



# A Summary of the All Stars Project’s Outcome Evaluation Conducted by Southern Methodist University’s Center on Research and Evaluation

## OVERVIEW

Over the last 40 years, the All Stars Project (ASP) has discovered that development is a foundation of learning and takes place when young people go outside of daily school and life experiences. The lives of children who grow up in middle class and affluent families are filled with rich, outside-of-school experiences that help them to continuously develop—to go beyond where they are intellectually, culturally, socially and emotionally. This development allows these young people to become good learners and empowers them to play an active role in shaping their own lives.

In poor communities, these experiences are often few and far between, leaving many young people with narrowed and limited identities, including in their roles as learners. The ASP intervenes in this development gap with programs that expose young people to the broader world, helps them build relationships with caring adults who let them know they belong, and introduces them to creating new performances as a power they have and can call on in their lives.

This report offers key findings from an ASP outcome evaluation designed and implemented over five years with the Center on Research and Evaluation (CORE) at Southern Methodist University’s (SMU) Simmons School of Education and Human Development. The evaluation systematically validates that **development can be measured** and that, **through participating in the ASP, young people advance their development.**

This outcome evaluation is a concrete step in defining, measuring and demonstrating how young people benefit from investment in development.



**Shadae McDaniel**  
Senior Vice President/  
Programs and Strategic  
Initiatives and Director,  
ASP of New Jersey



**Antoine Joyce-Roach**  
Senior Vice President/  
City Leader,  
ASP of Dallas

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All Stars works with hundreds of afterschool nonprofits that engage kids living in poverty and who, by more traditional measures, are too often considered failures. Yet when we talk about how our programs make them happier, more confident, or more worldly, we are largely dismissed. The SMU CORE study provides strong evidence that measuring the impact of non-traditional programs is not only possible but necessary for generating a greater investment in afterschool and for ensuring that disadvantaged youth have access to programs designed to help them grow, to thrive and to dream.

Additionally, it offers a new kind of evidence for ASP’s effectiveness. Equally important, it contributes to and further supports afterschool, youth development, Social Emotional Learning and 21st-century learning programs that are concerned with young people’s non-academic progress and what is needed to strengthen their capacities to navigate the world, meet challenges and make the most of opportunities.

## THE RESEARCHERS

Southern Methodist University's **Center on Research and Evaluation (SMU CORE)** conducts high-quality research and evaluation to drive positive and sustainable change in individuals, schools, and communities in a customized manner.



**Dr. Annie Wright**  
Executive Director  
SMU CORE

Lead researcher for the ASP evaluation, Dr. Wright works in various educational settings, including districts, schools, and out-of-school time non-profits. She is especially interested in the work of community coalitions focused on educational reform and systems-level change. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Community Psychology and her Master's Degree in Psychology from the University of South Carolina.



**Dr. Yetunde Zannou**  
Evaluation  
Project Manager  
SMU CORE

In her role as Evaluation Project Manager with SMU CORE, Dr. Zannou conducts program evaluations for alternative and supplemental education programs that promote equitable learning opportunities for students in underserved communities across the greater Dallas metropolitan area. Dr. Zannou received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University and her M.Ed. from Brooklyn College.



In working with the All Stars Project, we discovered quickly that the kinds of outcomes that they were interested in measuring were unique enough that the tools just really didn't exist. So, we embarked on a highly collaborative process of developing customized evaluation tools that fit their model. All along, we knew that if we were to just look at long-term academic outcomes, we'd miss a lot of really rich information about underlying mechanisms of change. By focusing on proximal outcomes of development, we have better information to help us determine what transpires when out-of-school-time programs focus on development. **Annie Wright, SMU CORE**

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

SMU CORE created customized measures (well-defined metrics, surveys and checklists) based on ASP theory and practice of development and provided ASP staff with measurement tools and rigorous protocols for collecting data. Youth and parents were informed and asked to consent to be included in the research. SMU CORE used multiple quantitative analyses to examine youth development changes over time and to make generalizable conclusions. Over 100,000 data points were collected and analyzed.

### TIMELINE OF THE STUDY

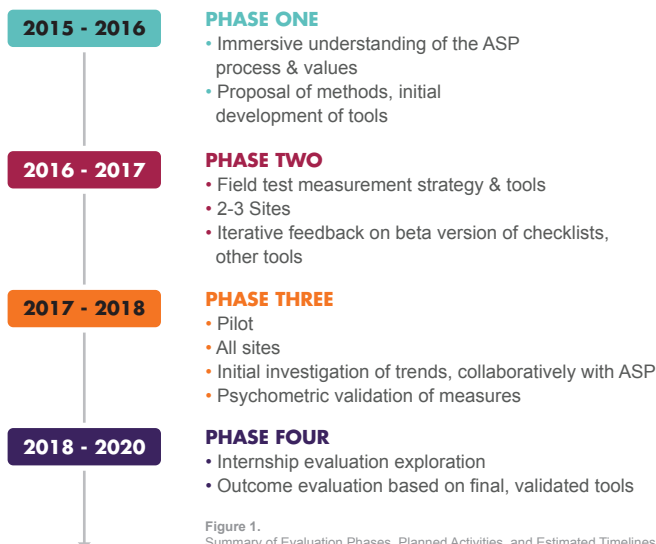
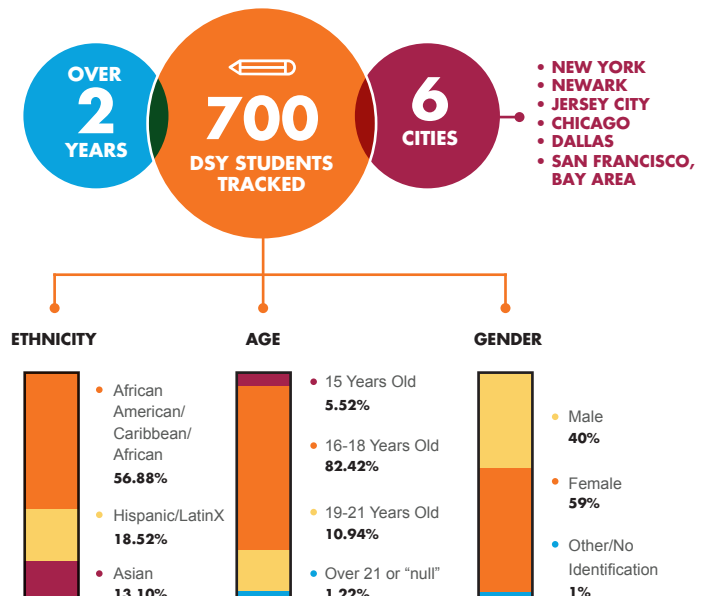


Figure 1. Summary of Evaluation Phases, Planned Activities, and Estimated Timelines



## DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

SMU CORE helped establish and identify eight **dimensions of development** that are at the heart of the ASP's model. These **strengths and capabilities**—by themselves or taken together—empower youth to be successful in both education and workplace situations and to fully participate in every aspect of society.

### RELATING TO OTHERS

- 1 **Appreciation**  
"In most every situation, I'm the type of person who values the effort people put into things"
- 2 **Giving**  
"I believe that all members of a group, team or community can contribute something"
- 3 **Interpersonal Competence**  
"I'm patient with others when I'm in a group"

### NAVIGATING PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS

- 4 **Personal Responsibility**  
"I ask for help when I don't understand how to do something"
- 5 **Vocational Competence**  
"I know how to act in a professional setting"

### ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD

- 6 **Confidence**  
"I feel in control of my life and my future"
- 7 **Improvisation**  
"I'm willing to make a mistake to find solutions"
- 8 **Open Worldview**  
"I can learn from interacting with people from different backgrounds than mine"

## WHY THIS MATTERS AND A CALL TO ACTION



**Chris Street**  
President & CEO

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Thanks to the SMU CORE evaluation, we now have proof that development through performance is transformative. This groundbreaking study gives the philanthropic community a basis for investing in innovation and in grassroots approaches that are opening new pathways of opportunity for millions of youth across America.

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We have invested millions of dollars and volunteer hours in this organization and can personally attest to the impact the All Stars Project has had in our own lives and in the communities that it serves across the nation. From its afterschool development programs to its volunteer base, the All Stars turns no one away, as it believes everyone deserves development and opportunity as well as a life that is free from fear and hate. Is there more to be done? YES. Will we continue to help grow All Stars' impact across America? YES. And we want you to join us.

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**Nathaniel Christian III**  
Board Chair

**Drew Williamson**  
Board Vice Chair

**Jessie Fields, M.D.**  
Board Vice Chair

## ANALYSIS OF ALL STARS OUTCOMES

The ASP's eight dimensions of development were assessed at the beginning (pre) and at the end (post) of the 12-week Development School for Youth (DSY) workshop experience. Staff observed/rated each student's development along multiple dimensions, and each student also reflected on/rated their own development along multiple dimensions. All assessments used similar five-point, high-to-low scales. SMU CORE tested the results to show that they are statistically significant and not due to chance. Meaningful growth was reported in all the DSY cycles and in all six of our cities.

To the right is an excerpt of the data and outcomes from both the staff assessment and youth self-assessment. There is positive change in each dimension assessed, and all results are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).

SOURCE	DIMENSION	AVG. PRE	AVG. POST	AVG. CHANGE
Adult Observation	Appreciation	2.593	3.677	1.085
	Improvisation	2.409	3.458	1.049
	Personal Responsibility	2.868	3.903	1.036
	Vocational Competence	2.592	3.605	1.013
Youth Self-Report	Confidence	4.018	4.264	0.246
	Giving	4.341	4.443	0.102
	Interpersonal	4.072	4.187	0.115
	Open Worldview	4.178	4.343	0.166

Scores based on a five-point scale (1=Low, 5=High)



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One of the things that resonates with me is All Stars' view that schools won't or can't entirely change the calculus for young people without community and individual development. With the publication of the SMU-CORE study, we now have qualitative and quantitative evidence of how the ASP approach is changing this calculus that we can communicate to educators, policy makers, and the public.

**David Chard**

Dean of Boston University, Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

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The **All Stars Project** is a privately funded, national nonprofit organization that was founded in 1981. Through the developmental power of performance, we transform the lives of youth from poor and underserved communities in partnership with caring adults, giving everyone the opportunity to grow. One of ASP's core programs is the **Development School for Youth**, where young people ages 16 to 21 partner with business leaders and learn how to perform as professionals.

