we also worked with key stakeholders to move toward a more systematic approach built on shared understandings and on improved coordination, collaboration, and communication within the OST community. In pursuit of this systematic approach, we engaged in an organizational learning process, seeking out local and national experts in the field and convening a working group of Brookline OST leaders. Thanks to this working group, many common interests, challenges, and questions surfaced about how effectively the OST landscape in Brookline is meeting the needs of children and families. We are grateful to the participants for deepening the foundation's awareness and inspiring this continued focus.

Because of the insights of this working group and the foundation's strategic priorities, we partnered with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) to facilitate a community convening in May 2017. The purpose of this gathering was to engage a large group of stakeholders in a community discussion about the significance of OST experiences and programming for children, youth, and families in Brookline, while also working toward a common understanding of OST systems and how these systems have supported OST quality, access, and participation in other communities. We want to thank the more than 70 individuals who attended, along with NIOST staff and Brookline Community Foundation staff and board members, all of whom helped bring the convening to life. The idea for this report stems directly from the conversations that began in that room.

The research conducted for this report involved the participation of many people throughout Brookline, including families and young people. We thank all of them for their time and insights. The themes that emerged at the convening demonstrate the potential for a community-wide approach to OST programming. They also raise important questions about available capacity and resources. This report is intended to build our collective understanding about the demographics of children and families who rely on OST programming; about the OST landscape; and about where we, as a community, may go from here. At the Brookline Community Foundation, we look forward to continuing to support and partner with organizations and individuals in the community who are committed to enhancing an OST landscape that affords greater coherence, access, and, ultimately, equity.

Sincerely,



Jenny Amory
Chief Executive Officer
Brookline Community Foundation

Executive Summary

This report recommends ways to improve equity and access to out-of-school time (OST) programs in Brookline. A study of Brookline’s current OST landscape, sponsored by the Brookline Community Foundation, revealed substantial inequity: Low-income families and others with barriers to participation simply do not have the access to OST programming that others enjoy.

A community that is committed to the well-being of children and families supports high-quality education for all, both in and out of school. Brookline — like many towns and cities nationwide — has work to do in order to enable all families to enjoy the benefits of high-quality OST programming. The good news is that efforts to improve access and equity will help not only the families targeted by those efforts but the entire community. This outcome is referred to as the *curb-cut effect*, a term derived from the ways in which sidewalk indentations — originally a response to advocacy by people in wheelchairs — ultimately have benefited many people throughout society: people who are pulling suitcases or pushing strollers, bikers, workers making deliveries, and many others.¹ The curb-cut effect “illustrates the benefits that accrue to everyone from policies and investments designed to achieve equity.... When [we] target support where it is needed most — when we create the circumstances that allow those who have been left behind to participate and contribute fully — everyone wins.”² Similarly, changes to Brookline’s OST system intended to help low-income families can benefit not only those families but also all children and families — and indeed the whole community.

Brookline’s OST Landscape

Disparities in access to OST programming in Brookline reflect the city’s economic disparities. Low-income families and those with other barriers to participation do not have access to the resources available to more affluent families. The Brookline Community Foundation study found that access to OST programming is no exception to this rule. Equity and access are affected by the following key realities:

1. Low-income families are concentrated in certain parts of town. This uneven distribution is reflected in the demographics of K–8 schools. Families with fewer economic opportunities have fewer OST options than more affluent families.
2. Many families rely on school-based OST programs. However, the school-based OST landscape is fragmented and difficult for busy caregivers to navigate.
3. Family income level and English-dominant practices affect not only families’ access to OST programming but also their sense of welcome in the community.
4. OST needs and opportunities differ based on participant age and geography.
5. Families benefit from support in navigating the complex OST landscape. Their needs and the capacity of OST providers to offer this support vary.

1 <http://www.policylink.org/about-us/curb-cut-effect>

2 Blackwell, AG. The Curb-Cut Effect. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_curb_cut_effect

Opportunities for Brookline

These challenges are not unique to Brookline, but the strategies to address these challenges must respond to Brookline's specific context. Structures that impede equity and access have taken decades to develop. Working toward a more equitable future therefore requires both long-term and short-term strategies.

Long-Term Recommendations

The study's findings suggest ways in which Brookline can adapt strategies used in other communities to improve equity and access. Leaders of Brookline's youth- and family-serving systems can spearhead efforts to:

1. **Collect better data about low-income families and their experiences.** To advance equity, Brookline OST stakeholders need a shared understanding of how disparities play out. Better data would also enable them to identify priority areas and track progress over time.
2. **Increase awareness and opportunities to participate.** Information about OST opportunities should be communicated consistently, coherently, and in many languages. A shared registration system would also enhance access.
3. **Engage families in ways and places that work for them.** Families know their own priorities and interests best, including their transportation needs.
4. **Address cost issues.** OST providers collectively can explore ways to address affordability. One step is to simplify the complex process of applying for subsidies.
5. **Identify and replicate promising practices.** Stakeholders can learn from and build on what is already working in Brookline's OST system.

Short-Term Recommendations

One way to focus among the many alternatives for action while conserving financial resources is to build on existing strengths — to find places where curb cuts already exist or are easy to create. Brookline's OST system can tap the wisdom and capacity of individuals and organizations that are already working for change. To that end, systems leaders can take the following short-term steps:

1. **Document and share efforts to address equity.** Organizations and institutions that are already working to advance equity in policy and practice can document their efforts and share lessons learned throughout the OST system.
2. **Advance community awareness.** Systems leaders and OST providers can communicate with families and community members while collaborating among themselves to make positive youth development a priority and to make programming available to all.
3. **Invest in an identifiable face of OST.** Resources can be pooled to create a position, perhaps within a municipal department, for at least one individual who works with the community as the representative of the whole OST system.
4. **Start with subgroups and working groups.** The Brookline OST galaxy can feel vast. Small groups of stakeholders can address specific topic areas, age groups, or neighborhoods in service of a coordinated approach.

5. **Engage the bigger systems.** Large public institutions like Public Schools of Brookline, the Brookline Recreation Department, and the libraries wield resources and power that can support and enhance existing efforts and encourage engagement across the OST system.
6. **Engage marginalized individuals and groups.** Equity demands full and authentic participation from the people and groups who experience inequity. The input of young people and families who participate in OST programming — or would like to do so but experience barriers — is vital to the construction of an equitable OST system.

Community change can endure when it results from collective and collaborative action. To advance equity in the OST system, Brookline needs a common vision, collective leadership, and coordination among providers. Most importantly, leaders must intentionally engage families and youth. With these commitments, Brookline has the potential to create an OST system that offers equity and access to all.

1 Background and Context

This report examines the out-of-school time (OST) landscape in Brookline through a lens of equity and access. It builds on and reinforces the Brookline Community Foundation’s *Understanding Brookline* reports of 2013 and 2014. As those reports highlighted, Brookline is a community with a growing school-age population; it is navigating significant economic and social disparities that affect the lives of children and families. Recent evidence of the community’s response to these important dynamics include increasing attention to and conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion and the passage of tax overrides to address capital and operating needs for the Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) and town agencies.

At the same time, a community commitment to the well-being of its children and families necessarily includes attention to supports and resources within and beyond the school day. Future discussions about growing school enrollment and capital needs must also include OST as a key complementary consideration. As this report underscores, the current disparities disproportionately affect low-income children and families; yet improved access and increased equity will ultimately benefit the whole community. Brookline has the potential to create an OST system that reflects the value it places on children and families. The community can benefit all by understanding and responding to the people who currently have the greatest barriers to access and participation.

Why Out-of-School Time Matters

OST participation has significant benefits for children and youth of all ages. Decades of research show that OST programs help young people learn, grow, and avoid risky behaviors.³ Quality OST experiences provide safe and supportive environments. Regular participation has been found to benefit young people by fostering academic growth and school engagement, social and emotional skill development, health and wellness, and civic engagement, while also supporting family employment.⁴

In Brookline, there is widespread and enduring recognition that OST opportunities and participation support healthy child and youth development, playing a critical role in the lives of children and families. Almost a decade ago, the Brookline After School and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Program Review Committee highlighted the value of OST programming to Brookline youth and families: “As a community, we value and rely on high quality ASOST programs. Research confirms what parents and providers know — that having a safe, productive environment for out-of-school time hours benefits students and families.”⁵ This sentiment, reiterated at the May 2017 convening sponsored by the Brookline Community Foundation, has been reinforced throughout the research conducted for this report. As one informant affirmed, Brookline is “a community that

3 Afterschool Alliance. This Is Afterschool. April 2018. http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/factsResearch/This_Is_Afterschool_2018.pdf

4 McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., and Yoo, P. The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. RAND Corporation. November 2017

5 Brookline ASOST Program Review Committee. Out-of-School Time Program Review. 2012

cares about kids and what they are doing, and values education and lifelong learning.” In a town of almost 11,000 children and youth under the age of 18,⁶ accessible quality OST opportunities are an essential part of the community’s focus on children and families.

What Do We Mean by “Out-of-School Time” and “OST System”?

OST includes all kinds of programs that:⁷

- Happen outside of the classroom, before and after school, in the evenings, on weekends, and during the summer
- Are located in school buildings or community settings
- Are managed or operated by schools, community organizations, parks, camps, faith-based organizations, and other entities
- Serve children and youth in grades K–12

Afterschool is sometimes used to mean the same thing, and the two are sometimes combined as the acronym ASOST, meaning afterschool and out-of-school time.

An OST system is a shared, overarching infrastructure that supports leadership, program quality, access and participation, financing, and sustainability across multiple OST providers and agencies. OST systems are more coordinated and operate on a larger scale than program-level infrastructures.⁸

Lens of Equity and Access

Participation in OST opportunities nationwide has increased markedly, accompanied by the stark reality that supply does not meet demand. In Massachusetts, for every child in an afterschool program, approximately two more children would be enrolled if a program were available to them.⁹ This gap in participation plays out most starkly along socioeconomic differences: Across the United States, one-third of children from low-income families are not participating in any afterschool activities, compared to only one in 10 of their wealthier peers.¹⁰ The highest-income families spend almost seven times more on enrichment activities for their children than the poorest families.¹¹

These opportunity gaps exist in Brookline as well. Brookline’s socioeconomic diversity and disparities impact families differently. Though the current disparities disproportionately affect low-income children and families, improved access and increased equity will ultimately benefit the whole community. This outcome is referred to as the *curb-cut effect*,

6 U.S. Census Bureau. 2016 American Community Survey Data.

7 Traphagen, K., and Stevens, P. Funders’ Guide to Quality in Out-of-School Time. Grantmakers for Education’s Out-of-School Time Funder Network. March 2016

8 Hayes, C., Lind, C., Grossman, J. B., Stewart, N., Deich, S., Gersick, A., McMaken, J., and Campbell, M. Investments in Building Citywide Out-of-School-Time Systems: A Six-City Study. Public/Private Ventures & The Finance Project. September 2009

9 Afterschool Alliance. America After 3pm: Afterschool Programs in Demand. October 2014

10 Little, P. Taking a Systemic Approach to Access and Equity in After-school. Youth Today, May 26, 2016. <https://youthtoday.org/2016/05/taking-a-systemic-approach-to-access-and-equity-in-afterschool/>

11 McCombs, J., Whitaker, A., and Yoo, P., *op. cit.*

a term derived from the ways in which sidewalk indentations — originally a response to advocacy by people in wheelchairs — ultimately have benefited many people throughout society: people pulling suitcases on wheels and pushing babies and young children in strollers, bikers, workers with large racks making deliveries, and many others.¹² The curb-cut effect “illustrates the benefits that accrue to everyone from policies and investments designed to achieve equity.... When [we] target support where it is needed most — when we create the circumstances that allow those who have been left behind to participate and contribute fully — everyone wins.”¹³ Holding a lens of equity and access provides clarity about where and how Brookline may enhance the OST landscape for all children and youth.

Brookline has a wide range of OST opportunities and providers. These have evolved organically over the years, without “a unifying vision for after school and out of school time, or ... alignment of mission across programs.”¹⁴ Within this landscape, barriers to participation, including accessibility and affordability, remain. Equity in opportunities varies based on demographic characteristics. The current fragmented landscape of OST opportunities and resources is not meeting the needs of all young people and families for a variety of reasons, with gaps more pronounced for certain groups.¹⁵ One informant summed up the sentiments of many: “We have so much in Brookline. For some families, the tricky piece is accessing it.” This statement gets at the heart of what access means for all — particularly for children and families for whom access is most challenging, if not most important. As the educational leader Pedro Noguera attests:

The biggest challenge facing the afterschool movement involves equity: equity in access, equity in the quality of what is provided to children, equity in the skills and training of those who provide services to children. Lack of equity is ultimately the critical factor driving disparities in learning outcomes (i.e. the so-called achievement gap), and it is manifest in the afterschool sector as well. Access to high quality afterschool programs could also play a decisive role in reducing educational disparities but this will only occur if we remain vigilant in advocating for equity in the sector.... We must be sure that access to good, stimulating learning experiences are available to all children, regardless of where they live, what language they speak, who their parents are, or how much money they earn.¹⁶

The Role of the Brookline Community Foundation

The mission of the Brookline Community Foundation (the Foundation) is to shine a spotlight on community needs, inspire philanthropy, and award strategic grants to build a more vibrant, engaged, and equitable Brookline.¹⁷ With roots in the community that date back to the 19th century, the Foundation has played a vital role in responding to community input to address issues of shared concern. The Foundation’s strategic focus on expanding opportunities for youth includes the recognition that OST experiences are vital

12 <http://www.policylink.org/about-us/curb-cut-effect>

13 Blackwell, A. G. The Curb-Cut Effect. Winter 2017. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_curb_cut_effect

14 Brookline ASOST Program Review Committee. Out-of-School Time Program Review. 2012

15 National Institute on Out-of-School Time & Brookline Community Foundation. Summary of May 25th, 2017 Discussions, June 23, 2017

16 Piha, S. Looking into the Future: The Words of Important Afterschool and Education Leaders. Learning in Afterschool & Summer Blog. February 23, 2015. <http://blog.learninginafterschool.org/2015/02/looking-into-future-words-of-leading.html>

17 Brookline Community Foundation. <https://brooklinecommunity.org/grants>

to young people's overall wellness and healthy development. Because accessible, quality OST experiences are important for all Brookline youth and families, the Foundation commissioned this report to increase the community's understanding of the demographics of young people in Brookline and of the current state of OST opportunities — both the availability of OST opportunities and what OST participation looks like across Brookline.

The Role and Approach of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time

The mission of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) is to support the healthy development of children, families, and communities and to advance the OST field through research, training, advocacy, and tools. NIOST helps before-school, afterschool, expanded learning, and summer programs get better at what they do.¹⁸ NIOST is a program of Wellesley Centers for Women, a premier women- and gender-focused, social-change oriented research-and-action institute at Wellesley College. For more than 35 years, NIOST has been a leader in defining, shaping, and promoting OST as a distinct professional field with evidence-based quality standards. NIOST bridges the worlds of research and practice to provide OST directors, staff, planners, school administrators, community leaders, and others with research, training, evaluation, and consultation to enhance and improve the quality of programs for all children and youth.¹⁹

NIOST began its partnership with the Brookline Community Foundation in 2017. It facilitated the Brookline OST convening, the purpose of which was to engage a variety of stakeholders in a community discussion about the significance of OST experiences and programming for children, youth, and families in Brookline, while also providing participants with an introduction to OST systems and how they have supported OST quality, access, and participation in other communities. The themes that emerged at the convening, summarized in the box on this page, helped inform the focus of this report.

Summary of Findings from the May 2017 OST Convening

A group of over 70 key stakeholders discussed the significance of OST experiences and programming for children, youth, and families. This group of stakeholders included representatives from the schools, town administration, libraries, public housing, and youth-serving organizations. Together, these participants began to articulate the potential for an OST system, in the context of a growing youth population, gaps in services, constraints in funding and space, and a need for coordination of services.

Several key themes emerged:

- Coordination, collaboration, and communication
- Access: space, transportation, cost, and equity
- Programmatic variation, staffing, and quality
- School and OST partnership

¹⁸ <https://www.niost.org/About-Us/niost-our-vision-for-the-future>

¹⁹ <https://www.niost.org/about-niost>

Participants affirmed the importance of accessible quality OST opportunities for all Brookline children and families. They agreed that the current landscape of opportunities and resources is not meeting the needs of all for a variety of reasons and that the gaps are more pronounced for certain groups.

The themes that emerged through discussion demonstrate the potential for a community-wide approach and raise important questions about available capacity and resources.

Methodology

The purpose of this report is to increase the community's understanding of the demographics of young people in Brookline and the current landscape of available OST opportunities. To accomplish this goal and to build on and complement existing information and research about Brookline children and youth, families, and the OST landscape, NIOST conducted the following kinds of research for this report:

- Three focus groups to provide a better understanding of youth and family perspectives on OST opportunities
 - With parents of school-age children who live in Brookline Housing Authority units
 - With parents of school-age children who speak Spanish as their primary home language
 - With youth participants in the Steps to Success program
- 20 key informant interviews to learn about the local landscape for children and families and the significance of OST opportunities
- Review of local demographic data from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, Brookline Community Foundation, Brookline Housing Authority, Override Study Committee, PSB, and the Town of Brookline
- Online survey of 33 organizations and town departments that provide OST programming outside of PSB-sponsored activities
- Environmental scan of PSB websites and websites of OST providers that did not complete the survey to generate a fuller picture of the OST landscape

Details about some of these components are available in the appendices, and further questions can be directed to NIOST.

NIOST acknowledges that there are limitations to the project scope, methodology, and research that may serve as the basis for future exploration. The intent of this project was to capture a snapshot of community experiences, perspectives, and assets from which to extrapolate and draw important conclusions, while also providing ways to better understand the supply of available OST opportunities. With the resources available, it was not possible either to elicit the full diversity of community voices and perspectives or to capture current rates of OST participation or demand. In developing the scope, NIOST considered factors highlighted by participants at the OST convening that contribute to

awareness of and access to OST opportunities. NIOST maintained a particular focus on two of these factors: socioeconomic status of families and English-dominant practices among providers. In conducting its research, NIOST discovered:

- Focus groups elicited a range of perspectives to facilitate analysis and development of reliable conclusions about the OST landscape and what enables and constrains equitable access to OST programming. Conversations with people who had insights into community resources helped researchers further understand the needs of families with children and recommend ways to respond to those needs.
- The focus groups were racially and ethnically diverse, yet many voices were not fully represented. Underrepresented groups include families who identify as Black or African American, Asian or Asian American, LGBTQ, and middle class and those who have children with special needs. Research would have been enhanced by more robust representation of youth, especially those of high school age, and by participation of a wider range of social service providers working with young people and families, particularly with families who have limited financial resources or who experience marginalization.
- Engaging a broad range of OST providers in completing the OST provider survey proved to be difficult. Getting timely and reliable data about OST opportunities is a challenge that is not unique to Brookline but rather is common in communities in which OST providers have limited capacity and in which there is no coherent OST system or shared sense of identity as a collective of OST providers. All of these factors exist in Brookline. Additional constraints may include one or more of the following: the length and complexity of the survey, the time of year when the survey was initially administered, and lack of understanding or buy-in from providers. Future efforts to elicit data from providers may take these considerations into account. These efforts might also seek information about realities for the OST workforce — a vital and essential community resource that often does not receive the recognition or support it deserves.

Areas for Additional Data and Research

In the course of conducting this research and finalizing the report, NIOST identified the following areas for further study to fill out the picture of the OST landscape:

- More robust quantitative and qualitative data about the demographic subgroups that comprise Brookline, including more accurate and current data; information about needs and interests disaggregated by economic status, race and ethnicity, gender identity, special needs, home language, neighborhood, and other factors; and data about how these factors intersect
- A deeper understanding of how a sense of belonging and connection is informed by the race and ethnicity, income, and home language of people in Brookline
- The breakdown of home languages across Brookline and within PSB
- The unfulfilled demand for OST: how many children and families who want to participate in OST opportunities are not doing so or are unable to do so
- The demographics of the OST workforce and how that workforce is supported, including compensation practices and data, opportunities for training and professional development, and related information

2 Key Findings: The Current OST Landscape in Brookline

The key findings from the research show the disparities in access to OST programs and suggest avenues for improving access and equity in Brookline.

Finding 1. *Low-income families are concentrated in certain parts of town. This uneven distribution is reflected in the demographics of K–8 schools. Families with fewer economic opportunities have fewer OST options than more affluent families.*

Like other communities in the region, Brookline is an expensive place to live. The 2018 area median income is \$107,800,²⁰ and the median family income is more than \$142,000.²¹ However, of the almost 13,000 families living in Brookline, one-third have an annual income of less than \$100,000, as shown in Table 1.²²

Median income varies greatly by census tract, as shown in Table 2.²³

Table 1. Family Income

FAMILY INCOME	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
Less than \$10,000	3.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4.8%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	7.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	9.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	14.7%
\$200,000 or more	31.9%

Table 2. Median Income by Census Tract

CENSUS TRACT	MEDIAN INCOME
400900	\$64,797
400200	\$65,845
401000	\$91,705
400400	\$95,278
400800	\$95,817
400100	\$97,132
400600	\$105,230
400500	\$109,333
401200	\$112,773
400300	\$126,711
400700	\$134,792
401100	\$166,552

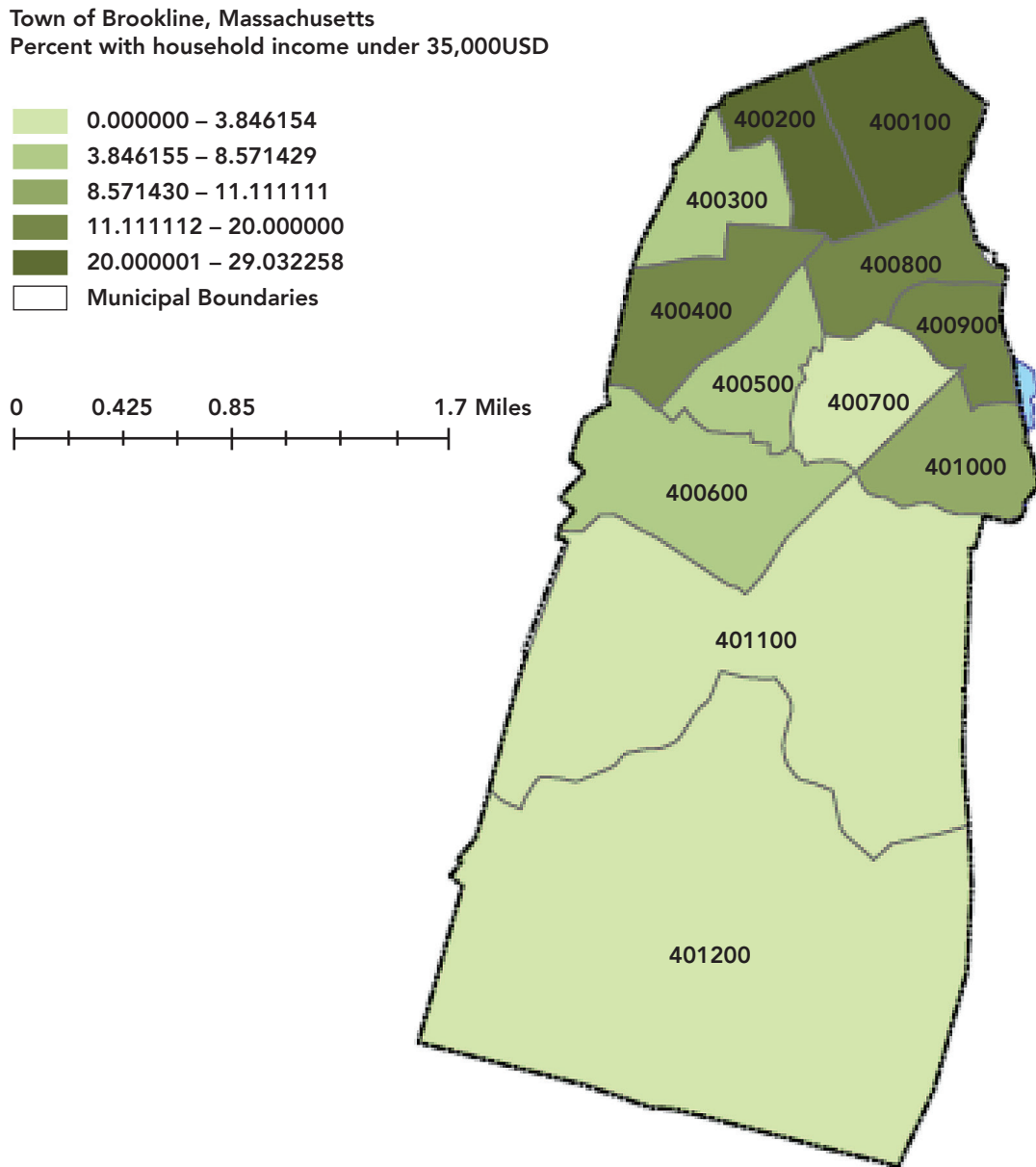
²⁰ <https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14588/2018-HUD-Income-Limits>

²¹ <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

²² *Ibid.*

²³ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/brookline-ma/#economy>

The figure below shows that households earning less than \$35,000²⁴ are concentrated in tracts in the northeastern parts of Brookline,²⁵ where the larger Brookline Housing Authority developments are situated.



24 Brookline Department of Public Health, Brookline Public Health Survey, Preliminary Results. 2018

25 Brookline Community Foundation. Understanding Brookline: A Report on Poverty. October 2014

This geographic distribution of wealth has very real implications for the experiences of the families and children, as options for housing are limited. To be eligible for consideration for affordable housing through the Brookline Housing Authority, income, including income from assets, cannot exceed the “Low” line shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Income Eligibility Criteria for Brookline Housing Authority

INCOME CLASSIFICATION	FAMILY OF 2	FAMILY OF 3	FAMILY OF 4	FAMILY OF 5	FAMILY OF 6	FAMILY OF 7	FAMILY OF 8
Low (80% of area median income)	\$64,900	\$73,000	\$81,100	\$87,600	\$94,100	\$100,600	\$107,100

In March 2018, approximately 200 families were living in Brookline Housing Authority and Section 8 units, including 300 children ages 5 to 18.²⁶ The supply of affordable housing does not meet demand, so there are with long waitlists.²⁷ Most likely some families have to pay more for housing than they can afford — meaning they have less money available for other needs, including OST.

These dynamics have implications for where families live and children attend school, as reflected in the demographics of PSB. Table 4 summarizes PSB data on the demographics of the town’s eight public K–8 schools for the 2017–2018 school year.²⁸

Table 4. PSB K-8 Demographics 2017-18

School	Number of students in 2017–2018	Economically disadvantaged	Special education level of need of low, moderate, or high	English language learner	Primary home language other than English
Baker	763	8.4%	14.4%	13.5%	34.6%
Coolidge Corner (formerly Devotion)	801	12.2%	15.5%	13.7%	32.6%
Driscoll	613	6.5%	13.9%	9.6%	24.5%
Heath	534	6.4%	9.9%	4.7%	17.0%
Lawrence	722	10.4%	12.9%	20.1%	35.3%
Lincoln	578	13.5%	17.5%	16.4%	30.1%
Pierce	859	10.9%	10.7%	17.2%	28.6%
Runkle	612	6.5%	20.4%	8.8%	21.9%
K-8 TOTAL	5,482	9.5%	14.3%	13.5%	28.7%

At least 1% lower than district K–8 average At least 1% higher than district K–8 average

Note: All demographic terminology reflects language used by PSB and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

²⁶ Brookline Housing Authority. Data provided March 2018.

²⁷ *Ibid.* & Brookline Community Foundation, October 2014, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Public Schools of Brookline. SY1718 October State Submission File and PSB Student Information System pulled on June 15, 2018

This data includes children who attend PSB but reside outside of Brookline, including approximately 200 K–8 students who participate in METCO²⁹, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity program that places Boston students of color in predominantly white suburban schools, and approximately 150 who are the children of PSB or Town of Brookline employees.³⁰

School demographics reflect the disproportionate number of lower-income families living in certain parts of Brookline. On top of the significant variations among the eight K–8 schools in the percentages of students in each group in Table 4, there are other notable dynamics:

- The three schools with the lowest percentages of students who are classified as economically disadvantaged — Driscoll, Heath, and Runkle — also are the schools with the lowest percentages of students who are English language learners and students who have a non-English primary home language. These schools are also in census tracts with higher-than-average median income. Heath and Runkle also have the highest percentages of students identified as white among the K–8 schools.³¹
- The two schools with the highest percentages of students who are classified as economically disadvantaged — Coolidge Corner and Lincoln — also have high percentages of students who have a non-English primary home language. These two schools are situated in or near census tracts with lower-than-average median income and have the highest percentages of students who identify as Black / African American or Hispanic / Latino.³²

These demographics not only suggest that school experiences may be different depending on where families live and which schools their children attend but also highlight the intersection between economic status and race. Families with limited economic resources have fewer OST options. As one focus group participant noted, “There are things to do in Brookline, but it’s restrictive to us, the low-income.”

The continued year-to-year growth projected in PSB³³ and the dearth of affordable and subsidized housing available to low-income families³⁴ increases the likelihood that the percentage of low-income families with children may decline relative to the total number of families residing in Brookline and attending its schools. This projection adds urgency to the need to respond to the voices of low-income families now. A number of informants identified the need for a deeper analysis of both the number of low-income families in Brookline and their experiences.

Finding 2. *Many families rely on school-based OST programs. However, the school-based OST landscape is fragmented and difficult for busy caregivers to navigate.*

As in national research³⁵, parents in focus groups for this report and those who responded to a 2017 PSB survey³⁶ identified many reasons that OST opportunities are important to them generally. They want their children to be active and busy and to have enriching

29 *Ibid.*

30 Public Schools of Brookline Enrollment Working Group. 2017–18 Enrollment Projection Report

31 Public Schools of Brookline. SY1718 October State Submission File and PSB Student Information System pulled on June 15, 2018

32 *Ibid.*

33 Public Schools of Brookline Enrollment Working Group. 2017–18 Enrollment Projection Report.

34 Brookline Community Foundation, October 2014, *op. cit.*

35 Afterschool Alliance. America for Afterschool. 2018

36 Public Schools of Brookline. After School Program Review Report. Summer 2017

experiences similar to what they see other children in Brookline accessing. They need reliable and consistent coverage so they can work and meet other responsibilities. Many families in need of OST opportunities prefer school-based options, which provide a familiar setting, necessitate fewer transitions, and minimize transportation. However, the fragmentation of the current OST landscape poses challenges to this need for consistency, particularly in the elementary schools, where many families who need full-time OST care — that is, every weekday until 6 pm — are unable to access it. The extended day programs in PSB elementary schools, which offer daily full-time care, are a vital resource for families with younger elementary school-age children, if they can access the programs. In school year 2016–2017, approximately 1,165 children in the eight elementary schools were enrolled in extended day programs — almost 30% of the total PSB K–5 population.³⁷ However, these programs have limited capacity due to space constraints, and most end at fifth grade. Some of the extended day programs have waitlists starting as early as kindergarten. In addition, they can be prohibitively expensive for lower-income families, even with cost subsidies: Tuition ranges between \$500 and \$600 per month.

The other school-based options beyond the extended day programs do not meet families' need for consistent, full-time care. PSB elementary school-based opportunities include enrichment programs that are managed primarily by parent volunteers. These enrichment programs run at various times during the year. Individual classes, which typically run for an hour on a specific weekday, can vary in duration and by cost. In 2016–2017, approximately 1,400 students across the district participated in enrichment programs.³⁸ (Students who are enrolled in extended day can also participate in enrichment programming.) The elementary schools also have some version of a free homework center or club, typically available to grades 4–8. Most K–8 schools also offer intramural sports, as well as content-specific clubs, whether for academics, enrichment, or both. All of these vary in terms of times, days, and duration. Each requires separate registration, and some have a limit on the number of students who can participate. None of the school-based options, including extended day, provide transportation home at the end of the day. For families looking for consistent, reliable programming that fills every afternoon throughout the school year, these school-based options — even if they are free — provide limited help.

Across the elementary school level, the school-based OST landscape is difficult to navigate and does not meet the needs of busy families. In addition, the schools do not have consistent practices for sharing information about OST opportunities with families. This issue with K–8 school-based offerings reflects a reality that is both specific to Brookline and common in many communities: The fact that OST opportunities exist does not mean that families know about them or know how to access them.

If the school-based landscape is difficult to navigate, the broader “galaxy” (as one informant called it) of OST opportunities is even more complex, time-consuming, and often discouraging. One parent affirmed, “Without information, we cannot access ... and we don’t have time to call 20 programs to find something.” One school- and community-based organization that many families identified as a tremendous resource and support is Steps to Success, a nonprofit organization that provides free OST opportunities beginning

37 Public Schools of Brookline. After School Program Review Report. Summer 2017

38 *Ibid.*

in fourth grade, with a focus on serving low-income families who live in public housing. Research respondents recognized Steps to Success for calling and meeting with families directly to provide information about its programming and other OST opportunities and for engaging with families to make sure they get connected. One informant suggested that the best support for families in this fragmented and difficult-to-navigate landscape would be wraparound supports similar to Steps to Success, starting in kindergarten.

Finding 3: *Family income level and English-dominant practices affect not only families' access to OST programming but also their sense of welcome in the community.*

In a 2007 brief, the Massachusetts Special Commission on Afterschool and Out-of-School Time highlighted realities that remain true in Brookline today: “Low-income and minority parents are considerably less likely to report that it is easy to find programs that are affordable, run by trustworthy adults, conveniently located, of high quality, and/or interesting to their child.”³⁹

More than a decade later, the fourth- to eighth-grade youth who participated in a focus group at the Lincoln School provided the same insights. For these children, cost is a primary consideration in helping them to determine whether they would consider participating in an OST opportunity. Young people are often aware of their family’s financial constraints; focus group respondents suggested that they had ruled themselves out of consideration for programs before even finding out whether cost subsidies and other logistical supports were available.

Beyond affordability, many of the other access barriers described in the 2007 brief persist, including lack of transportation, work responsibilities, family factors, and concerns about program quality. As one parent focus group participant reflected, “It is not an even playing field, or equal opportunity.” Given these barriers in Brookline, some parents indicated that they go to Boston to try to access childcare and OST opportunities that are more affordable than in Brookline. Caregivers also said that Boston and its programs feel more welcoming and supportive to them.

Cost subsidies have the potential to help with the affordability issue. The majority of fee-based OST providers who responded to the survey indicated that they have some form of cost subsidy or financial assistance available. However, the amount of assistance available is often capped and may not fully meet families’ need. Although these subsidies enable many lower-income families to participate in OST opportunities, they also pose an unintended barrier to access. For families, the availability and amount of subsidies is an additional piece of information that they need to glean from providers. Then they need to complete time-consuming paperwork — in English — and often must submit personal financial information. This intrusive process deters many families. As one parent stated, “Obviously, if we get food stamps, if we have an EBT [food and economic assistance] card, we’re poor.... It should just be that cut and dried.” Further adding to the challenge for low-income families is the policy of some organizations that families cannot register for a new session or season if they have an outstanding balance from a previous session or season.

39 Little, P. Access to Afterschool Programs: Overcoming the Barriers to Getting Youth “in the Door.” The MA Special Commission on Afterschool and Out-of-School Time. Fall 2007.

For many families, the public libraries have become a key OST provider. As one librarian indicated, “We are a default spot for those that do not have other options.” As free locations with no registration required, libraries have seen an increasing demand over the past few years, with significant — and growing — numbers of children and caregivers coming each afternoon. Often, caregivers bring several children with them; library staff said that they hear children and caregivers speaking languages other than English. Parents identified the libraries as a key resource, while recognizing that they are not ideal. For all the libraries do to respond to the needs and interests of families, including the facilitation of structured OST activities, they are not equipped to provide either full-time, continuous care for younger children or reliable and stimulating experiences for older children.

Economic status is not the only barrier to participation. The prevalence of English-dominant practices among OST providers and across the town presents another significant obstacle. Parents are looking for connection and a sense of community within their children’s schools and OST experiences, their neighborhoods, and the town. For some parents, Brookline has not afforded that sense of belonging, so that they are reticent to participate in school, OST, or community activities and events. As one parent shared and others affirmed, “Brookline is good ... and [has] good schools, but they are not good to their poor people.” Other parents identified the importance of having the support of someone who can speak and answer questions in their primary language. One parent described having encountered some “neighbors [and] other people [who] haven’t been open, haven’t made [them] comfortable enough.” It can be hard for parents to ask for help, especially if they feel uncomfortable or don’t have a clear sense of whom to ask. More than half of OST providers indicated on the survey that they have people who can provide families with information and registration help in at least one language other than English. However, this help is often provided only on an as-needed basis, and it is up to the family to ask. Across programs, printed and online materials are mostly available in English.

This lack of support and connectedness was also named by parents who have lived in Brookline for many years and whose primary home language is English. An informant summed up the experiences of many parents: “Families with low income do not have access. Part is transportation, part is communication.... In Brookline, a lot of sticking points are structural.”

Finding 4. *OST needs and opportunities differ based on participant age and geography.*

Brookline has a robust landscape of OST providers, with hundreds of distinct programs and activities providing thousands of slots for children and youth in elementary, middle, and high school. There are many opportunities, by age, type of activity, season, day of the week, and time of day. Stakeholders must consider how the OST landscape meets the varying needs of families with children of different ages and in different parts of town. As noted above, families with children in the younger elementary grades prefer school-based opportunities that provide coverage every afternoon and throughout the school year. Many of the respondents to the 2017 PSB family survey expressed satisfaction with the school-based extended day and enrichment opportunities for children through fifth grade. However, the families who responded were not reflective of the district as a whole;

respondents included a significantly higher percentage of white families and significantly lower percentages of families in need of financial assistance and families with children who are English language learners.⁴⁰ For many families, school-based opportunities are unavailable or unaffordable, or they may not respond to families' needs and youths' interests. Families need to navigate the broader OST landscape and, in the words of one informant, "piece it together."

In addition to the libraries, public institutions offer some of these pieces. The Brookline Recreation Department (Brookline Rec) has a wide range of programs throughout the year for children of all ages. These programs provide an outlet for some families, offering significant financial assistance. Brookline Rec has added slots in recent years to respond to the number of families on the waitlist for extended day programs. Cost and lack of transportation home continue to be significant barriers for many lower-income families. Like other OST providers, Brookline Rec requires extensive information on its application for financial aid, with no guarantee of aid. Furthermore, the aid can be insufficient to meet the needs of some families. For lower-income families living in its family housing sites, Brookline Housing Authority offers free family learning centers that provide enrichment and homework support to children; families identified these centers as a critical resource in the absence of or as a complement to other opportunities.

Beyond the larger and more familiar opportunities that are available in schools, Brookline Rec, and the libraries, Brookline has many additional OST opportunities for children in grades K–12. Many are run by community-based organizations and some by larger organizations with a local footprint. Programs have varied areas of focus, including academic enrichment and support, dance, music, visual and performing arts, sports and athletics, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics), faith-based programming, and more. Each provider has its own schedule and structure; approach to outreach; and registration, fees, subsidies, scheduling, and other logistics. Few are intended to provide full-time care, and fewer still offer transportation; if they do, they may charge for it. In addition, although some programs are close to the schools or sections of town with higher percentages of children who are from low-income families, an additional hurdle remains: families' lack of familiarity with providers they do not know. Families emphasized the importance of trust in responsive staff as a feature of a quality program, and are less likely to consider opportunities when they have no prior connection with staff or other families that participate. The factors caregivers and young people said were important in considering OST programs are outlined in the box below.

40 Public Schools of Brookline, Summer 2017, *op. cit.*

BEYOND COST, WHAT MATTERS MOST WHEN CONSIDERING OST OPPORTUNITIES?	
What focus group respondents said	
Parents	Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality programs that their children enjoy and that support their children's education, assist with childcare, and provide older youth with jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule, including days of the week, time of day, and duration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety "Transportation is big for everyone" — particularly in getting children to opportunities that are not based at their school or in their neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust in staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An environment in which "[peers] interact nicely"

For children in grades 6 through 8, participation in school-based OST opportunities decreases, in part because the options are fewer⁴¹ and in part because children's needs and interests change and they tend to "vote with their feet."⁴² Brookline Rec staff said that they also see a similar decline. Library staff noted that many 10- to 13-year-olds visit the libraries after school; they identify that as the age group that could most benefit from additional opportunities for engaging, adult-facilitated enrichment activities. In addition to Steps to Success, parents identified Middle School Mondays at the Brookline Teen Center as an important outlet that offers a wide variety of structured and unstructured programs. Families said that they wanted the same consistency for their middle school children as for younger children, with opportunities to experience more autonomy and opportunity for leadership, to pursue specific interests and try new things, and to be with friends. The range of options in Brookline affords the potential to create a full weekly schedule of developmentally responsive activities for a middle-school-aged young person. However, realizing that potential schedule demands time and resources that many families do not have. This galaxy of OST opportunities exists, and yet it can feel far away for families and youth. As one parent said, reflecting the reality of many: "We all stumble across things. You talk to people, or see something hanging up on the wall randomly.... And you feel like it's a sign from God that you get a call [about a program]." The landscape can be difficult for anyone to navigate, yet it is clearly harder for some.

In high school, some youth want opportunities to specialize and to hone new or deepen existing skills. Brookline High School (BHS) provides many on-site activities, through clubs, sports teams, intramurals, and performing arts opportunities. However, participation in sports requires a seasonal fee, and accessing subsidies requires submission of a separate application and documentation of family income. Most high-school-based

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Harvard Family Research Project. Exploring Quality in After School Programs for Middle School-Age Youth. 2006

OST opportunities are listed on the BHS website. Families find that high school youth often navigate these opportunities on their own. Results of the 2018 Brookline High School Health Survey offers insights into participation rates in some school-based OST opportunities: 59% of students in grades 9 to 12 self-reported having participated in at least one BHS sports team in the past 12 months, and 66% self-reported having participated in organized extracurricular activity at least one day in the past week.⁴³ The Brookline Teen Center and the Teen Room and Teen Zone at the libraries also are important, welcoming OST spaces that provide both structured and unstructured opportunities.

For some high school youth, and for many of the parents in the focus groups, the opportunity to work and earn money is very important. Opportunities for paid work for teenagers during the school year are limited. Unlike surrounding communities including Boston and Cambridge, Brookline lacks a town-wide summer jobs program for youth. Some community-based organizations provide their own paid opportunities for youth. Among them, focus group participants cited Steps to Success: “There is not work for teenagers in Brookline, but young people that are part of Steps, if their grades are good, and they are doing what they have to do in school, they have a job.”

Finding 5. *Families benefit from support in navigating the complex OST landscape. Their needs and the capacity of OST providers to offer this support vary.*

Across the community, there is a shared recognition that participation in OST opportunities is important. Children very much want to participate, and families want to know what is available to them. OST providers want to serve children and families; 50% of the programs run by community-based (not school-based) organizations that completed the OST provider survey are below capacity and have available slots. However, the availability of slots does not make the slots accessible to families who could benefit. The needs of families are varied and complex, as are the approaches OST providers take to reach out to families and respond to their needs. Bridging the gap between family interest and actual participation is demanding. As illustrated in the box below, families need to find information that is accessible to them, make sense of the information and determine feasibility, complete registration materials (and, likely, financial assistance forms, some of which require documentation about family income and circumstance), have financial resources to pay for programs that charge fees, and, finally, figure out transportation. Beyond these considerations, families still need to develop trust in unfamiliar providers. For families with several children, the complexity and challenge increase significantly. OST providers have their own set of constraints, including, for many, having insufficient financial and human capacity to reach out to families and to respond to their unique needs.

43 Brookline Department of Public Health. Healthy Brookline Volume XVIII: Youth Risk Behavior Survey. 2018

FROM INTEREST AND NEED TO ACTUAL PARTICIPATION: A MULTI-STEP PROCESS

1. Find accessible information about OST opportunities

2. Make sense of the information and determine feasibility of participation in relation to family needs

3. Get and complete registration materials and, as needed, financial aid forms

4. Make necessary payment(s)

5. Figure out transportation and other logistics

In light of these challenges, youth and parents who participated in the focus groups identified supports and approaches they found helpful. Parents highlighted people and organizations that reach out directly to parents in person or by phone, taking the time to get to know and understand families and then introducing or directly connecting them to other resources and opportunities in Brookline. Parents specifically mentioned Brookline Housing Authority staff and social workers, individual PSB personnel at some elementary schools and especially at BHS, and Steps to Success staff. In addition to that personal connection, parents appreciate paper copies of handouts and flyers, both delivered to people's homes and posted in public places including schools, libraries, and common spaces in Brookline Housing Authority buildings. Handing papers to children in school works in the younger elementary grades but becomes less effective as children get into middle school. Emails, particularly messages with clear and catchy subject lines, work for families who check their inboxes regularly, but some do not. Focus group parents perceived social media as less effective, given the number of platforms. Both young people and families see school as a helpful place to reach children directly, whether school staff present information or OST providers go into school classrooms to share what they have to offer. Finally, families said that word-of-mouth referrals are also helpful when they come from trusted community members, including neighbors, other families, healthcare providers, and social service providers. One parent reflected, "I wish more people would go around, and if someone needs help, help them." Coordinated efforts among OST providers to provide information, outreach, and support to families in navigating and accessing available opportunities can benefit both families and providers.

Composite Pictures of Family Experiences

Rose has lived in Brookline in a subsidized apartment with Paula, her six-year-old child, for almost a year. She needs to place Paula in a stable, reliable OST setting in order to be able to work multiple jobs to keep up with expenses. The family is on the waitlist at the extended day program at Paula's school, though Rose is worried she will be unable to afford it if a space opens up. She wants to make sure that Paula is participating in fun and interesting activities

that she will enjoy. However, Rose is worried about Paula's behavior and how unfamiliar staff will treat her. Paula, who can be very active, benefits from having physical outlets for her energy. Paula had a difficult incident at summer camp; Rose felt that Paula was blamed for breaking a dish. When the camp staff called Rose, the staff person made it sound like Paula was the only one involved and that the incident was Rose's fault. Paula told her that it was an accident, and she was very apologetic. Rose did not feel that the camp staff listened to her, so felt unsure about sending Paula back to camp. Rose learned about some new OST opportunities from a friend at work, who also introduced her to the Brookline parents Facebook group. Rose enrolled Paula in an art class, which the child loved, but when Rose's work hours were cut back, she was unable to afford the class. Paula wants to participate in an enrichment class at her school, but it ends at 4 pm, and Rose works until 5 pm. Rose is worried that Paula is falling behind what she sees other children doing and that she will be unable to provide her child with the experiences that matter to both of them.

Jackie has been living in Brookline for almost 15 years. She has been dealing with health issues that have made it difficult for her to work in recent years. She lives in subsidized housing with her three children. She wants her children to participate in OST experiences that meet their interests and complement their school learning, but she does not have the financial resources to pay for these experiences. Nancy, the oldest child, has had limited opportunity to participate in OST experiences. Now in 10th grade, she often helps Jackie around the house. Nancy has expressed interest in going to a free OST program with friends, and Jackie is willing to consider it if she can find someone she knows who could accompany Nancy to and from the program. Jackie and Nancy would both like Nancy to get a job but are not sure how to find one. Robert, who is in seventh grade, enjoys football and basketball. When he was in elementary school, he played in Brookline. Then Jackie learned from a friend that he could participate in the same sports in Boston for free, so he has been playing there for the past few years. Antonia, the youngest child, is in fourth grade. She plays soccer in Boston and really wants to take dance classes, but Jackie is not sure where dance classes are offered and does not think she could afford them. Jackie wants all of her children to learn to swim, but the lessons she found are too expensive for all three of them, even with financial aid. Though she wants to respond to her children's interests, she finds it stressful to try to find affordable opportunities with programs that she trusts and can easily access.

3 Opportunities for Brookline

In many ways, the English-dominant OST landscape reflects the economic and geographic disparities that exist across Brookline. Access to opportunities is not equitable. Families for whom barriers to participation exist are not able to take advantage of the resources that are available to others. In considering opportunities and next steps, Brookline leaders must acknowledge that advancing equity requires both shorter- and longer-term strategies to address structures that have taken decades to develop. In the curb-cut analogy, accruing the full benefits demands attention to the entire system of sidewalks, not just some. Similarly, advancing access and equity for all young people will require a coordinated and sustained effort addressing the full landscape of OST providers and collaborators.

Significantly, some “curbs” in the OST landscape are already lower or easier to change than others. Building on these existing strengths can support learning and change across the system. With shared and sustained commitment, Brookline stakeholders can imagine and work toward a future in which all young people and families can fully participate and succeed. The strategies in this section apply the key findings in Section 2 to approaches taken in other communities.

Long-Term Recommendations

Recommendation 1. *Collect better data about low-income families and their experiences.*

Better data is needed to more fully understand the demographics and experiences of families with children in Brookline, particularly those of low-income families. It is difficult to find publicly accessible, up-to-date data; different stakeholders hold different pieces of information. The majority of key informants identified lack of data as a significant gap. To advance equity, Brookline needs a shared understanding of how disparities and inequities play out. It needs ways to identify priority areas and to track progress over time.

In some communities, OST participation data is compiled and tracked, often by the school district’s student information system or a connected data source. This data gives those communities a comprehensive picture of what OST participation looks like in the aggregate and even at the individual student level. This approach takes time and money and requires shared understanding with and buy-in from families, OST providers, and the school district, as well as data-sharing agreements that have legal implications. It also requires OST providers to compile and submit reliable data; human resources must be available to manage the data system, to gather and synthesize the information, and to help stakeholders make use of this data consistently. Integrating OST participation data into an existing student information system is the most reliable way to fully understand the demand side of the OST landscape. This approach also affirms the importance of OST as part of children’s complementary learning experiences.

There are other ways to understand demand; they also come with a cost, but are easier to implement. The PSB survey of K–8 families in 2017 was one such effort, though, like most electronic surveys, it did not reach all families; it also was available only in English. Having surveys available in multiple languages and in several formats — for example, emailing them electronically, having them available for completion on tablets or laptops at schools and community locations, mailing them, and having paper copies available at schools and community locations — can increase rates of participation. Some communities have also developed questions related to OST awareness, access, and participation and incorporated them in their local version of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for students in grades 7 through 12⁴⁴. The Brookline High School Health Survey already includes some questions that provide insight into participation in high-school-based OST opportunities and integrates questions pertaining to risk and protective factors taken from the National Institute of Health’s Monitoring the Future survey⁴⁵. It may be possible to add targeted questions for all students in grades 7 through 12 when the survey is next administered in 2019.

Another short-term step is for the OST provider community to identify and share best practices around the participation data they collect and maintain, identify common data fields, and generate common data sharing agreements to include in family registration materials so that family information can be shared across providers. This step can serve as the precursor to broader opportunities, such as a shared data system or a common application or registration process across multiple providers. The data infrastructures of entities including PSB, Brookline Rec, and Brookline Housing Authority could not only provide useful learnings about managing individual data responsibly and at scale but also potentially serve as platforms on which to build.

Recommendation 2. *Increase awareness and opportunities to participate.*

Although there are many barriers to access and participation in the complicated galaxy that is the Brookline OST landscape, awareness of these opportunities could be improved by creating common ways to compile and share information about OST opportunities. Families and youth identified some of the basic information that matters most to them, including:

- Ages served
- Time of day and year
- Hours of operation
- Location
- Transportation options (even if transportation is not provided)
- Cost (including subsidies)
- Types of activities that participants can do
- Availability (open slots)

OST providers, including PSB-based and community-based offerings, can work together to make sure they are presenting information about their opportunities in consistent

⁴⁴ Brookline Department of Public Health, Healthy Brookline Volume XVIII: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2018

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

ways. This consistency would make it easier for families to understand differences among opportunities. It also would make it easier for providers to share information about other OST opportunities, so that families see a more complete picture of the landscape in more places. There are existing examples already in the community, like *Kids Involved During Summer Camp Directory* from Steps to Success and *The Brookline Thrive Guide* from Women and Girls Thriving in Brookline, as well as some school-based activity directories. The *Elder Resource Guide*, published by the Brookline Council on Aging and the Brookline Senior Center, is a similar example, though for a different population. The box below provides a brief sample, and an inventory of Brookline OST Opportunities based on our research can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/OSTInventory>.

Sample Entries of School-Year OST Opportunities for Middle School Youth (Grades 6, 7, 8)

Sample Entry 1

Organization & program name: The Makery afterschool arts and tech programming for ages 10+

Location: 2 Sewall Avenue **Website:** www.brooklinemakery.com

Social media: @themakerybrookline (Instagram), @TheMakeryBrookline (Facebook)

Primary contact: Hayley Greenberg, Phone: 617-230-9621,

Email: hayley@brooklinemakery.com

Description of program: Afterschool arts and tech programs including design, laser cutting, 3D modeling and printing, woodworking, mold-making, electronics, and more

Main focus of program: Arts - visual, Computer programming / computer science / coding, general enrichment / range of activities

Grades (ages) served: Grades 5–12 (ages 10–16) **Total capacity:** 8

Time of year program takes place: School year

Days of the week: M, T, W, TH, F

Cost to participate: Yes, fixed amount: \$20/hour; no cost subsidies

Staff who can communicate in languages other than English: Yes - Spanish

Support for children with physical disability: Support for children with some disabilities

Support for children with special needs: Support for children with some special needs.

Transportation: No

Snacks / meals: Families asked to send from home

Sample Entry 2

Organization & program name: Steps to Success, Inc. - Invest in Kids (INK)

Location: 24 Webster Place **Website:** www.stepstosuccessbrookline.org

Social media: Facebook: Steps to Success Brookline; **Linked In:** Steps to Success Brookline

Primary contact: Sydney Keiler, Phone: 617-713-5310, **Email:** sts@stepstosuccessbrookline.org

Description of program: School-year mentorship / academic support program for 7th and

8th graders (STS students only) in partnership with Boston College

Main focus of program: Academic enrichment, Academic support, Mentoring

Grades (ages) served: Grades 7 & 8 (ages 12–15) **Total capacity:** 40 (Typically full)

Time of year program takes place: School year

Days of the Week: TH

Eligibility criteria: Must live in Brookline, must live in Brookline Housing Authority units, must meet income requirements

Cost to participate: Free if participant / family meets certain requirements

Staff who can communicate in languages other than English: Yes – Spanish, Haitian Creole, or any other translation provided through Public Schools of Brookline

Support for children with physical disability: Support for children with some disabilities

Support for children with special needs: Support for children with some special needs, on a case-by-case basis

Transportation: Yes, included for all children

Snacks / meals: Provided for eligible children / youth from Brookline Housing Authority housing

Most OST providers identified some willingness and capacity to support families with the registration process for their own offerings and with finding other opportunities if they do not have a slot available. This support is an important resource to offer families. To provide families with consistent information and common experiences, OST providers could collaborate to build a shared understanding of the range of OST opportunities and shared approaches to reviewing offerings that are not their own. This collective capacity-building could also engage PSB personnel, Brookline Housing Authority staff, healthcare providers, and other community members who provide resources and services to families who have limited financial resources and have other needs. When families cannot find full-time care in one program, OST providers could provide examples of how to piece together multiple OST offerings to create a full-time menu, including cost and transportation logistics.

A longer-term step is to identify a group or organization willing to compile this information on an ongoing basis, making it available both online and in print. It is also essential that there be consideration and commitment over time to disseminating this information in languages other than English. Many OST providers say that they have staff with non-English language capabilities. Considering ways to partner in order to make collective use of these important human resources could have significant benefits for families both in the short term and over time.

An important complement to consistent approaches to disseminating information about OST opportunities is easing and streamlining registration and enrollment processes both within and across OST providers. Individually, OST providers can make sure they are requesting and collecting only information they need and use. Collectively, providers can follow the example of communities that have created a common registration form, available in languages spoken in the community, that asks for basic family information to be used by many providers. Online platforms such FamilyID, an online registration

platform used by PSB and some other OST providers in Brookline and elsewhere, could also advance efficiency for families and providers alike — provided that it can be made available in multiple languages. Eliciting the perspectives of families as the primary consumers is vital. As researchers heard in the focus groups, parents have many helpful ideas about how providers can better respond to their needs.

Recommendation 3. *Engage families in ways and places that work for them.*

Family partnership and engagement are increasingly popular ideals in schools and youth-serving settings. To realize these ideals takes commitment and practice. Families want to be welcomed, connected, and included in their neighborhoods and communities; fulfilling this need requires a collective commitment to reaching families in ways that work for them. The best way to understand what works for an individual family is to take the time to make a connection and ask. As families shared, phone calls and home visits can be powerful ways to initiate trusting relationships. OST providers, working if possible with school personnel, can identify, share, and compile promising practices that they use to connect with families and can potentially pool resources to build their practice together. In some communities, schools partner with OST providers to reach families who may be hard to reach during the school day or are hesitant to connect with schools. Similarly, school personnel can help OST providers reach out to families who may have expressed interest in OST opportunities. In light of the range of service providers in Brookline, creating opportunities for people working with families to come together to share practices can lead to new ways to collaborate in service of families. Providers can share information about which families they are serving to tap into existing relationships and minimize duplication of efforts.

Families identified places in the community as great sources of information, including the libraries, Brookline Housing Authority community spaces, some healthcare providers, and some schools. Understanding and defining what works well in these settings could enable other parts of the community to take on more explicit roles as community resource hubs, where parents know they can go to access information and potentially meet other parents and caregivers seeking to do the same. Part of the power of the focus groups was that parents came together in places where they felt comfortable to share their experiences and learn from one another. Tapping into settings in which families feel comfortable can allow providers to reach parents directly and can enable parents and caregivers to be conduits to one another in powerful ways.

Some communities have adopted an approach similar to the use of healthcare navigators, who are trained to support people in navigating health insurance marketplaces. These communities have trained individuals to serve as OST liaisons or youth connectors who help youth and families to navigate the local landscape of OST opportunities. These liaisons could be OST professionals or other human service providers, librarians, school-based personnel, and even older youth or parents who provide peer support; they should include people who speak languages other than English. This navigator role can be part of someone's existing job or an additional paid opportunity. Providing this service could be a powerful signal of the community's commitment to equity and to young people's access to and participation in OST opportunities.

Families and other informants made it clear that transportation is also a barrier to participation. There may need to be a range of responses to the unique needs and interests of families in the face of limited resources. Different communities have tried different things to address transportation challenges. For example, some school districts provide late buses. Some communities provide discounted or free access to public transportation for older children. OST providers may collaborate with other social service providers or faith-based organizations that have buses or vans that are not being used at dismissal time. They may pool resources to rent vans or shuttle buses, coordinate ridesharing or carpooling between families, or coordinate buddy systems that pair older youth to travel with younger children to and from OST opportunities. Family trust and buy-in is necessary for any effort to address barriers to transportation; Brookline may need to pilot different approaches in order to learn what can work for families and the community.

Recommendation 4. *Address cost issues.*

Cost remains a significant, often insurmountable, barrier to OST participation for some young people and families. For families and youth, the facts can be very simple and discouraging: Either they can afford an opportunity, or they cannot. Part of the collective challenge and complexity for OST providers is their differing organizational structures, financial needs and constraints, and policies and practices around cost subsidies. The reality is that funding for youth-serving organizations is limited, and raising money is tremendously time- and labor-intensive; many organizations rely on participant fees in order to exist. One important starting point is for providers to come together and begin a conversation about their own financing and related policies, including how they navigate affordability for families. Some providers have already started sharing in this way; others can build on what is already working. In some communities, organizations collaborate around shared purchasing and even share back office and administrative functions in order to decrease expenses.

It is also important to hold an equity lens to this issue and to recognize that charging the same amount per slot or giving equal amounts of financial aid to all families can be inherently inequitable. The practice of requiring families to complete an additional form and supply documentation to apply for cost subsidies is burdensome and similarly inequitable, as is requiring families to pay off an outstanding previous balance in order to register anew. In fact, some parents identified making sliding scales part of the regular registration process, based on a percentage of self-reported income, as the least intrusive and most helpful process. Others suggested that showing their EBT food assistance card should be sufficient proof that they need financial assistance. The number of unfilled slots across some providers could also catalyze opportunities to experiment with different cost structures; providers could offer those slots at a significantly reduced cost directly to families or young people who are participating in a different OST opportunity and may need or want to fill additional time.

Some communities have generated community-wide funds for OST participation. In others, individual programs have set fee schedules that reflect the great variation in family income, so that some families paying significantly more and others less — or nothing at all — for the same slot. Some providers have partnered on both registration and cost

sharing so that participation in one program automatically affords participation in another at no additional cost, simply by checking a box on the application.

Understanding what is available and possible in Brookline will take dedicated and creative thinking in both small and big ways; it will require some commitment to experimentation and learning over time. The Brookline Community Foundation's Brookline Youth Fund — which supports activities among Brookline youth whose families earn less than the town's median annual income or are underserved or considered at risk — provides a potential learning and leverage opportunity for generating investment that can be scaled across the community. Making cost reduction a collective commitment is an important start.

Brookline is not alone in trying to address issues related to the cost of participation — yet there are no quick or easy fixes. Public funding at the federal and state levels for OST programs and cost subsidies has been stagnant at best. The October 2018 publication *Recommendations of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council: A Report on the Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning* includes recommendations for increasing investment to support access to quality OST opportunities in Massachusetts. The recommendations include increasing state budget funding for OST and funneling cannabis tax revenue to afterschool and summer programs at both the state and local levels.⁴⁶

Private funding from corporations or foundations can be variable and often targets specific programs, content (for example, STEAM, the arts, or social and emotional learning), or outcomes. However, some communities have benefited from foundation funding to support specific components of a coordinated OST system, such as building out a shared data infrastructure, developing and implementing shared quality standards, or advancing school-OST partnerships. Increasingly, foundations have demonstrated interest in supporting public-private or cross-sector partnerships that seek to address community needs with collective long-term strategies. To access these funding opportunities, Brookline stakeholders will find it helpful to consider OST access and engagement within a broader context of and shared commitment to equity, child and youth development, college and career readiness and success, community health, or other similar community improvement efforts.

Recommendation 5. Identify and replicate promising practices.

Nascent examples of collaboration among Brookline OST providers include the Brookline Community Foundation's OST Working Group and the PSB Summer Partners Group, a monthly convening of providers that run summer youth programming in PSB buildings. These groups have demonstrated the power of coming together around a shared agenda and common discussion points and have the potential to serve as a springboard for similar kinds of professional learning communities or working groups. Capturing and sharing the strengths and challenges of these efforts, and inviting others to tables like these, can rapidly extend successful practices more broadly. Similarly, the young people, families, and informants who contributed to the research for this report identified

⁴⁶ Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership. *Recommendations of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council: A Report on the Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning*. October 2018.

powerful examples of practices that are working or emerging and have the potential to spread. Examples include the various ways Steps to Success successfully engages low-income families through partnerships with Brookline Housing Authority and PSB; the approaches the libraries are taking to create welcoming environments for young people and their caregivers and expand their OST programming; the sense of support and welcome families experience through Women and Girls Thriving in Brookline — as well as the ideas families have about how they can bring their insights, skills, and experiences to OST providers and the broader community.

There is a lot of shared concern about the gaps in the Brookline OST landscape and the ways they impact young people, families, and the providers. Tapping into this concern by convening people to provoke conversation and to develop and pilot some shared, time-bound, and attainable efforts to address these gaps would provide important learning for the participants and for the broader community. Many tools and resources are available to help groups facilitate discussions and processes that draw on the wisdom and experience of the people in a community. Many communities are creating more spaces in which people can connect and collaborate, pursue shared professional development, explore hard questions about equity and access, and generate collective energy to create OST systems that are more coherent and effective for everyone involved.

All of this work requires a commitment to collaboration, ideally with the support of a coordinating entity or group that can help guide the work over time — often referred to as a backbone organization. Developing a coherent system-wide approach requires a shared vision, sustained focus, and dedicated administration. This last is most feasible and effective when a designated individual or group is responsible for it. Many backbone entities are housed within public or private organizations that have existing administrative capacity and infrastructure; some spin off into independent entities over time.

Moving this work forward requires an investment of human and financial resources. This reality presents a real challenge given Brookline's fiscal constraints. In the absence of additional funding, it may be necessary to start by engaging the wide spectrum of youth- and family-serving stakeholders — both public and private — to identify where any capacity to support this work may exist and pool resources accordingly. Innovative solutions have emerged in other resource-constrained communities. With similar commitment and a collaborative spirit, Brookline can generate its own creative approach.

Short-Term Recommendations

Community change is most effective and enduring when it is collective and builds on existing strengths. In those and other respects, Brookline is positioned to do the hard and important work ahead of it. Stakeholders share a recognition of two key intersecting dynamics: (1) the disparate impact of the town's socioeconomic and geographic disparities on the experiences and well-being of low-income children and families and (2) the importance of an enhanced OST landscape that supports all children and families by responding to the needs of those who will benefit from it most. The community's attention to school enrollment and capital needs provides an important on-ramp for further consideration of OST: Any serious effort to respond to the educational needs and interests of a community should include OST. Brookline has many strong and committed programs,

organizations, and leaders — including young people and families themselves — who are poised to help make a change. A commitment to equitable OST participation for all children and families is an investment in present and future generations. Brookline has taken, and continues to take, many small steps in this direction. Larger-scale change needs to continue to include incremental approaches while keeping a shared focus on advancing the curb-cut effect across the entire system. Specific steps may include the following.

Document and share efforts to address equity. Organizations and institutions — both alone and in partnership — can and should take steps to reflect on and advance equity in policy and practice and then document and share these efforts broadly to make sure they do not live in isolation. Smaller efforts need support and energy to be sustained and spread; they can receive that support and energy only through clear and open lines of communication.

Advance community awareness. Communications, coordination, and collaboration are important to the growth of an OST system. Many communities have found creative ways to make explicit and amplify the vital importance of OST participation as part of the healthy and positive development of children and young people; they have even positioned OST access as part of a larger equity agenda. Developing common talking points and finding champions and multiple channels for similar messages can help generate broad awareness and commitment, while nourishing those who are already in the know and doing the work. As evidenced by the May 2017 convening, there is incredible power in gathering around a common issue. Committed stakeholders should continue to provide regular opportunities to advance shared understanding and articulate key priorities with and for Brookline children and families.

Invest in an identifiable face of OST. Communities benefit when one or more identifiable individuals or entities are willing to hold the work and help move it forward over time. Identifying and supporting such an individual or entity to help with this work in Brookline is an important next step. In many other communities, this process has started with the pooling of public and private dollars and other resources to create a part-time or full-time position to be a recognizable face of the work at the outset. Where this position is housed is an important consideration to ensure that the incumbent has access to key leaders and credibility across the community; some communities have found it advantageous to place the position in one or more municipal departments that already serve children (such as the school district, the recreation department, or the library system), with an advisory group that includes representatives from community-based groups.

Start with subgroups and working groups. The Brookline OST galaxy can feel vast. There are many ways to consider organizing stakeholders in service of a coordinated approach; the PSB Summer Partners group is one such example. Efforts and subgroups can be organized by age (K–5, middle school, teen); by school, in order to foster collaboration and coordination among OST providers and school personnel in a given school community; or by neighborhood, which may involve the creation of wraparound zones or similar structures in which multiple service providers collaborate to respond to the needs of children and families through a coordinated approach. Some communities have also created topic-area working groups focused on such issues as outreach and awareness, quality improvement, or financing or on particular content areas, such as STEAM.

Engage the bigger systems. Identifying where individuals and organizations are already investing time and energy, or would be willing to do so, can help bring people to shared tables to create a common agenda and build collective capacity. This effort can also create multiple entry points that ease barriers to participation. When an individual or organization publicly steps up to take the lead, others often follow. Key to any change effort is the involvement of the larger public institutions, including PSB, Brookline Rec, and the libraries. These entities wield significant resources and power, so they will be called on to continue to share both.

Engage marginalized individuals and groups. Embarking in a concerted way to advance equity in OST participation demands mutual respect and a willingness to tap into all that is good and challenging in Brookline, without blame or shame. Everyone can have a role to play in moving this work forward. All stakeholders need to be able to honor differing perspectives and acknowledge difficult truths. System-builders should identify and tap into the many individuals and resources in Brookline that already foster welcoming spaces in order to enable all stakeholders — including young people and families — to engage in these important conversations and efforts moving forward. One informant emphasized the importance of inviting into spaces of creation and decision-making people who are typically marginalized. Doing asset mapping of both key stakeholders and existing resources can provide a helpful roadmap for engagement over time.

The Way Forward

Brookline is at an important moment, as it aspires to realize its commitment to all children and families. The current reality of a fragmented, English-dominant OST landscape places a particular burden on working families and has an outsized impact on low-income families, those whose primary home languages are languages other than English, and those who are experiencing other social and economic stressors. Yet Brookline is positioned to do the hard and important work ahead of it to develop an OST system that supports all children and families by responding to the needs of those who will benefit from it most. Advancing access and equity requires a concerted effort that prioritizes coordination and collaboration — which already exist in some places. Community change is most effective and enduring when it is collective and builds on existing strengths. With a clear direction and with shared and sustained leadership, Brookline can maximize its resources and fully realize its commitment to young people and families.

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Appendix A.

Definitions of Terms

Brookline Community Foundation (the Foundation)

The mission of the Brookline Community Foundation is to shine a spotlight on community needs, inspire philanthropy, and award strategic grants to build a more vibrant, engaged, and equitable Brookline. The Foundation commissioned this report and sponsored the May 2017 community convening that preceded and catalyzed it.

National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST)

NIOST is part of the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College. Its mission is to support the healthy development of children, families, and communities and to advance the OST field through research, training, advocacy, and tools.

Public Schools of Brookline (PSB)

PSB is the public school district in the Town of Brookline. PSB's mission is to ensure that every student develops the skills and knowledge to pursue a productive and fulfilling life, to participate thoughtfully in a democracy, and to succeed in a diverse and evolving global society.

Equity

Equity means promoting just and fair inclusion and creating conditions in which all young people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity is everyone having what they need to be successful.⁴⁷

Out-of-School Time (OST)

OST includes all kinds of programs that happen outside of the classroom, before and after school, in the evenings, on weekends, and during the summer; that are located in school buildings or community settings; that are managed or operated by schools, community organizations, parks, camps, faith-based organizations, and other entities; and that serve children and youth in grades K–12.⁴⁸ Afterschool is sometimes used to mean the same thing, and the two are sometimes combined as the acronym ASOST, meaning afterschool and out-of-school time.

Out-of-School Time (OST) System

An OST system is a shared, overarching infrastructure that supports leadership, program quality, access and participation, and financing and sustainability across multiple OST

⁴⁷ Walker, K. Re-imagining Youth Work Through an Equity Lens. University of Minnesota Extension Youth Development Insight Blog. January 24, 2018. <http://blog-youth-development-insight.extension.umn.edu/2018/01/re-imagining-youth-work-through-equity.html>

⁴⁸ Traphagen, K., and Stevens, P., *op. cit.*

providers and agencies. An OST system is more coordinated and operates on a larger scale than program-level infrastructures.⁴⁹

Quality

As the OST field has evolved, grown, and become increasingly professionalized in past decades, quality has become an important consideration. OST opportunities provide more than a place for children to go when not in school — they are contexts for child and youth development in ways that complement young people’s experiences at home, in school, and elsewhere. Quality standards have been developed at local, state, and national levels. Ample research exists about what makes for quality experiences, and resources exist to support providers in assessing and improving quality. The *Funder’s Guide to Quality in Out-of-School Time* provides a helpful summary of why quality matters:

Why are high-quality OST programs important? For starters, they typically engage youth in different ways from schools, homes, independent or peer group experiences. For example, in OST programs, youth often make independent choices about how and with whom to spend their time in a structured, safe and engaging learning context. High-quality OST also offers young people the opportunity to forge positive relationships with adults and peers, and build social, cognitive and other vital skills. Research has shown that healthy relationships form the foundation of social/emotional skills and the ability to function successfully throughout life — at home, in school, with family and friends and as members of civic communities. The best OST programs epitomize the term “child/youth centered” in that the structures and activities are rooted in the interests and experiences, as well as the cultural and community context, of the participants and their families.⁵⁰

Subsidies

Cost subsidies referred to in this report include any financial assistance — such as scholarships or fee reductions, acceptance of state childcare vouchers, and other means — by which providers offset participation costs for families.

⁴⁹ Hayes, C., et al., *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Traphagen, K, and Stevens, P., *op. cit.*

Appendix B.

Focus Group Summaries

Youth Focus Group, May 2018

Nine youth participants, grades 4–8, in the Steps to Success programs at the Lincoln School. Overarching themes:

- Youth have participated in a range of OST activities beyond Steps to Success, and they generally rated their OST experiences positively overall — with room for improvement.
- What matters most to youth in rating their OST experiences: friends, activities and how good / fun they are, adults and how they are, and ability to get homework done. In considering whether to participate in an OST opportunity, the most important factors include cost, who else goes there / friends, location, time of day, and what activities there are to do.
- Youth would most like to be doing OST activities during the summer, vacation weeks, after school, and weekends; a few indicated that they prefer not to participate on weekends.
- Youth learn about OST opportunities mostly from a parent/caregiver, from a teacher at school, and from looking online; other ways that would help them learn about OST opportunities include having OST providers come to talk to them at school and receiving paper copies of a guide to multiple programs or flyers for individual programs — though respondents acknowledged that many paper flyers get thrown out immediately.
- Youth know what quality looks and feels like to them, and they want to be involved in improving the programs in which they already participate and developing the kinds of opportunities they will find most engaging.

Family Focus Group #1, April 2018

Seven parent participants, all of whom live in Brookline Housing Authority properties. Four parents have lived in Brookline for at least 10 years (up to 20+ years), and three have lived in Brookline for two years or less. Overarching themes:

- Children have participated in a range of OST activities in Brookline and Boston. Many have been unable to participate in as wide a range as parents would like due to lack of awareness, cost, lack of transportation; the group wants more access to more quality opportunities at all ages and expressed particular interest in enrichment opportunities like the arts, swimming, etc.
- Living in Brookline Housing Authority units and accessing public benefits means that many participants are acutely aware of their income status, and this awareness is reinforced by lack of access to things they want for their children, including information requested when applying for subsidies.

- Direct outreach about OST opportunities has been very helpful, and many families would like to see more of it; they also appreciate opportunities to share their knowledge and skills with other families.
- Parents with multiple children feel added strain; having several children increases the challenges of affordability and logistics.

Many OST opportunities do not meet the scheduling needs of working parents.

- Some school and OST opportunities seem inaccessible and/or not welcoming. Parents experience them as being publicized to and accessed by more affluent families before group members even find out about them or are given an opportunity to register.
- Parents want to be engaged as resources to support program improvement and development, to reach out to other families, and to navigate and address barriers to participation.

Family Focus Group #2, June 2018

Seven parent participants, all of whom speak Spanish as their primary home language. Four parents have lived in Brookline for at least six years (up to 12+ years), and three have lived in Brookline for two years or less. Overarching themes:

- Group members want high-quality programs for their children to support their education, provide youth jobs, and assist with childcare; year-round opportunities are most helpful — and most difficult to find and access.
- Shared challenges are cost, transportation, access, and lack of communication about these issues.
- Parents had varying OST experiences: Some programs do a good job of connecting youth to other opportunities; access to information about OST, summer, and enrichment opportunities varies by school and family experience including support at elementary schools and in Brookline; materials about OST programs are not shared in Spanish, and the FamilyID online registration platform is not available in Spanish.
- Many OST opportunities do not meet the scheduling needs of working parents.
- Parents expressed their feeling of a lack of connection to and fit within Brookline and perceived English-language dominance across the town. There are not a lot of people in Brookline to relate to, and this fact impacts access to information; issues of cost and transportation are exacerbated by the gap in needs between families in the focus group and Brookline families who speak English and/or are more affluent; group members have not found people equipped to help or support them in Spanish in schools/programs; several felt uncomfortable or unwelcome at parent events and around parts of Brookline and so will attend only with a friend; some have experienced acts of discrimination or racism.
- It is helpful to get information about OST and other community resources from trusted service providers, such as healthcare providers and school personnel, though such referrals do not happen consistently. Knowing about quality programs is not enough for parents to commit to them. In addition to considerations around cost, transportation, and duration, it is helpful if the child has a friend or the family knows another family attending.

Appendix C.

Key Informants

Conversations with key informants helped researchers to understand the Brookline OST landscape.

Brookline Community Foundation

- Jenny Amory, Chief Executive Officer
- Board of Trustees
- Alicia Hsu, Trustee
- Jennifer Lemire, Program Director
- Linda Olson Pehlke, Trustee

Brookline Community Foundation OST Working Group

- Kathy Bisbee, Executive Director, Brookline Interactive Group
- Jenn Bray, Assistant Director, Brookline Teen Center
- Lisa Brown, Program Director, Family Learning Centers, Brookline Housing Authority
- Matt Cooney, Executive Director, Brookline Teen Center
- David Flick, Coordinator, Baker School Extended Day
- Sarah Fowler, Director of Extended Learning and Programs, Steps to Success
- Shoma Haque, Executive Director, Steps to Success
- Erin Kinney, Manager of Engagement, Brookline Interactive Group

Brookline Housing Authority

- Matt Baronas, Assistant Executive Director / Director of Management
- Lisa Brown, Director of Family Learning Centers
- Patrick Dober, Executive Director

Public Schools of Brookline

- Erin Cooley, Director of Data Analysis & Information
- Ben Lummis, Special Assistant to the Superintendent for Strategy & Performance
- Meg Maccini, Senior Director of Programs
- Vicki Milstein, Principal of Early Education Programs

Public Library of Brookline

- Robin Brenner, Teen Librarian
- Caroline Richardson, Children's Librarian

Town of Brookline

- Lloyd Gallineau, Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations
- Leigh Jackson, Acting Director, Brookline Recreation Department
- Dr. Swannie Jett, Director, Public Health and Human Services
- Lisa Paradis, Former Director, Brookline Recreation Department

Appendix D.

OST Provider Survey Respondents

A special thank you to all the providers who completed the survey online:

- Artbarn Community Theater, Inc.
- Baker School Extended Day Program, Inc.
- Boston Workmen’s Circle Center for Jewish Culture & Social Justice
- Brookline Arts Center
- Brookline Chinese School
- Brookline Housing Authority
- Brookline Interactive Group
- Brookline Music School
- Brookline Recreation Department
- Brookline Teen Center
- Community Boating, Inc.
- Coolidge Corner School PTO
- Devotion After School Enrichment Program
- Enrichment & Challenge Support Program, PSB
- Heath School Extended Day Program
- Highrock Covenant Church of Brookline
- HomeBASE
- John Payne Music Center
- Lawrence Extended Day Program
- Lawrence Special Activities
- Pierce School Extended Day, Inc.
- Public Libraries of Brookline
- Runkle After School Program
- Russian School of Mathematics Brookline
- Steps to Success, Inc.
- The Brookline Ballet School
- The Calculus Project
- The Makery
- The Tent: A Jewish Learning Community for Greater Boston Teens at Temple Israel of Boston
- The Village Dance Studio

- Therapeutic Skating
- VOICES Boston
- Yelena's Piano Studio / Sing for Joy Vocal ensemble

PSB opportunities included based on review of PSB websites and online materials:

- All PSB K–8 offerings, by school
- PSB summer school offerings
- Brookline High School (BHS) afterschool clubs and activities
- BHS intramurals
- BHS athletics

Appendix E. Additional Resources

Local Data

Peterson, H. Draft Report on Capacity to Pay, for Consideration by the Brookline Override Study Committee. 2018

2017 Override Study Committee. Report to the Select Board. 2018

Additional Data and OST Resources

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