



For Immediate Release
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Top Academic, Health, Philanthropy & Youth Development Experts Examine the Ways Sports-Based Youth Development Programs Support Academic Success

OAKLAND – Some of the nation’s leading experts in education, youth development, health and other fields met last week to examine how youth sports programs link to youth success in school, and the implications of that knowledge for policy, research and practice. The meeting, at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation in Menlo Park, California, was the first to bring such high-level experts together to examine the ways sports-based youth development programs help students succeed in school and in life. Participants paid particular attention to the impact of these programs on children and adolescents living in low-income communities and communities of color. The meeting included practitioners who work with children and teens every day.

“For this first-of-its-kind meeting, we brought together some of the very best minds in a range of fields to help us shape recommendations that will guide educators, philanthropists, after-school program providers and others as they develop programs and activities that give young people the supports they need to be fit and active, engaged in their communities, and successful in school,” said Janet Carter, Executive Director of Team-Up for Youth, which convened the meeting with support from the Hewlett Foundation. “We also identified gaps in the research that will be important as we look at what additional studies we need.”

A literature review prepared for the meeting found that, on the whole, children and youth’s participation in organized, supervised sports activity outside of the regular school day has beneficial effects on their grades, high school completion, college attendance and success in the labor market. Student involvement in sports also positively affects their school attendance, homework completion, and aspirations for postsecondary education. Yet the factors that contribute to these positive educational outcomes are only beginning to be understood.

A comprehensive paper pulling together all the research on this topic will be released this winter. It will be designed to provide both an overview of what is and isn’t yet known on the subject, as well as practical information to guide policy makers, funders, educators, parents and others ensure that youth use the afternoon hours as effectively as possible.

In addition to Carter, the meeting included Team-Up for Youth Board Chair Wally Haas as well as: Megan Bartlett, National Director of Training, America SCORES; Susan Bell, Vice President and Senior Fellow for Energy and Climate, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Sylvia Epps, Senior Research Associate, Decision Information Resources; Jennifer Fredricks, Associate Professor of Human Development, Connecticut College; Robert Granger, President, William T. Grant Foundation; Jacob Harold, Program Officer, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Adam Hirschfelder, Program Officer, Koret Foundation; Kristine Madsen, Assistant Professor, Pediatrics, UCSF; Joseph Mahoney, Associate Professor, Department of Education, UC Irvine; Sandra Simpkins, Assistant Professor, School of Social and School Dynamics, Arizona State University; and Maureen Weiss, Professor, School of Kinesiology, University of Minnesota.

It was facilitated by Ann Rosewater, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Services Policy, at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rosewater served on the National Advisory Committee on Services for Families with Infants and Toddlers which designed the Early Head Start program, and coordinated the Department's participation in the Federal Support to Communities initiative to maximize opportunities for children and youth in the non-school hours. Rosewater also wrote the literature review, which will be made available on the Team-Up for Youth website, www.teamupforyouth.org.

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Team-Up for Youth helps to create after-school sports opportunities for disadvantaged girls and boys that build their confidence and skills, connect them to mentors and improve their prospects in school and in life. More information is available at www.teamupforyouth.org.