Afterschool Science Network Study Findings

87% of sites offered science

48% of sites that offered science provided it weekly or more

63% of sites that offered science had a partner who supported science programming

Sites reported that most partners were local within **50** miles

Science Learning Opportunities

- A large majority of sites offered science (87%), but popular activities like arts, sports, or tutoring were provided more often
- About half of sites (48%) offered science weekly or more, while about another half offered science less than weekly
- Opportunities for youth to explore their worlds and answer their own questions using science inquiry were uncommon

Science and Site Characteristics

- Four site characteristics were associated with more frequent science, more inquiry practices, connecting to youth's interests, and opportunities for youth choice and leadership:
  - Having a partner who supported science programs
  - Having a staff member responsible for science
  - Having staff members with knowledge of science
  - Having staff members with knowledge of the nature of afterschool activities

Partnerships

- Most sites (63%) had a partner who supported science programming – most often community-based organizations or school districts
- Partners most often provided training, resources, or directly led science programming
- Most sites with partners (95%) had one partner supporting their science offerings (5% had more than one partner)
- Across the state, sites reported that most partners were local (within 50 miles)

Network

- Networks of support were not centralized or extensive
- The network was generally made up of 1:1 connections, with some signs of nascent network components

Instructional Materials

- Sites selected materials that were fun, easy to use, and had support features to help staff lead activities, such as discussion questions
- Sites mostly used materials from the Internet and activity books, though curriculum materials had more support features for staff members
- Sites planned one session at a time – even when they used curriculum
- Sites are constrained by time and staff's lack of science background

The SRI Education Afterschool Science Networks Study

SRI Education

Afterschool Science Network Study Background

The project explored

- The nature of elementary afterschool science offerings
- The resources and sources of support for science programming and staff development
- Ties between offerings and external supports

Study Context - California's Public Afterschool Program

California's After School Education and Safety (ASES) program is the largest state-funded afterschool program in the country ($550M each year):

- More than 4,100 afterschool sites across the state (all with at least 50% FRPL population)
- ASES funds locally-driven programs at schools and other community settings
- Each grant represents a CBO-school partnership

5 Study Components

Program Survey	Gathered information regarding science offerings, science materials, and partnership. Sampled to represent ASES programs (n=415). (2010-11)
Case Studies	Observed science & interviewed staff, site coordinator, and partners. Sampled for programs with rich and frequent science (n=9). (2011-12)
Support Partner Survey	Interviewed or surveyed all available organizations named by sites as science partners regarding the supports they provide (n=61). (2012)
Instructional Materials Analysis	Examined the materials sites use for science, focusing on the support features included in different types of materials. (2013-14)
Social Network Analysis	Used SNA to examine connections among sites, their partners, and the partners of partners. (2013-14)

The Afterschool Science Networks Study is a project of SRI Education at SRI International, an independent, nonprofit research institute conducting client-sponsored research and development. The study is the most comprehensive study, to date, of a statewide afterschool program. This five-year examination of informal science is supported by the National Science Foundation (under Grant No. 0917536).

SRI's partners in this work include: the California AfterSchool Network, Joseph Ames of Ames & Associates, and Steve Fowler of FowlerHoffman, LLC. Inverness Research is evaluating the project.

The SRI Education Afterschool Science Networks Study

SRI Education

afterschoolsciencestudy.sri.com

Ann House
ann.house@sri.com

Carlin Llorente
carlin.llorente@sri.com