

## Making the Case for OST: The Perspectives of Parents, Educators, and Providers Interactive Transcript

December 9, 2021

Katherine P. ([00:03](#)):

Good morning everyone. Welcome to our webinar for today. We are so thrilled to have all of you here joining us for a [inaudible 00:00:13]. Good thing zoom gave me a notice that I got muted. We are very excited to have you for making the case for OST, the perspectives of parents, educators and providers.

Katherine P. ([00:28](#)):

Our session today is going to spotlight Learning Heroes latest research out-of-school time programs paving the way for children to find passion, purpose and voice. Learning Heroes was pleased to have support from The Wallace Foundation for both that research. We're very grateful to The Wallace Foundation for supporting today's session.

Katherine P. ([00:48](#)):

I am Catherine Clark Martinez. I'm a senior consultant with the Forum and for Youth Investment. I'm thrilled to be joined today by David Park and Howard Winchester from Learning Heroes as well as Erik Skold and Danielle Felder who we will introduce a little bit later in the session. But I want to jump right in to our great conversation to make sure we have plenty of time for everything. Again, thank you for joining us today. We're going to end with a little bit of time at the end for our breakout rooms but would love to start and have David join us right away on screen.

Katherine P. ([01:22](#)):

Welcome. Good morning David.

David Park ([01:24](#)):

Good morning.

Katherine P. ([01:26](#)):

Can you jump in and just tell us a little bit about the research? How did the study come to be? What are the few of the key findings? I know that the study builds from past work that Learning Heroes has done. Tell us a little bit about this research project.

David Park ([01:41](#)):

Sure thing. Thanks a lot Catherine. It's a pleasure to be here today. We're especially excited to hear from all of the folks that are part of this webinar. What do you find most useful about this research? What else do you want to know? What reflections do you have? How do you think you might be able to use the playbook that we're going to be talking about today? I too would like to thank The Wallace Foundation for supporting the research. We also had a lot of great advisors who were true thought part partners along the way.

David Park ([02:14](#)):

Anyone from... We've worked obviously with The Forum for Youth Investment, The Afterschool Alliance, National PTA, [inaudible 00:02:22] and the National Afterschool Association where some of the partners and their contributions were significant throughout the process of this research and also the development of the playbook.

David Park ([02:35](#)):

Our research partner was Edge Research. We work a whole lot with Edge. They are true experts in this space. Pam Loeb from Edge is with us today. She's done a ton of work in social-emotional learning including her work in the America After 3 research which I'm sure many of you are familiar with. She can help answer specific questions you may have on the methodology or the research itself.

David Park ([02:58](#)):

But to answer your first question Catherine, first and foremost, Karen Pittman, a huge part of the development of this research. She served as an advisor and she really helped us crystallize the need for this kind of research early on. But in addition to Karen's great wisdom and encouragement, the research to us seemed like a natural progression. In the words of Bibb Hubbard, our founder and president, good research always leads to other research. It opens up doors and makes us want to go a little bit deeper and find out a little bit more.

David Park ([03:30](#)):

In this case, it was the Developing Life Skills Research that was conducted in September of 2018 where we sought to better understand how parents and guardians think, feel and speak about the development of social-emotional and academic learning in their kids.

David Park ([03:48](#)):

Since that was fielded in the home and school settings, it felt right then to explore and better understand how parents, teachers and program providers perceive the role of Out-of-School time programs in the development of their children's social-emotional and academic skills which can then help inform our communications, our programs and certainly our policies.

David Park ([04:13](#)):

Specifically, if we go to the next slide, we wanted to understand the unique role that different settings play in a child's development so we can think more about the opportunities to connect those settings. We also wanted to better understand how parents chose OST programs and how they assessed quality.

David Park ([04:39](#)):

Finally, we know the past year and a half or more actually has been incredibly difficult especially for families. We wanted to understand and unpack how the pandemic has impacted these programs. In terms of the key insights from the survey, we've categorized them here into communications, policies and programmatic.

David Park ([04:59](#)):

In terms of communications, we found that parents and teachers see a very specific and unique role for OST programming which provides in their minds a differentiated and unique child-centered experience. Parents want their kids to develop a broad set of skills and believe that home has a role and school has a role and OST certainly has a role. They're complimentary.

David Park ([05:24](#)):

When asked what they believe each should focus on, parents told us that academic fundamentals and problem solving are what schools should focus on. Respect and kindness for home and social skills and teamwork for extracurricular. They also found OST programs as the place where kids can find their passion, purpose and voice. We'll talk a little bit more about that later.

David Park ([05:49](#)):

For policy, especially at this moment in time, parent responses suggest that while parents value OST programs immensely, participation in high quality programs isn't equitably distributed. There were significant differences in parent perceptions who have kids in OST programs versus those who don't. This is important as there is more funding available for these programs and an infusion also of new thinking. We need to prioritize equitable access.

David Park (06:20):

Then the programmatic where it all comes together. We have a unique opportunity in our minds to develop and strengthen what I call a web of support where parents, teachers and OST providers can partner to support parent's top priority for their child which is this social and emotional wellbeing.

David Park (06:40):

Before... I'm not going to spend a long time going into the specific findings from the survey but we created a short video. This video is also in the playbook that you'll have access to. It gives a little bit more information and dives a little bit deeper into the findings. Howard, if you don't mind rolling the video.

David Park (07:21):

(silence)

David Park (07:22):

I Think we may be missing the volume.

David Park (07:40):

(silence)

Katherine P. (07:41):

Are you able to turn the volume as well on the video?

Howard W. (07:50):

I think... You guys, can I hear the video on your end?

Katherine P. (07:53):

We cannot.

Howard W. (07:55):

No.

David Park (07:55):

Yeah. No. We can't hear it.

Howard W. (07:58):

Let's see if I can fix that.

Katherine P. (08:02):

Give it one more try. If not, we'll make sure to give everybody that direct link as part of the larger playbook.

Howard W. (08:08):

Yes. All right. Let's try this one more time. Sorry [inaudible 00:08:13].

Speaker 4 (08:16):

Learning Heroes with the support from the Wallace Foundation conducted a national survey of more than 2000 K-8 parents and guardians, more than 600 K-8 public school teachers and nearly 400 out-of-school time extracurricular or after school program providers. Learning Heroes wanted to understand the role these programs play and the opportunities they offer beyond the school day.

Speaker 4 ([08:40](#)):

The survey found that 65% of parents enroll their children in at least one out-of-school time program. Parents say they enroll their children to expose them to new experiences, ideas and perspectives and to help them find their passion, purpose and voice. Parents also prioritize programs where their children are safe, feel nurtured and welcomed and most of all, come home happy. Across race, ethnicity and income levels, parents with children in these programs say their kids do better academically and are more prepared for the next school year and for college.

Speaker 4 ([09:17](#)):

Many teachers also see significant value in extracurricular programs. They agree these programs expose students to new experiences and say programs motivate students to get excited about learning and to grow in ways beyond core academics. But despite many benefits, programs remain out of reach for some families often due to cost, time and transportation issues. Demand for out-of-school time activities is high among all families.

Speaker 4 ([09:47](#)):

Let's expand partnerships between districts and program providers to ensure equitable access to quality programs for all children. For more information on the report, visit [www.belearninghero.org/ost-research](http://www.belearninghero.org/ost-research).

Speaker 4 ([10:08](#)):

(silence)

David Park ([10:16](#)):

Great. Thanks. Our contact information is right here. Please feel free to get in touch with us anytime if you have questions about the research and also about the playbook that we're going to talk more about.

Katherine P. ([10:30](#)):

Wonderful. I'm so excited. You guys know I am a big fan of the research and has really enjoyed using it to help make the case as we come back from the pandemic about the need for the partnership and love the balance of parent voices and teacher voices. We'll dig in more to that but particularly how it builds on the conversations that as you said, your previous research really started with social-emotional learning.

Katherine P. ([10:53](#)):

I could go on forever on the parts of the study that I like but would that really to hearing how would I added you to the conversation without introducing you. We've got Howard with us now. I'd love to start with you Howard. When you think about the research, what really jumps out at you? Are there any data points that you find really compelling or things that you've really been finding people using a great deal since this was released?

Howard W. ([11:17](#)):

Yeah. Thanks so much Kathryn for having me. You got to love psychology. Right? But for me, the most compelling, surprising piece from the data was the equity issue. While 65% of parents said that they enrolled their K-8 kids in one or more OST programs, there were still significant barriers for many families including costs, transportation and just overall lack of availability. This requires all of us to help make sure that every family has access to high quality programs so that it's just not a handful of families and communities that have access to it.

Katherine P. ([11:59](#)):

This barrier piece is something we know but it's always good to have more data that helps us even get in a little more deeply on what do we mean when we talk about that? David, how about for you? What has really jumped out, surprised you from the data?

David Park ([12:15](#)):

Yeah. There are so many nuggets of information that I think were both compelling and surprising. I do encourage everybody, in the playbook there's the deck that you can spend hours just digging through the research. I totally agree with Howard. The equity piece is a huge part of it.

David Park ([12:32](#)):

There's also a more detail in the survey about the parents who enroll their kids in these kinds of programs. They tend to be more highly educated and have higher incomes across race and ethnicity. That for sure is a huge issue. But as a communicator, it was also really interesting to see how parents spoke about these programs because too often and we'll talk about this some more, too often we just use jargon and edgy speak in our communications. Honestly, it's not connecting with parents and families.

David Park ([13:07](#)):

One of the things that I think is most compelling about this research is we provide a playbook if you will, for OST providers and others to be able to talk about the programs that they're providing in a student-centered way, in a child-centered way that really talked about the unique value proposition for these programs. There's a lot of information on messaging and how communications can be affective when targeting parents and families.

Katherine P. ([13:38](#)):

Yeah. That's a great point. That's another great thing about the study is that the data really can be used in so many different ways to help think about the programming that you're offering. To think help think about cost and funding and equity. To help think about how we make the case for that programming. I think that's a perfect segue. Howard, I would love it if you could just give us a quick tour of the playbook and show people what's in there and how they access it. I'll share that link again.

Howard W. ([14:04](#)):

Yes. Of course. Thanks. If you go to [bealearninghero.org/ost-research](http://bealearninghero.org/ost-research) and in case you forget, I'm just going to put that link in the chat. This is the communications around that. At the top of the playbook is the research deck. It's intentionally packed with data. Please do not get scared around that. We learned a lot through this research project.

Howard W. ([14:38](#)):

While David covered some of the top line insights earlier, I encourage you guys all to go through the data and determine what data slides and insights could be most helpful to you and your work. Please let us know if you would like any of the slides in PowerPoint format. Right now on our site it's in PDF.

Howard W. ([14:58](#)):

We also have a few examples of ways that you can use the research. If you're an out-of-school time provider for example, you may want to use it to speak to parents about your programs offerings in a way that is informed by what you know resonates with parents and families.

Howard W. ([15:14](#)):

If you work as an advocate or an advocacy organization, you can use the data to promote high equitable access to high quality programs including reducing cost and transportation barriers as we talked about earlier identified by low income families.

Howard W. ([15:32](#)):

If you scroll down a little bit, you'll find the playbook resources under about the research. That is there right there. There you'll see the research deck again as I mentioned earlier as well as the video that we showed. What I really like about this video is that it allows you to get a feel for the key insights from the research in a quick and visually compelling way.

Howard W. ([15:55](#)):

Over the years at Learning Heroes, we found that video is a great way to engage our audiences especially on social media. Videos perform at a much higher rate of engagement than anything else, texts, pictures and photos and everything which is why we continue to incorporate it into every one of our research reports like this one to give high level insights into all of the data.

Howard W. ([16:18](#)):

Also in the about the research section are three one pagers. One that talks about the research. One with terminology and definitions from the report and one that highlights our core partners on this research.

Howard W. ([16:35](#)):

Scroll down a little bit more, you'll see that we have a messaging guidance one pager. While this isn't specific messaging, it provides some general research based guidance in three categories. Understanding what parents value, supporting the whole child and increasing access. Under increasing access, we highlight the need to communicate the quality features of low and no cost programs and use equitable strategies that engage families to sign up for and access these programs.

Howard W. ([17:11](#)):

Excuse me.

Howard W. ([17:14](#)):

Finally, we have some amazing social media graphics. Some infographics that we created. Because as I mentioned earlier, video does really well but the next best thing is image and photos. I'm going to take a moment and go through... Give you a... Not a sneak peek but a look into what the social toolkit and our infographics look like. If you click on... We have made it available in both English and Spanish in case you have multilingual communities.

Howard W. ([17:46](#)):

The social toolkit is here. It has an array of sample posts and tweets and Facebook posts that you can use in your engagement strategies that include again a link to the research. A link to the video as well as our infographics. I'm going to give you a quick insight and look into some of the infographics. We have a total I believe of six or seven of them. This is just one example of one of the infographics that I mentioned. This one talks about the top five reasons parents choose to enroll their kids in OST programs.

Howard W. ([18:35](#)):

This one as again we keep coming back to that very issue. This talks about despite the many benefits of OST programs, they are not accessible for all parents and families. There are several others to choose from. We have an array of infographics again in English, Spanish on the website. Again as they mentioned earlier, if you have any questions, if you have any requests, please email that to us. We'll be sure to get back to you.

Katherine P. ([19:07](#)):

Wonderful. I love the openness to continuing to adapt the playbook. I hope that us folks are listening today, they're really thinking about that. We'll chat about it a little bit at the end as well.

Katherine P. ([19:19](#)):

David and Howard, I'm going to invite you guys to stay with us. I am going to add Eric and Danielle to our conversation. David and Howard, I would love you guys to stay because I know you both come from the communications and strategy lens. As we're thinking about this idea of making the case, feel free to pop in and add more thoughts as we go.

Katherine P. ([19:40](#)):

But I'm pleased to welcome and we'll start with Eric. Eric is the director of Sprockets. The local out-of-school time intermediary in St. Paul. Eric, we would love for you to share just bit as you've played with the research and the playbook. What's really jumping out at you when you think about both the work the Sprockets does at a citywide level but also the providers that you work with? How are you thinking you might be able to use both the data and the playbook to advance your work?

Erik Skold ([20:10](#)):

Yeah. Thank you Catherine. Thank you for inviting me today. I'm really excited about this research and excited about this conversation today. I think, well, first of all, I wanted say that paving the way for children to find passion, purpose and voice is just really great. The tagline there is really succinct and I think communicates a lot of the valuable OST right in that single sentence. I'm going to start using that and incorporating more into my work. But another piece that I think is really valuable from this research is the parent perspective.

Erik Skold ([20:42](#)):

That is oftentimes a perspective that is missing from a lot of the data that's Sprockets collects. We have real access to our program providers. We have a lot of access to the young people who participate in those programs but having access to all the parents and all those things can be a bit harder to capture.

Erik Skold ([21:00](#)):

Quite frankly, just more costly and difficult for us to conduct research on. I think having this big national data set is really helpful for Sprockets. I think it's helpful for a couple of different reasons. One, it helps us understand how parents really think about after school and what they value from after school.

Erik Skold ([21:20](#)):

I really appreciated David's remarks earlier about helping us translate some of our jargon so that we can better communicate with parents. Because I think what we hear from parents in the research really affirms a lot of the things that we think about in value and after school. But sometimes we're just using different terms and thinking about a little bit differently. We all have our own perceptions of quality and certain terms we use around that. It might look a little bit different as it comes out of the mouth of parents or the thoughts of parents.

Erik Skold ([21:52](#)):

I think there's a real big communication value in that. But also I think from an advocacy perspective, this is really important. It can really help us articulate how out-of-school time supports working families, to policy makers and other funders. I think that's just a really valuable perspective that sometimes they lack too. They're hoping we can share with them. A couple of pieces I found really helpful were the concerns that parents are voicing especially coming out of the pandemic around social connection and young people having too much screen time.

Erik Skold ([22:29](#)):

I think these are all things we know but to be able to cite this research and share it confidently is really important. Then I also really appreciated the value themes that parents said. I think they're really useful for us in thinking about, how do our programs do that? And help us describe in affirm that our programs are those types of spaces or if they're not, help us think about, well, how can we make sure that we are creating those types of spaces for parents and for young people? Those are some of the things that jumped out at me right away.

Katherine P. ([23:01](#)):

Yeah. That's really great Eric. I know we have a lot of our communities on the call that work with the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality as you guys do in St. Paul. I love... I was just hearing so much continuous improvement language even as you were talking. Right? That we're improving our language in how we talk about it. But we're also bringing this data in to think about those values and how we're improving our

programming and coupling that national data with our quality data so we can improve how we further leverage our quality work. It's so many different angles and aspects.

Katherine P. ([23:34](#)):

You started to lean into the conversation about advocacy and would love for Danielle, for you to pop in there. I mean I know you spend a lot of time, you work at the state level supporting the boys and girls clubs in Colorado and doing a lot of work thinking about advocating for the field, for funding. Obviously David and Howard's book do that a little bit as well. What are you thinking about related to this playbook? How this can really help further the support for the field in Colorado and beyond?

Danielle Felder ([24:05](#)):

Wonderful. Thank you Catherine. Again, thank you for having me as well. Really appreciate the opportunity to talk to all of you. I know many of you are going to have similar issues and probably agree with much of what I say. Feel free to chat any questions or reach out to me individually as well. But when I look at this playbook and the data, I think what's interesting to me to read about is what teachers are saying. Right?

Danielle Felder ([24:28](#)):

Right now we're doing a lot of talk around ESSER and ESSER funding. How to get it? How to talk about it? Who do you talk to? How do you talk to them? I think this national data is really helpful in those conversations. It's most certainly a really good start when you talk with teachers who are in the field and in the classrooms. I'm really hopeful to see how this maybe could translate here in Colorado as we talk about expanding after school and what does universal after school look like and how do you get there?

Danielle Felder ([24:58](#)):

I think all of this data is very helpful in those conversations and proving up the ROI if you will, of community based organizations and OST providers. I'm really excited to hopefully be able to take this back when our legislative session starts in January and use a lot of these points.

Danielle Felder ([25:16](#)):

I also think just for individual clubs and I'm sure many of you on this call will maybe say the same if you've had a chance to briefly look through is, hearing at least looking at the few slides about teachers not thinking there's enough communication between themselves and out-of-school time was so impactful to me. Because when I think about our club organizations and who we talk to at the school, it is most of the time the principal, the superintendent. It's much higher up.

Danielle Felder ([25:42](#)):

We maybe don't prioritize the communication with teachers as we should. They're understanding the value of our programs and that teachers can't do everything. We want to be here to help you. How do we help you? Maybe really opening up that communication channel is something I'm getting from this data that I want to take back to our clubs here in Colorado and encourage them to think about how are we communicating with teachers in the classrooms. Is there an opportunity to do so a bit more cohesively? A bit more collaboratively across the state.

Danielle Felder ([26:13](#)):

All of that's playing into my work. Then like I said at the advocacy level, really thinking about ESSER funding is going to have somewhat of a cliff effect. Right? We all know it's going to end. We all know that it can't last forever. How are OST providers working with school districts running out-of-school time programs as well going to continue this momentum of providing after school opportunities to young people? What does after school look like for all?

Danielle Felder ([26:41](#)):



I think all of this hopefully plays into that conversation and how we maybe shape that conversation with legislators, with the federal government even as we move this conversation forward.

Katherine P. ([26:54](#)):

Yeah. Such amazing points and opportunity. I mean we've said a lot over the last 20 months that in many ways the disruption has created opportunity for the out-of-school time field. Those first few months, we really showed the role that we play for the communities, for young people, for families. I think the data really reinforces that but how do we keep that focus and keep that conversation going?

Katherine P. ([27:18](#)):

I think Danielle in talking about the clubs, you bring up a really great point that connects to a question that Marsha shared in the chat. David and Howard, I'd love for one of you to add a little bit more detail with this. But asking if the study speaks to the value of out-of-school time programs outside of the school itself.

Katherine P. ([27:34](#)):

I'm curious Danielle as you think about the teacher voice for clubs that aren't in the schools, why does that teacher voice still matter? But David and Howard, I'd for you just answer that question more tactically first of are we just talking about programs in schools? Are we talking about all programs? Why ask teachers about programs if they aren't in the schools? Then we'll bounce it to you Danielle.

David Park ([27:56](#)):

Yeah. I think Pam also wrote...

Katherine P. ([27:59](#)):

Good.

David Park ([28:01](#)):

... put some information in the chat as well that you can look at there but there's the definition. It's basically programs that your children might participate in outside of school hours and schedule. These are programs that have a learning or skills component with organized activities and or learning opportunities in addition to providing childcare and may be offered before or after school on weekends online and in person. That's the definition that was used in terms of the research that we did.

Katherine P. ([28:31](#)):

Yeah. I think I [crosstalk 00:28:33]. No. Go ahead David. Please keep going.

David Park ([28:36](#)):

I just wanted to not lose one point also that Danielle made about teachers which I think probably a lot of organizations do the same thing in terms of approach schools at a higher level than the teacher level. You asked Catherine what surprised me earlier.

David Park ([28:53](#)):

One of the things that really surprised me was the teachers and how they responded in the survey, in the qualitative that we did about OST programs. Literally teachers can tell when kids are a part of OST programs. To me that is an untapped resource or maybe not untapped but that's a resource that we need to really lean into because teachers can be incredible ambassadors for the work that we're all doing on the field.

Katherine P. ([29:20](#)):

Yes. Pam can correct my language because I'm sure I'm going to get it wrong without the slide in front of me but that data around teachers viewing OST as a nice to have or a must have I think. We know that for parents

but we don't know that as much for teachers. Danielle, what would you add to that in terms of the relationship between clubs and teachers and teacher perception?

Danielle Felder ([29:40](#)):

Absolutely. I think to David's point, teachers are a really powerful force. Right? Teachers unions have a really strong voice at all levels of advocacy for us. When you can bring in teacher unions into the work that you're doing, you have a much greater chance of passing legislation, of being able to work through opportunities for after school. Having this perspective in here, I think is just really important because it reminds us that at the very base of after school, right? Is what are we doing to help teachers in classrooms?

Danielle Felder ([30:15](#)):

Because teachers only get so many hours in a day with these young people and then OST has to kick in. I always say young people spend more time out of school than in school. How are we supporting them? How are we able to ensure that COVID doesn't continue to widen the gaps. Those gaps are very real and something we're all trying to figure out how to address in new and different ways.

Danielle Felder ([30:39](#)):

I also think tapping into teachers is interesting too because, and this is again nothing against schools but there's been a lot of turnover within our own workforce, within the school workforce. Right? Even within the leadership workforce of schools. Thinking about those teachers as moving up the ranks and being that next principal or the next superintendent and having a good impression with them as a community based organization is the start of a really good relationship and a really good conversation.

Danielle Felder ([31:08](#)):

Teachers within a school can make a difference and have influence over principals and school administrators in some instances, maybe not all. But I think it's just a really good example of a bottom-up approach to OST improving value within the school building as well as our standalone clubs. It's been nice to have school based sites but with the closures and the quarantines and the continued uncertainty of COVID, we've really started to hit snags around our school based facilities.

Danielle Felder ([31:39](#)):

How do we ensure our standalones are accessible? Not just to young people but that teachers know of the resource as well. Right? Because teachers might be the first referral source for some of us as clubs and I'm sure as many of the other CBOs, community based organizations on this call know. That's my thought and what I would add to what David's already mentioned around this.

Katherine P. ([32:05](#)):

Eric, I saw you come off mute. You want to add something to that?

Erik Skold ([32:07](#)):

No. I just thought that was just a tremendous point Danielle. I think the idea of how we can use this research to support our relationships with teachers union is really brilliant. Obviously Sprockets works on a citywide level but we also work at a statewide level around policy and our teachers union is a very powerful and an influential force in that.

Erik Skold ([32:29](#)):

One of the things I'm going to take away from this conversation today is connecting with my statewide network around how we can use this to have more conversations with our teachers union and support each other's work. I thought that was great.

Katherine P. ([32:43](#)):

Yeah. Eric, you really honed in on the parent voice. I think a lot of parallels between the conversation there. I mean, I think Danielle makes the point that sometimes the teachers are those folks that school leaders and administrators are going to listen to. Often it's the parents that school boards are going to listen because they're the voters.

Katherine P. (33:00):

As you think about that advocacy work but also helping providers understand what parents are really looking for and thinking about. I know you already started to talk about it but is there anything more you would want to add in terms of how you might leverage this for Sprockets maybe at that citywide level?

Erik Skold (33:19):

Yeah. Well, I think I talked about communication and advocacy but I think the playbook is also instructive in helping us think about how we improve our work. A lot of out-of-school time providers are really interested in parent engagement. We know that parent engagement looks different for different programs in a lot of different ways and parents want different things out of this. But I think one thing that the playbook reaffirms is that, it starts with solid communication. Then as Danielle pointed out, communication across settings is really important.

Erik Skold (33:51):

I think that's something that really stood out from the research for us to think about. How are we doing that as a network? How can we support our programs to communicate more clearly and effectively with parents? But also how can we do that together with our network, with our schools and our providers together? Is something that we can use this playbook to really think about and look into and develop strategies around and just improve. We know that communication is so important but I think this really crystallizes that for us. It provides a real call to action.

Katherine P. (34:27):

Yeah. I love... I hear from both of you that there's this element of ideally we'd know some of these things locally. Right? Ideally we would have strong parent engagement but it's a challenge. Having this parent voice from a national level is really helpful. Ideally we'd know what teachers are thinking locally but where we don't, having national to even help prompt the questions can be really helpful.

Katherine P. (34:54):

How are you thinking about that balance of the playbook providing national data and how it informs those local conversations? Where maybe you want to dig in a little bit further or things you might love for Learning Heroes to dig in further on.

Erik Skold (35:11):

Yeah. I think that's a great question Catherine. I mean one thing that a national data set always provides is something for you to bounce your experience off of. Right? Does [inaudible 00:35:26] ask some of those reflective questions like does this information reflect our experience? Why or why not? What more would we want to know?

Erik Skold (35:33):

I think it does allow this to do this. I was thinking as Danielle was speaking too about just how pressured our teachers are right now and how busy our school personnel are. So it's helpful to have a national data set so we don't have to necessarily ask all these questions and try to take up more of their time at a time when we know we might not have access to them.

Erik Skold (35:56):

Although I would like to know it locally, I think sometimes we have to also say, this is a great start and we can extrapolate this out to our community too and other things. I think it's really helpful around that. But also again, just having that starting place to say, does this represent St. Paul or not is really helpful for us.

Katherine P. (36:17):

Danielle, anything you want to add?

Danielle Felder (36:19):

Yeah. I mean I'll just add from the statewide level again. Really focused in on that advocacy and what are the next steps. When I look at this data, I think of, is this a really good starting point of proving up ROI in our state? I agree with Eric. It's really hard to get teachers who are already overworked and even staff of OST providers who are already overworked to spend the time to fill out additional surveys and more surveys. Even our after school network here in Colorado tries to get that information.

Danielle Felder (36:50):

So to what extent do we maybe start thinking about consolidating that in a way that can provide a more cohesive picture as we're approaching and discussing... There are lots of states that are moving forward with commissions and task forces at the statewide level to really assess the ROI of their out-of-school time. Is there support for additional funding? Is there support for additional programs, organizations? What does that look like?

Danielle Felder (37:17):

Here in Colorado, I think we're having those conversations for the first time and really starting to think about what are the steps to get to whether it's universal after school or an after school statewide grant program. What are the steps to get there?

Danielle Felder (37:31):

I think it starts with proving up the ROI because legislators and elected officials really can't jump on board with something that they don't know has actual value other than the anecdotal... Of course, it has value. We all know the stories of clubs, of Y's, of 4-H, of whatever organization you may be representing.

Danielle Felder (37:52):

But can we show it in a more cohesive way that shows value to constituents, to community. Continuing to grow that conversation as we really start honing in on how to define ROI outside of just saying, well, for every dollar you invest in us, you get X dollars back. That's always been the traditional way we talk about our ROI. I think this might provide some new opportunities to think about it a little bit differently.

Katherine P. (38:23):

Great. So many good questions coming in the chat. I'm going to draw our participant's attention to one in particular. Anna asked a question about cross setting partnerships and navigating licensing and program rules. Anna, I'm not going to pose that one to the panelists but I am certain you have some experts in the audience who can share some ideas with you on that one.

Katherine P. (38:42):

For some of our other questions, I'm going to do one more question before we transition a little bit. I'm going to try and merge five questions into one. It's just a little one.

Katherine P. (38:50):

David and Howard, you both emphasize that equity piece and really around efforts to ensure that programs are accessible to families that can't afford them. We have a couple of questions related to that. How are we actually doing that on the ground?

Katherine P. ([39:02](#)):

Eric and Danielle, you've talked about it from an advocacy standpoint but I'm also wondering from a program standpoint of what... Eric, what are some of your programs doing to help make what they're offering more accessible? Danielle, what are you seeing clubs doing? There's also a question in there of what can funders be taking away from the data that helps them think about OSD funding. Then here's where I'm throwing you the curve ball.

Katherine P. ([39:23](#)):

There's an additional question from Mohanma about religious boundaries. We also talk about the roles and the values that people place. How does that also come into play when you think of about increasing access? Just that simple question of how do we get more kids in programming? Let's close out with that one. Then we'll transition to our next little piece here. I would welcome any of the four of you jumping in with brilliance on my six part question.

Danielle Felder ([39:53](#)):

I don't know if I have brilliance but I'll start it. I will say, right now, and it's not a great answer and I apologize. I don't have a good answer for you but to be honest with you, it's just really hard right now. With the smaller cohorts, we're having to prioritize who can be in our programs. With the lack of funding in a lot of ways to open new sites and grow our programs at least here in Colorado and I'm sure maybe across the United States, it just creates hurdles and barriers for us.

Danielle Felder ([40:23](#)):

I really hate to say that we have to prioritize certain age groups or focus in on certain age groups but when you can only fit 75 young people in a building that held 125, you do have to start thinking about who is it that we're serving? How are we ensuring that they're being served appropriately?

Danielle Felder ([40:41](#)):

I really wish I had a great answer for you. Many of you know clubs. I'm sure you're familiar with our low cost, no cost model. We're still struggling to reach all of the families and families we expect to be in club are not anymore or we've lost to touch with them.

Danielle Felder ([40:59](#)):

I think this is still an open conversation that none of us have been able to provide an answer just yet. We keep talking about what allegedly is a new normal or allegedly is a post pandemic era but it feels like it's an era that continues and that the uncertainties of 2022 with the new variant add additional concerns as we try to reopen our clubs to more young people in our communities.

Danielle Felder ([41:30](#)):

I would welcome anyone in the chat to give us some better answers than what I just gave but it definitely feels like a struggle on the programmatic level. Then when you add in the workforce shortages, I think it just creates additional issues, concerns, hurdles to being able to reengage young people. I'm not sure how many of you are seeing this but we are seeing a real disengagement of teenagers.

Danielle Felder ([41:58](#)):

Those 13 to 16 year olds are somewhere but they're not necessarily in club anymore. They're not necessarily in some of the community based organization programs we used to see them in. How do we reengage our teenagers in this new era we find ourselves in and a new way forward? It's both an opportunity and a challenge I think.

Danielle Felder ([42:18](#)):

Unfortunately, I can't say that I had a great answer but those are top of mind for us with challenges. How are we helping to reengage families? I think virtual programming has been a wondrous new way to try to engage

young people who are at home and cannot get to clubs and will continue to use virtual programming and activity kits and providing ways for young people to feel connected with their peers even if they can't be in the actual clubhouse.

Katherine P. ([42:52](#)):

Great. David, I would love for you to continue responding to that piece but also, yesterday was an exciting day in that additional data. Your Parent 2021 data was released. I think some really great opportunities to connect that to out-of-school time programming. To access to as there Danielle said our new normal. Would love for you to add anything to what Danielle just said but also tell us a little bit about the new Parent 2021 data.

David Park ([43:19](#)):

Yeah. I also think there was a question there about funders and how they can use the data. I think there's so many ways that funders can use this important data in their work. One thing just top of mind is, listen to parents. Listen to parents and families in terms of thinking through strategies for giving. I think philanthropy is a key audience for us.

David Park ([43:42](#)):

They both support the work that we do but they're also a key audience in terms of learning what's in the minds of parents. What's on the hearts of parents. What they're most concerned about. When we look at this data, I think the beauty it is that it shows the incredible value that OST programs have for parents. We definitely want to put concerted effort into providing more parents with the opportunities to have their kids involved in some of these programs.

David Park ([44:13](#)):

In terms of we released yesterday our new research which is our new annual research of parents and guardians and we also included teachers and principals for the first time in this research. It's called Parents 2021: Beyond the Headline. The headline is that even when a lot of times in the media, we see parents and educators pitted against each other. We've all seen those articles lately. But what we found through this latest round of research is that there is a surprising amount of agreement and alignment between parents and families and educators.

David Park ([44:51](#)):

First there is agreement on what's most important for schools this year. I think this will really resonate with OST providers because they say what's most important is obviously the safety and security of students and staff. But also academic progress, mental health and emotional wellbeing. Those are the top priorities according to parents, according to teachers and according to principals.

David Park ([45:15](#)):

In terms of communicating between educators, parents and families, parents prioritize direct and truthful information about performance and also having a clear picture of their child's achievement. That really top the list in terms of parents thinking about communications between educators and families. Not only is there agreement on the priorities which I mentioned earlier but there's also more engagement.

David Park ([45:47](#)):

93% of parents say they will be as or more engaged in their child's education than they were last year during the heart of COVID. That's a pretty incredible statistic. We find that parents whose kids are enrolled in an OST program are more likely to say that they will be actually more involved. Now we know it was off the charts in terms of parent engagement in their child's education. Well, guess what? This year parents are leaning in to their child's education even more. I think that certainly has an impact on all the work that we're doing.

David Park ([46:25](#)):

Those are some of the key findings from Parents 2021. You can find more about that on our website but I'll leave you with one thing that I thought was important. We also tested words and phrases that best represent the language that parents use when describing your goal for family engagement.

David Park ([46:45](#)):

Surprisingly or maybe not surprisingly, partnership didn't really rise the top nor did collaboration but what did, trust. Trust and teamwork. That's what parents are looking for. I think that's with schools and with out-of-school time providers.

Katherine P. ([47:03](#)):

Love that. That may be a bit of that jargon piece. Right? They call it trust and teamwork but we call it collaboration and partnership. Super great. Thank you for highlighting that for us. We have about 10 minutes left. We really want to hear from all of you. I think we've heard both Danielle and Eric talk about ways they're thinking about using the data. Talking about places they might need or want more. We are going to send all of you into just short five minute or so breakouts.

Katherine P. ([47:29](#)):

We have two questions for you that I've dropped in the chat as well as a Padlet where we'd love to capture your answers. It's those two questions that we've been posing to Danielle and Eric. How are you thinking about using the playbook and what additional tools or data would be most useful to you in advocating for the value of OST programming and thinking about how you improve programming?

Katherine P. ([47:50](#)):

I'm going to ask my colleague Ian to go ahead and open our breakout rooms. We'll pull y'all back here in about five minutes to close out for the day. Just in case folks don't come back, thank you all so much to our panelists.