



On July 1, 2004, then-Mayor David N. Cicilline launched the Providence After School Alliance, a public-private venture to develop a citywide system to substantially increase high quality, affordable, out-of-school enrichment opportunities for Providence's children and youth. Our goals are to support students' academic successes, improve their physical and emotional health, improve the quality of programming and the number of youth served, and create better partnerships while leveraging funding for more efficient systems.

## **Developing the Business Plan**

As an intermediary organization, PASA serves as a vehicle for collective action, advocacy and integrated planning. PASA grew out of a nine-month strategic planning process led by Rhode Island Kids Count and funded by The Wallace Foundation. The plan outlined a set of key investments that would lead to higher quality after school programs and better outcomes for Providence youth, with an initial focus on middle school students age 11-14.

More than 100 leaders from after-school organizations and city departments joined teams of youth and parents to create the plan, which was also informed by research from Community Matters and market research. As planning is an ongoing process, we continue to revisit our data, practices and constituents' needs and update and revise our plans and logic model.

## **Initial Funders**

The Wallace Foundation and Bank of America recognized the initial plan's merits and awarded PASA five-year \$5 million and \$1 million dollar grants, respectively, to begin building a quality, citywide after-school system for middle school youth. Since then, more than a dozen other funders and supporters have followed those founding grants and helped PASA grow a coordinated after-school system that includes close to 100 public and private partners and a \$2 million system serving nearly one half of PASA's target Providence middle school youth each year.



## **Launching The AfterZone**

PASA's business plan called for the formation of the AfterZone—a network of community campuses of after-school activity—across the city, as well as a quality improvement agenda to build the capacity of providers to deliver high-quality after school experiences in the AfterZone.

Today, the AfterZone is a unique, citywide network of 70+ community partners, school principals and teachers, and city leaders who co-design and invest in operating a collaborative expanded learning after-school system for middle school youth. Consisting of museums, arts, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and youth organizations, the AfterZone is now a community campus where the youth of Providence participate in dynamic enrichment activities like music, art, STEM subjects, and sports that contribute to their healthy social and emotional development.

## **Expanding to High School**

Though PASA's work to expand and improve quality opportunities for young people began with middle school youth, our full vision for youth development includes extending learning opportunities for all youth. In 2007, Mayor Cicilline funded a team to create an extended learning system for high school youth that would draft a plan, informed by leaders and youth, for PASA to support. This group delivered the Hub Design Plan to the Mayor and PASA in November 2008.

The Hub is a citywide approach to building sustainable, high-quality out-of-school opportunities for high school-aged youth. It is an open, safe and affirming public space acting as a gateway and connection space for Providence youth and opportunity providers. At the Hub, young people are able to access the internet, get guidance from staff, and participate in programs, trainings and information sessions.



## Quality Improvement and Nationwide Spread

PASA has also developed a quality improvement agenda that has been replicated across the state and the country. The foundation of the quality improvement system is community-developed standards for after-school excellence paired with a self-assessment tool and aligned professional development.

After just four short years of operation, PASA is becoming a national model. Fourteen cities across the country have contacted PASA for information about replicating the AfterZone model and quality improvement work in their own communities.