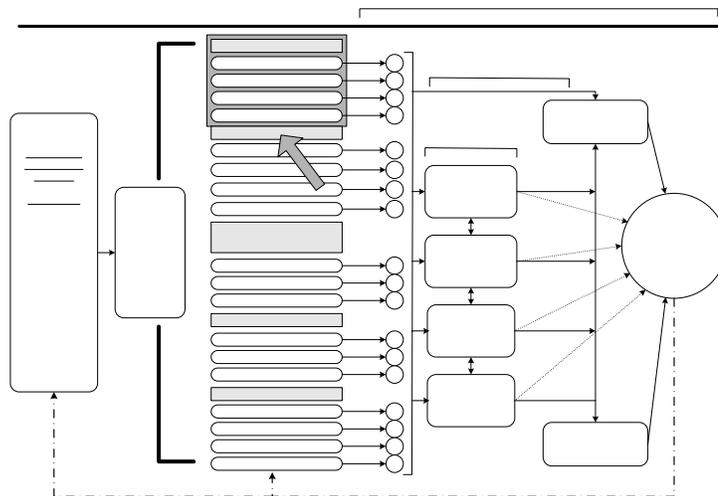


## Academic Learning

### Introduction

The Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement (OCCMSI) is offered to you and other school community leaders with three main advantages in mind. The model:

- Provides schools and educators with influence and control over traditional school hours as well as out-of-school time;
- Mobilizes school-related resources, supports and assistance networks in families and communities; and
- Creates new opportunities for learning and, at the same time, implements strategies for addressing non-academic barriers to learning. In brief, this new school improvement model effectively expands the boundaries of school improvement.



It is important to remember, however, that this new model will not succeed unless the typical priorities for school improvement planning – curriculum, instruction, school climate, school management and continuous improvement efforts – remain top priorities. Simply stated, school communities can not and should not lose sight of these priorities and their relationship with the accountabilities established by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

This chapter is structured to enable you and other school community leaders to develop firm connections between traditional school improvement planning and the new model's approach to improvement planning. Academic learning, which we define below and operationalize throughout this chapter, is one such connection.

Aiming to make you and other school community leaders aware of important connections between the two school improvement models, we begin with an appreciation of traditional models.

### ***Appreciating traditional school improvement models***

There are countless reform initiatives, and some schools are implementing more than one. Thus, it is risky to reduce, simplify and categorize them. Nevertheless, this is the easiest way to introduce and justify our key claims about their common limitations and strengths.

Essentially, there are four types of school improvement:

- Subject-specific initiatives;
- Comprehensive, or whole school, initiatives;
- District and state-wide initiatives; and
- Alternative prototypes for schools and schooling.

These four types are not mutually exclusive; many schools are implementing two or more. Table 5.1 provides more details.

<b>Table 5.1: An overview of traditional school reform initiatives</b>
<p>1. Subject-centered and other instructional improvement initiatives. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies and models for mathematics and science</li> <li>• Strategies and models for literacy and language (e.g., writing across the curriculum)</li> <li>• Strategies and models for other special subjects (e.g., social studies, health education)</li> <li>• Strategies and models for educational technology</li> <li>• Strategies and models for educators' collaboration and "de-privatizing practice"</li> </ul>
<p>2. Comprehensive school improvement initiatives (whole school reform planning). For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models stemming from the Effective Schools Research</li> <li>• National school reform models (e.g., Success for All, The Coalition of Essential Schools, James Comer's School Development Program, Accelerated Schools, Atlas Schools, Edward Zigler's Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Project Zero Schools)</li> </ul>
<p>3. District-wide improvement initiatives. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative school management frameworks</li> <li>• District and state-wide P-16 articulation plans (aimed at ensuring a smooth progression with needed supports and resources, beginning at Preschools and culminating in a college or university degree)</li> <li>• "Families" or clusters of schools as planning units with special attention to supporting students' transitions from one school to another</li> <li>• Partnerships with education schools, colleges and departments in universities and colleges; partnerships for simultaneous improvement and renewal (e.g., Holmes Group Partnerships, National Network for Educational Renewal Partnerships)</li> </ul>
<p>4. Breaking the mold: alternative prototypes for schools. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charter schools</li> <li>• Magnet schools</li> <li>• Small(er) Schools</li> <li>• Turning Points Schools (Middle schools founded on youth development principles)</li> <li>• Community-based and neighborhood-based and -run schools</li> </ul>

Risking over-simplification, all of the above school improvement designs have three commonalities.

- *Ultimately, all improvement initiatives are aimed at creating and maintaining safe schools and supportive classroom environments in which every child has access to a qualified, caring and competently performing teacher who implements a standards-based, research-supported curriculum.* Arguably, this is the centerpiece of every school improvement initiative – past, present and future. It is the primary determinant of students’ learning, academic achievement and success in school, and, if this piece is not in place, schools can be viewed as barriers to students’ learning, academic achievement and healthy development.
- *All, or nearly all, are aimed at collecting information (data) about students’ learning, development and academic achievement and then using this information to make solid, defensible decisions (data-based decisions) about instruction and overall improvement planning.* Fueled by NCLB, this common element nevertheless preceded this legislation. Like the first commonality, it is a mainstay in future improvement initiatives, and it is a practical necessity in today’s accountability-rich environment. Evaluation-driven and data-based decision-making also are vital to successful schools, and this is why they are emphasized later in this guide.
- *All, except James Comer’s School Development Program and Edward Zigler’s Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, approach improvement planning in essentially the same way. One school is the planning unit.* Educators are the improvement experts, and they consult their school’s site-based team in this improvement planning. Because these educators and teams are the main change agents, only a few improvements can be attempted each year; linear, one-at-a-time, change strategies are commonplace. Above all, educators and site teams focus their improvement planning on priorities inside the school and within its immediate jurisdiction. In short, all promote building-centered, or walled-in, school improvement.

You can appreciate the OCCMSI in relation to these three commonalities. Basically, it draws on the strengths and contributions associated with the first two commonalities and it compensates for the limitations of building-centered, or walled-in, school improvement. Furthermore, this new improvement model provides an expanded focus on academic learning, one that prioritizes the development of solid connections among schools, families and community agencies.

In brief, we when talk about academic learning – with a special eye toward closing the achievement gap – we have in mind many of the same priorities your school community leaders are addressing now. Conventional academic learning strategies, coupled with practices aimed to foster the necessary conditions for learning, are vital for students’ academic learning, achievement, and overall school success. The OCCMSI builds on the strengths of these conventional strategies and school improvement models.

Importantly, this new model takes advantage of new technologies and opportunities associated with “anytime, anywhere learning.” This opportunity brings another: to bring the kinds of research-supported conditions for academic learning and achievement, which professional educators want and need, into out-of-school agencies, homes and contexts. In other words, the research-supported knowledge base about academic learning and instruction can be shared with family and community leaders to assist them in their work with children and youth. Details follow.

### ***What do we mean by academic learning?***

As the above introduction indicates, when we refer to academic learning, we have in mind the kind of learning that improves academic achievement, paves the way for successful school completion and sets the stage for a successful transition into productive adulthood. Few priorities are more important for Ohio’s children and youth. In Ohio and elsewhere in the nation, success in school is the key to healthy development and a successful transition to adulthood.

Academic learning is our shorthand for several, inseparable components of powerful learning and development. These components include:

- Content mastery, especially in core subject areas;
- Learning process skills and abilities, especially learning how to learn;
- Learning enrichment skills and abilities, especially knowing where and how to get new knowledge and skills;
- Learning enhancement skills and abilities, especially the capacity to reflect on personal learning experiences and, on the basis of this reflection, to correct weaknesses and build on strengths;
- The ability to engage in self-directed learning, including the ability to persist when challenges are present; and
- The ability to teach others and, all in all, help them learn.

We emphasize in this chapter the preconditions and conditions needed to develop this kind of powerful, multi-faceted academic learning. In other words, we aim to help you help others to get the conditions right for academic learning.

You will find research-supported guidelines in the following analysis. These guidelines are, in our view, generic; they have universal application. We make this claim mindful of competing theories of learning and teaching in all three locales: schools, homes and community agencies. Now that these competitions have been acknowledged, you will find no more of it. The summaries and syntheses provided for you in the following pages are prime examples of the most important, shared elements needed for powerful academic learning. These elements cut across many of the competing theories and approaches.

This guide does not provide subject-specific preconditions, conditions and guidelines. For example, it does not venture into “the reading wars,” including which teaching method is best, and it does not offer research-supported guidelines for teaching mathematics and

science. It does emphasize the need for qualified teachers and related services providers/student support services staff, especially persons who know the content, know how to teach it, understand students and know how to operate in schools, homes and community agencies. It also emphasizes the need for safe, secure, health-enhancing learning environments, starting with the school's climate (Ohio Department of Education School Climate Guidelines, 2004).

Also note that we make no claims that we have incorporated every research-supported model and strategy documented in the school improvement literature (this would take books). What we have done, however, is indicate the top priorities for walled-in school improvement, reasserting their significance and indicating how you can take these same improvement priorities, techniques and strategies and use them for improvement in community agencies and homes. Academic learning, wherever it occurs, has many benefits.

### ***Outcomes associated with academic learning***

Strategic academic practices and programming are vital in schools, community organizations and homes. The main idea is to harmonize and coordinate academic learning and the conditions needed to support and reward it – in all of the places where youth learn and develop. This means that everyone, including you, is committed to, and a partner in, school improvement. It means that everyone, including you, is responsible and accountable for academic learning and achievement.

A great deal of research has pointed to the importance of academic learning time and opportunities. Research has documented significant improvements in important outcomes as well as reductions in problem behaviors. The table that follows provides the most important examples of both.

<b><i>Table 5.2: Outcomes associated with academic learning</i></b>	
<p><b>Improvements in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades</li> <li>• Scores on proficiency tests</li> <li>• Increased attendance</li> <li>• Positive school climate</li> <li>• Behavioral and emotional functioning</li> <li>• Student interest and value of subjects</li> <li>• Self concept and esteem</li> <li>• Social skills</li> <li>• Positive attitudes toward school</li> <li>• Quality of relationships between students and educators</li> <li>• Teacher morale and support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reductions in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special education referrals</li> <li>• Disruptive and aggressive behaviors</li> <li>• Drop out</li> <li>• Truancy</li> <li>• Absenteeism</li> <li>• Teacher turnover</li> </ul>

From: Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002; Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Husbands & Beese, 2001; Holdzkom, 2002; Knoff & Batshe, 1995; Gambrell et al., 1999; Plucker, Simmons, Lim, Patterson, Wooden, Jones, et al., 2004; Slavin & Madden, 1995, 2001; Sterbinsky, Ross, & Redfield, 2003; Stringfield, Millsap, & Herman, 1997; Wallace, 1993; Wasik & Slavin, 1993; Wheelock, 1994; Wright, Horn, & Sanders; 1997.

### **Key design principles and strategies for academic learning**

Several key design principles and strategies contribute to successful academic learning. Predictably and understandably, most of these principles and strategies focus exclusively on schools. You can adapt them to other family and community contexts with an eye toward harmonious, coordinated relationships with schools.

These principles below have been identified repeatedly in research in the areas of educational practice, best practices in academic and behavioral interventions, school improvement studies and psychology of learning and behavior.

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

<b>Principle and strategy</b>	<b>What this looks like</b>
Federal and state standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools implement state and federal standards for performance and performance reporting</li> <li>• Educators measure students' performance against standards</li> <li>• Educators use student learning and performance data to improve learning and instruction, while maintaining high expectations for all students</li> <li>• Educators develop specific progress targets for subgroups such as children who are poor, have limited English proficiency, etc.</li> <li>• The state has rewards and sanctions in place to hold public schools and districts accountable for making yearly progress</li> <li>• School and district report cards document data indicators and progress</li> <li>• Schools on the emergency list and the "at risk of emergency list" develop and implement school-wide improvement planning</li> <li>• Educators and other school community leaders publicize the importance of academic achievement standards and advocate for community-wide initiatives aimed at closing the achievement gap</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators use multiple methods of evaluation and assessment (e.g., pre-assessments, diagnostic, standardized, curriculum-embedded, informal tests, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators use assessments that are both formative (during learning) and summative (after learning)</li> <li>• Assessment results are available in a timely manner</li> <li>• Assessments are aligned with curriculum content</li> <li>• Assessments examine student performance on individual items, not just through total scores (content gaps are identified)</li> <li>• Assessments measure students' abilities to answer questions acceptably and use problem solving methods</li> <li>• Educators make accommodations for individual students based on student needs</li> <li>• Educators use technology to adapt to student individual needs</li> <li>• Educators receive time, assistance, technical supports and resources needed to interpret assessment data and use these data in their instructional planning</li> <li>• Educators design follow-up interventions, instruction and assignments in response to identified unlearned concepts</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

<b>Principle and strategy</b>	<b>What this looks like</b>
Assessment continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community use assessment results to adjust programs, policies, curriculum, instruction and teaching</li> <li>• Professional development programs are readily available for educators needing help with assessments, data interpretation and the translation of data into instructional and school improvement planning</li> </ul>
Focus on academic learning and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community establish specific, challenging achievement goals for the school as a whole</li> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community establish specific goals for student performance and benchmarks for meeting these goals (for groups of students and individual students); accountability structures exist for students so they learn responsibility and experience goal accomplishment</li> <li>• Schools adopt a clear and consistent focus on academics, instruction and student achievement; there is a student-focused environment</li> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community establish and prioritize clear and coherent achievement targets (short and long term); districts and schools engage in strategy development processes to support decision making and resource allocation</li> <li>• District and school policies, decisions and expenditures clearly support teaching and learning</li> <li>• District and school implement a systemic planning process in place that prioritizes academics</li> <li>• Educators use coherent instructional plans to guide their teaching (e.g., standards-based assessment maps, rubrics, activity banks, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators use standards-based units as teaching plans to organize and focus learning activities and assessments around grade-level indicators and essential concepts</li> </ul>
Continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and district continuous improvement plans include missions, visions, measurable goals, objectives and performance indicators</li> <li>• Educators provide students with opportunities to display learning and improvement that reflects the outcomes of instruction and hard work</li> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community implement evaluation plans that provide feedback for continuous improvement</li> <li>• Districts, schools and members of the school community rely on assessment and evaluation data when they make decisions</li> <li>• Educators and other school leaders have access to professional development opportunities related to data-information management and data-based decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum and instruction</b>	
Effective, research-supported strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and district operational principles, curriculum, instruction and leadership are research supported</li> <li>• School practices are driven by theories of child development, incorporating approaches that demonstrate beneficial effects on children's learning</li> <li>• Schools and districts have effective, research supported strategies in place to address the conditions that relate to safe and supportive learning environments</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Effective, research-supported strategies continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies are implemented with fidelity</li> <li>• Schools and districts have developed infrastructure supports for retrieving and using research, including key people who translate research for practitioners</li> <li>• Educators and others at the school are encouraged, supported and assisted in completing action research focused on their own practices and student performances</li> </ul>
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's and the district's recommended curriculum is research-supported</li> <li>• Curriculum content is aligned with state and national standards, test content and instruction</li> <li>• District leaders and principals ensure that curriculum standards are aligned across schools and that students enjoy transition supports when they move from one school to the next</li> <li>• District leaders and principals ensure school and school district standards are aligned with the admission requirements for community colleges, four year colleges and universities</li> <li>• Educators identify and communicate the content considered to be essential</li> <li>• Educators focus instruction on specific content and purposes (not miscellaneous topics/content)</li> <li>• Educators ensure the essential content is addressed in the time available for instruction</li> <li>• Educators balance the breadth of topic coverage with depth; providing more in-depth coverage of topics instead of a lot of topics</li> </ul>
Quality instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District officials and principals ensure that instruction is aligned with curriculum, test content and state and national standards</li> <li>• District officials and principals ensure that research-based, instructional strategies are used and implemented with fidelity</li> </ul>
Achievement expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and educators believe all students are capable of learning; high expectations and standards are set for all students (i.e., all students will progress sufficiently to the next level)</li> <li>• Students realize schools, educators, parents and others expect them to succeed; students have high expectations for themselves</li> <li>• Students are taught to see relationships between effort and achievement</li> <li>• Educators are capable and feel responsible for student learning (educators believe they do well at their job)</li> <li>• Strategies are in place to teach and re-teach students in a variety of methods and figure out ways in to support all students in their learning</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and school staff</b>	
Collaborative leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District and school leaders establish and reinforce clear goals, focus, values and operating rules</li> <li>• District and school leaders foster a positive school climate and sense of community; leadership has buy-in and support from faculty, district administration, staff, community, etc.; there is full support for reform</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Collaborative leadership continued	<p>efforts; cooperation and initiative are encouraged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The superintendent is an effective advocate for the needs of students, individual schools and the school district</li> <li>• District leaders and principals strike a balance between centralized and decentralized decision making</li> <li>• District leaders and principals are knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction and assessment</li> <li>• District leaders and principals collaborate in the allocation and reallocation of resources to improve students' learning and academic achievement</li> <li>• District leaders, principals, educators, parents, social-health service providers, youth development specialists and other leaders share responsibility for students' learning, academic achievement and success in school</li> <li>• Superintendents and district staff collaborate with top level leaders and middle managers in youth development agencies and health-social service agencies to maximize opportunities for students during the non-school hours</li> <li>• Principals and their designated representatives establish sustainable connections with leaders of after-school programs, youth development agencies and social-health service providers to gain their support and resources in support of students' development, learning and academic achievement</li> <li>• Principals and their designated representatives establish sustainable connections with leaders of community technology centers</li> <li>• Educators are involved in the design and implementation of decisions and policies</li> <li>• Principals, educators and their designated representatives engage parents and families as genuine partners in school community leadership</li> </ul>
Principal leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principals foster a sense of community and cooperation in the school</li> <li>• Principals establish and enforce a set of operating procedures and routines for the school</li> <li>• Principals are effective leaders who are actively engaged in school operations (understand how to run a school)</li> <li>• Principals ensure educators are aware of most up-to-date theories and practices; protect educators from issues that would detract from their focus</li> <li>• Principals are effective advocates for the needs of students and spokespersons for the school; celebrate successes and acknowledge failures</li> <li>• Principals are willing to and actively challenge the status quo; monitor school effectiveness and will change direction if needed</li> <li>• Principals are knowledgeable about instructional practices, curriculum, etc.</li> </ul>
Effective professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and district professional development strategies are supported by research</li> <li>• School and district professional development strategies are aligned</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Effective professional development continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with curriculum, technology and other identified needs</li> <li>• District leaders and principals support educators and their professional development goals</li> <li>• Educators, paraprofessionals and supportive service staff are encouraged to continuously improve and refine their practices</li> <li>• Educators and other school personnel's needs, priorities and interests weigh heavily in professional development planning and implementation</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities are connected to district goals and student needs and are relevant and useful</li> <li>• Principals, educators and student support staff at the school receive professional development experiences aimed at enabling them to utilize family and community resources for learning and academic achievement</li> <li>• Principals, educators and student support staff receive professional development experiences aimed at effective connections with community health and social service providers</li> </ul>
Qualified staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators are certified and credentialed in the content areas they teach; in other words, the staff meet state requirements</li> <li>• Principals, superintendents and administrators are competent in their jobs and are effective leaders</li> <li>• Student support personnel are effective at their jobs and are certified and credentialed in their respective areas</li> </ul>
<b>Level of priority</b>	
Readiness, fit and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a fit between school improvement strategies and other programs and services underway at the school</li> <li>• Improvement planning proceeds routinely with assessments of possible conflicts, duplication and signs of fragmentation and competition</li> <li>• District leaders, principals, educators and other stakeholders commit over time for long-term work in relation to school improvement</li> <li>• Expectations are realistic and stakeholders realize schools will not change overnight</li> <li>• Improvement models and strategies fit with the local context, school community and culture</li> <li>• Improvement planning routinely involves consensus-building among all of the key stakeholders at the school, including educators, parents, social and health service providers and after school staff</li> </ul>
Adequate and effective resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and districts enjoy adequate resources (e.g., staff, time, funding, etc) to support planning, professional development and the implementation of quality instruction</li> <li>• School funds are allocated in accordance with the school improvement plan</li> <li>• School and community funds are blended and braided to maximize health and social services and learning supports for students</li> <li>• Funding at the local, state and federal level supports schools</li> <li>• Community resources are brought to the school in support of school missions and needs</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Adequate and effective resources continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and community resources are mobilized and leveraged to provide learning and health-enhancing opportunities for students during the non-school hours</li> <li>• Staff assignments are utilized effectively to accomplish school goals</li> </ul>
Cultural responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and multiculturalism are valued and practices are culturally responsive</li> <li>• Strategies are culturally responsive and value diversity</li> <li>• Educators are aware of their own cultures, traditions, values and cognitions and realize how these impact their everyday practices</li> <li>• Schools value inclusion</li> <li>• Schools and educators recognize and use cultural resources that students bring with them to school and the classroom</li> <li>• Targeted attention is paid to achievement gaps</li> </ul>
<b>School environment considerations</b>	
School climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School-wide discipline rules and procedures that guide general student behavior are fair and effective</li> <li>• The schedule and structure of the school maximally supports learning and positive behaviors (clusters, schools within schools, small schools, block periods, etc.)</li> <li>• Youth help form school policies and procedures</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to develop and display positive behaviors; students are taught self-discipline and responsibility</li> <li>• Positive student behaviors are reinforced and rewarded</li> <li>• Schools and educators ensure that academic learning time is maximized</li> <li>• Systems are in place for the early detection of real and perceived threats to safety and security (i.e., facilities and equipment are safe and secure)</li> <li>• Classroom/school atmospheres and practices convey a warm, welcoming and caring school environments; students feel a sense of “belonging” in the classroom and to the school</li> <li>• Students are valued as a part of a cohesive learning environment</li> <li>• School-wide discipline rules and procedures are consistently enforced in classrooms</li> <li>• Appropriate consequences for violations of rules and procedures are established and enforced</li> <li>• There are high-quality food service supports for students and families</li> <li>• There are high quality student support services (i.e., school social workers, psychologists, nurses, counselors) available onsite each day</li> </ul>
Collegiality and teacher support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools and school districts promote positive norms of behavior and conduct that foster professionalism</li> <li>• Schools and school districts promote the development of professional learning communities among educators, including opportunities for mentoring, coaching and team teaching</li> <li>• The school’s governance structure allows for teacher and staff involvement in decision making and policy creation</li> <li>• There are sufficient resources, services and supports for educators and</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Collegiality and teacher support continued	school personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student and teacher assistance teams, intervention assistant teams, etc., operate effectively and efficiently</li> <li>• Policies are in place to support employee assistance for staff in need of special services</li> </ul>
<b>Family and community considerations</b>	
Family involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents, other adults and family members monitor, supervise, assist and encourage students as they practice skills and complete homework</li> <li>• Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children, families and the school</li> <li>• Parents and other caregivers are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought</li> <li>• Parents and families have high expectations for their children</li> <li>• Parents effectively communicate these expectations to children</li> <li>• Parents have effective parenting styles (i.e., authoritative) that provide warmth, non-punitive punishment, and consistency; parenting skills are promoted and supported</li> <li>• The communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful</li> <li>• Social and health service providers and other parents are mobilized, as needed, to support and assist families with special needs</li> <li>• Principals, educators and student support staff engage in professional development experiences aimed at forming, improving and sustaining effective school-family partnerships</li> </ul>
Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School and district policies ensure there are multiple ways for parents and the community to be involved in day-to-day school operations</li> <li>• School and district policies ensure there are effective, regular communications among the home, community and school</li> <li>• Community and home resources are maximized in support of schools and children; community and home have commitments to education</li> <li>• School and district policies ensure that efforts exist to improve public relations between the school and community (i.e., community forums, etc.)</li> <li>• School and district policies ensure that community philosophies and attitudes are represented through community-elected school boards who govern policy and that community and parents have voice in key decisions about schools</li> <li>• Strategies are in place to determine the requirements, expectations and preferences of stakeholders and markets, ensuring the relevance of the educational process</li> <li>• Principals, educators and student support staff receive professional development experiences aimed at forming, improving and sustaining effective school-community partnerships</li> <li>• Community recognizes the contributions of youth; community provides service opportunities for youth</li> <li>• Formal school-community partnerships enable the provision of comprehensive services for students and staff</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: Design principles and/or strategies for academic learning**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
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From: Apthorp, Bodrova, Dean, Florian, Gaddy, Goodwin, et al., 2001; Baldrige National Quality Program, 2004; Beck, 2001; Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002; Brophy, 1999; Gay 2000; Husbands & Beese, 2001; Marzano, 2003; Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Learning First, 2002; Ohio Department of Education, 2004; Searl, 2004; Walberg & Paik, 2000; Walter, 2001; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; WestEd 2004.

**Table 5.4: Ohio's School Climate Guidelines**

- Operational principles are grounded in academic achievement research and are espoused by the families and community
- School and community partnerships exist to provide comprehensive services to students and staff
- Regular and thorough assessments and evaluations are conducted for continuous improvement
- High-quality staff development and administrative support is available for program improvement
- Real and perceived threats to safety and security are addressed to permit educators to focus on instruction and students on learning
- A student's sense of belonging or connectedness to school encourages student participation, positive interactions with staff and peers, and is directly related to improved achievement
- Parent engagement maximizes the potential for effect instruction and student achievement
- Engaging youth in forming school policy integrates an essential perspective into proposed solutions
- High-quality food service supports improvements in academic achievement and behavior

From: <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/students-families-communities>

**Table 5.5: Ohio and K-12 standards**

Ohio Academic Content Standards  
[http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic\\_content\\_standards/](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/academic_content_standards/)  
[http://ims.ode.state.oh.us/ODE/IMS/ACS/Grades\\_ContentAreas/Default.asp](http://ims.ode.state.oh.us/ODE/IMS/ACS/Grades_ContentAreas/Default.asp)  
 Operating Standards for Ohio's Schools  
[http://www.ode.state.oh.us/school\\_improvement/Standards/Default.asp](http://www.ode.state.oh.us/school_improvement/Standards/Default.asp)  
 K-12 Education Compendium of Standards  
<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>

## ***Other considerations in academic learning***

This section highlights some of other considerations that need to be taken into account discussing academic learning. It begins with an exploration of time and how academic learning time can be maximized in schools.

Specifically, it focuses on key design principles and strategies central to quality instruction by educators in classrooms. It then follows with the examination of extended learning time by examining tutoring practices, the role of homework, academic enrichment activities, and the linkages among these with youth development. All strategies are critical to ensuring academic learning, student achievement and healthy development and overall school success.

### **Academic learning time**

Not surprisingly, research consistently shows that one of the most important factors contributing to improved achievement is the amount of time students spend engaged in academic activities (Aronson, Zimmerman, & Carlos, 1998; Cotton, 1989; Lauer et al., 2004). Schools, educators, after-school staff and others should plan to maximize the amount of time students spend in academic learning.

#### *The issue of time*

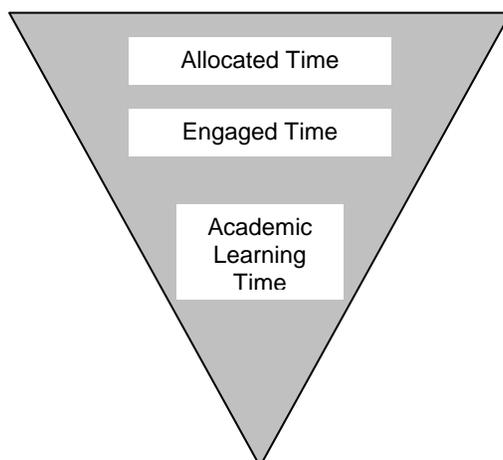
Time in school can be thought about in several different ways. For instance, students may think about time in relationship to when the first and last school bell rings. Educators may think about the amount of time they need for delivering a key lesson. Administrators may wonder how much time students spend on recess, in play and/or recreation or at lunch. Policymakers may wonder how many snow or vacation days took away from student time in classrooms.

The issue of time is complicated. The terms allocated time, engaged time and academic learning time may provide clarity to all stakeholders (Aronson et al., 1998; Cotton, 1990).

*Allocated time* refers to the total amount of time students are required to attend school. This is typically divided into instructional time and non-instructional time. Instructional time is time students spend in class; whereas non-instructional time is the time students spend at lunch, recess, transitioning between classes, and in other non-classroom activities.

*Engaged time* is the time when students are actually participating in learning activities. This is sometimes referred to as “time on task.” It does not include “dead time” or time where there is nothing students are expected to be doing and the teacher is not managing student behaviors.

Although students may be engaged in learning activities, this does not necessarily mean they are learning new concepts and/or skills. *Academic learning time* refers to the time when learning occurs. It is the time when students are working on tasks that are appropriately aligned with their readiness. It does not include the time students spend engaged in tasks that are too easy or difficult.



*Figure 5.1: From Aronson et al, 1998*

Research suggests that there is little relationship between allocated time and student achievement; some relationship between engaged time and achievement; and a large relationships between academic learning time and achievement (Cotton, 1990). Therefore, it is essential that educators and others maximize the amount of time students spend in academic learning time.

Two strategies for engaging students in academic learning time are discussed in the following, including maximizing teaching and instruction and providing extended academic learning time.

### **Maximizing teaching and instruction**

Researchers have established that high quality educators are an essential factor for improving the academic achievement of low achieving and at risk children. In fact, school improvement research shows educators influence student achievement more than any other variable (Marzano, 2003; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

The most important factor impacting student achievement is the teacher (Sanders, 1997; Sanders & Horn, 1994; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). We will not have better schools and better achievement outcomes until such time as we provide supports for good teachers and teaching. With the new school improvement model, these teachers and their teaching also includes homes and community organizations. “Educators” also means persons who teach students in homes and community-based organizations.

You will find below an overview of effective design principles and strategies for teaching and instruction. Specific techniques also are identified. Using these techniques will ensure high quality, effective instruction, regardless of what is being taught (i.e., math, reading comprehension, sports, music, etc).

**Table 5.6: Checklist of overarching design principles and/or strategies for successful programs**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Table 5.6: Checklist of overarching design principles and/or strategies for successful programs</b></p>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is designed to create intended results</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The logic behind the program makes sense as the services link to outcomes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program uses multiple strategies to accomplish its goals (comprehensive)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is evaluation-driven and continuously improved upon</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is research-supported and theoretically-sound</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> There is sufficient dosage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The program is implemented the way it was originally designed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff are well-trained in the program design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants have a “say so” in how the program is structured and implemented</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is tailored to meet individual needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is appropriately timed and located</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is implemented in culturally competent ways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program is family-centered and -supportive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Strategies foster self-determination and personal control</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants are empowered</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Participants’ strengths are built upon in the program</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Positive relationships and bonding are created</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Program activities are enjoyable and meaningful to participants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff are engaging</li> </ul> |  |

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
<b>Time and opportunities</b>	
Learning opportunities and exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every student enjoys access to qualified educators with instructional and subject matter competence</li> <li>• Educators maximize academic learning time (i.e., “time on task”) during the school day (i.e., time designed around instructional goals is maximized)</li> <li>• There is a high degree of exposure to content; activities/assignments have intention (i.e., clear goals and objectives)</li> <li>• Transitions between periods, lessons, lunch/recess, etc., are kept short; students are immediately engaged in the next activity; lessons and classes begin and end on time</li> <li>• Educators encourage students to generalize their learning to other contexts and settings; in other words, content is applied to real world settings outside the classroom</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Learning opportunities and exposure continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school provides technology linkages and supports for “anytime, anywhere learning” in homes, technology centers, libraries, faith-based institutions, and other community organizations</li> <li>• Educators use effective classroom management techniques that limit the amount of time spent on behavior problems</li> <li>• Additional, engaged academic learning time occurs during the non-school hours via youth development programs and in students’ homes (i.e., students participate in academic enrichment activities that build upon classroom content)</li> <li>• Extended day programs at school and community-based after-school programs reinforce additional participation in academic activities; classroom educators help structure these activities so they align with academic curriculum</li> </ul>
Practice and application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are engaged in activities that involve real world issues, concerns, examples, problems (i.e., students are given taste of what it’s like in the business world - use local businesses to do so, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators create opportunities for problem based learning</li> <li>• Educators engage students in assignments/activities that provide opportunities to practice what they are learning; in other words, there is the practical application of skills within meaningful settings</li> <li>• Students practice under guided supervision of educators and then have opportunities for independent practice once content is more fully mastered</li> <li>• Educators and students set aside time to independently practice and apply information learned within a variety of contexts</li> <li>• Educators assign homework that allows students the opportunity to practice and apply newly learned skills; feedback is provided on all assigned homework</li> <li>• Homework is realistic in length and at a difficulty at level where students can do the work independently</li> <li>• Students use technology to explore real-world problems and open-ended questions, to conduct research and to manipulate data</li> <li>• Students’ home, school, and community environments are conducive to homework completion</li> </ul>
<b>Student characteristics</b>	
Student motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are involved in tasks and activities that are engaging, meaningful, and relevant to everyday life</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to develop their own long-term projects, formulate questions, and collect information</li> <li>• Educators encourage self assessment where students link efforts to their achievements</li> <li>• Educators serve as facilitators and resources</li> <li>• Educators make learning new concepts and skills interesting and relevant</li> <li>• Educators allow for student-driven learning and base the lessons on student interests, their suggestions and the questions they ask in class</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to plan and monitor classroom activities</li> <li>• Students understand their motivations and how they affect their effort in school</li> <li>• Students see the value in what they are learning as important for success in life in the future</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Student motivation continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators provide students with feedback on their progress which in turn enhances student motivation for future work</li> <li>• Educators ensure that students know what they are supposed to learn and why it is important (i.e., clear objectives and purpose)</li> <li>• Assignments/activities are challenging, but not threatening; they allow students to achieve high rates of success when they make reasonable efforts</li> <li>• Students find that their assignments and learning activities are interesting and engaging; there is minimal “drill, skill, and no thrill”</li> <li>• Students are intrinsically motivated (i.e., from within) to learn and achieve</li> <li>• Students have some control over learning; in other words, youth are engaged in their learning</li> <li>• Educators encourage students to generate and test hypotheses (i.e., problem solving, exploration, analysis, etc.)</li> </ul>
Students’ background and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are involved in activities that directly enhance the quality of their life experiences</li> <li>• Students’ backgrounds and prior knowledge determine teaching and instruction</li> <li>• Educators link new content to students’ prior knowledge</li> <li>• Students master activities/concepts before moving on to new lesson/unit</li> <li>• Educators make strategic decisions about what content to cover first based on needed prerequisite skills (e.g., provide direct instruction in vocabulary terms that are important to subject matter first)</li> <li>• Educators ask students to describe what they know about a topic prior to the presentation of new content</li> <li>• Educators gear instruction to the ability and background of students; there is a match to the readiness of students</li> <li>• Educators adapt their methods to meet individual student needs and ability levels</li> <li>• Educators use technology to adapt lessons and activities to individual student needs</li> <li>• Students develop vocabulary related to units of study; students are involved in reading programs that emphasize vocabulary development</li> <li>• Students enjoy opportunities for mentoring and other out-of-school experiences, and these opportunities promote the expansion of background knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations and competencies</b>	
Expectations for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has, as part of its mission, high expectations for students</li> <li>• Every teacher has high expectations for students</li> <li>• Students have high expectations for themselves</li> <li>• Educators use consistent strategies when completing recurring activities (dealing with transitions, turning in homework, allocated reading time, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators implement activities/assignments that challenge students (as opposed to those that protect them from failure)</li> <li>• Students are aware of what is expected of them and know how to accomplish it</li> <li>• Students learn how to set their own goals and keep track of their progress</li> <li>• Educators establish clear, consistent rules and expectations for students’ attitudes and behavior</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Teacher qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators accept responsibility and accountability for students' learning</li> <li>• Educators believe students are able to learn and that they can teach them</li> <li>• Educators find ways to ensure students learn curriculum (if students don't learn it the first time, they teach it again, teach it differently, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators understand the central concepts as they relate to the Ohio Core Curriculum Content Standards</li> <li>• Educators create a professional learning communities, which emphasize important concepts and expectations</li> <li>• Educators show they care about students and their learning</li> <li>• Educators show enthusiasm and a passion for learning</li> <li>• Educators understand how children develop and learn and provide opportunities that support the developmental needs of all students</li> <li>• Educators understand that children learn in diverse ways and adapt and modify instruction accordingly</li> <li>• Educators use effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional strategies</b>	
Teaching and instructional methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators implement research-supported and evidence-based methods</li> <li>• Educators explain to students the value of what they teach and expect students to learn</li> <li>• Educators explain what to do, how to do it, and when and why to use the information being taught</li> <li>• Educators use rehearsal strategies and repeat material being taught so students remember it more effectively; students practice over longer periods of time so content is more likely to be remembered</li> <li>• Educators use elaboration strategies by describing content in "user-friendly" ways (i.e., paraphrasing, reframing, etc.) and relating content to prior knowledge and concepts</li> <li>• Educators spend time summarizing or reviewing lessons before moving to the next activity</li> <li>• Educators offer students opportunities to practice newly learned skills</li> <li>• Educators ensure that homework's primary purpose is to practice skills and build relevant knowledge related to classroom priorities</li> <li>• Educators employ organizational frameworks to assist in material recall (i.e., outlines, figures, advance organizers, sequential steps, review material frequently, reflection at the end of a lesson, etc.)</li> <li>• Students take and review notes to assist with learning</li> <li>• Educators monitor which strategies work and those that don't, as well as understand which ones create anxiety and decrease focus</li> <li>• Educators model how to do the assignment/activity being taught and use "self-talk" to guide the students through problem solving (i.e., cognitive modeling); use of role plays</li> <li>• Educators strike a good balance between the breadth and depth of content</li> <li>• Educators make good decisions regarding when to emphasize depth of understanding versus breadth</li> <li>• Educators check in with students to see if they understand what has been taught by asking them to repeat it to the educators or to classmates</li> <li>• Educators frequently ask students to provide samples of work, including the assigning, collecting and grading of homework regularly</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Teaching and instructional methods continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators use a variety of teaching strategies (lecturing, shared reading, note-taking, hands-on activities, cooperative learning groups, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators use teaching strategies that match a variety of student learning styles (verbal, visual, dramatic, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators effectively balance direct instruction, guided instruction and independent learning</li> <li>• Educators encourage students to create nonlinguistic representations of content (i.e., pictures, mental images, graphs and models, etc.)</li> </ul>
Mastery learning and targeted intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators focus their instruction on the individualized needs of students (as opposed whole class teaching)</li> <li>• Type of instruction is matched to meet students' individualized needs (i.e., learning styles, content gaps, small learning communities, etc.)</li> <li>• Educators adapt lessons and activities for individual students/small groups based on needs and ability levels</li> <li>• Educators coordinate instruction with other professionals to support student learning</li> <li>• Students master activities before moving on to new lessons/units</li> <li>• Educators use assessments to determine the mastery of learning, and students needing additional instruction are targeted with strategic interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Content considerations</b>	
Classroom curriculum design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators present new content multiple times using a variety of instructional strategies</li> <li>• Educators identify the specific focus of a lesson or unit, addressing what students will learn ahead of time</li> <li>• Educators inform students of the skills they need to master and those they do not</li> <li>• Educators present content in groups that demonstrate the critical content area as a whole</li> <li>• Educators involve students in a variety of tasks that require students to address content in different ways</li> </ul>
Coherent sequencing and pacing of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators structure the sequence of events in classrooms logically, and relationships among concepts are clear; connections are made among important ideas (i.e., chunking)</li> <li>• Schools implement strategies that allow for logical sequencing between grades in order to avoid excessive review</li> <li>• Educators create meaningful learning experiences as they connect content with real life applications</li> <li>• Educators present new information in small steps and build from students' previous knowledge; finish with review and next steps</li> <li>• Educators connect new skills with previously learned ones as opposed to practicing them apart from rest of curriculum; links are made with materials previously studied</li> <li>• Educators and other school staff support students as they transition from school-to-school, school-to-work, school-to-college, etc.</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
<b>Other strategies used by educators</b>	
Establishing learning orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators provide students with a preview of the lesson, goals and purposes, knowledge of why lessons are important and teacher expectations</li> <li>• Educators use anticipatory sets to get students engaged (i.e., exciting examples in the beginning of a lesson that shows the importance of the content; mental set that encourages student focus on what will be learned)</li> <li>• Educators encourage the use of organizers and systems to support student learning</li> </ul>
Scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators include explanation, modeling and coaching in the initial stages of instruction (i.e., explain work and overview practice examples prior to assigning work and then monitor progress)</li> <li>• Educators use guided practice in beginning stages</li> <li>• Educators allow for broad meanings and many varieties of applications of concept or skill</li> <li>• Teacher support and instruction fades as students increase their expertise (i.e., zones of proximal development)</li> <li>• Educators allow for independent practice and facilitate application to new examples</li> <li>• Students actively self regulate their own engagement and improvement, especially over time as knowledge and skill develops</li> </ul>
Thoughtful discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators use questions to stimulate higher order thinking, problem solving, decision-making, debating and application</li> <li>• Educators encourage thinking and reflection</li> <li>• Educators integrate different questions for a variety of purposes: explanation/clarification, summary, extension and reflection</li> <li>• Educators allow students plenty of time to reflect on a question and respond</li> <li>• Educators listen carefully to student responses to questions and provide positive feedback</li> <li>• Educators strike a balance between teacher- and student-led discussions</li> <li>• Educators implement interactive lessons and discussions, especially when discussing newly learned content (rather than didactic lectures and presentations)</li> <li>• Educators address questions to the entire class and ample time is allowed for processing responses</li> <li>• Educators use open-ended questions and encourage students to apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate</li> <li>• Educators provide activities/assignments that encourage the identification of similarities and differences (i.e., making comparisons, classifications, etc.)</li> </ul>
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators provide feedback to students based upon content that is learned</li> <li>• Educators provide informative feedback so that it helps students assess problems and correct errors (as opposed to evaluative)</li> <li>• Educators provide feedback that helps students assess their own performance and correct their errors</li> <li>• Educators provide students with immediate feedback</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Feedback continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators provide feedback that is related to specific knowledge and skills among specific students</li> <li>• Educators provide feedback that is given in such a way to not disturb other students</li> <li>• Educators praise students verbally for quality work; effort and progress toward learning is recognized and celebrated</li> <li>• Educators evaluate students based on the task, not in comparison to others</li> <li>• Educators consistently check for understanding to determine that students understand the concepts</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom structure and environment</b>	
Classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators maximize academic learning time in classrooms.</li> <li>• Students feel welcome and supported in their classrooms and school; educators and students have effective, caring relationships</li> <li>• Class sizes and student to teacher ratios maximize student learning</li> <li>• Educators and students jointly establish clear rules and behavioral norms for classroom behavior, and everyone shares responsibility for enforcing them</li> <li>• Educators and students communicate these rules and behavioral norms to parents and youth development specialists, aiming for consistency among school, home and community environments</li> <li>• Educators use a healthy balance between rewards and punishments</li> <li>• Educators use strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviors and provide consequences for inappropriate behaviors</li> <li>• Educators balance the use of control/dominance strategies versus cooperative ones</li> <li>• Educators quickly and accurately identify problems and act on them (i.e., “with-it-ness”)</li> <li>• Educators incorporate classroom management practices with emotional objectivity</li> <li>• Educators establish an inclusive classroom environment in which special needs students are integrated in learning and instructional activities</li> </ul>
Use of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators develop parent and family programs and activities aimed at supporting home environments conducive to homework completion, learning and academic achievement</li> <li>• Parents directly reinforce and encourage children to succeed in school</li> <li>• Educators maximize the use of paraprofessionals and teacher aides in support of individualized student instruction and targeted intervention</li> <li>• Volunteers assist in strategic ways in the classroom to assist with behavior management, individualized instruction, etc.</li> <li>• Educators assist in the identification of student needs and make referrals to social and health service providers, youth development specialists and after school program leaders</li> <li>• Educators work closely with social and health service providers to ensure that classroom environments and requirements are consistent with service plans for special needs students</li> <li>• Educators actively seek and utilize the assistance of other significant adults (e.g., service providers, parents) when they are planning instruction and learning for “hard-to-reach students”</li> </ul>

**Table 5.7: Design principles and/or strategies for teaching and instruction**

Principle and strategy	What this looks like
Cooperative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students learn interdependent skills where learning goals are in place so that individuals are not able to succeed unless the group does</li> <li>• Educators provide opportunities for students to work in pairs or small groups, increasing the value of instructional content and encouraging social interactions</li> <li>• Students have more chances to talk in small groups than in whole class activities</li> <li>• Educators partner students with others to encourage the expression and explanation of problem solving strategies</li> <li>• Students get to practice and learn skills in meaningful learning experiences through social settings</li> <li>• Educators ensure that individual students in each group are held accountable for group goals and cooperation</li> <li>• Educators work with youth development specialists to help them build cooperative learning environments in their agencies</li> </ul>

From: Aronson, et al., 1998; Beck, 2001; Bennett, 1968; Brophy, 1999; Cotton, 1991; Daniels & Bizar, 1998; Elias, 2002; Ericson, 1998; Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Kounin, 1983; Lappan, 2000; Marzano, 2003; Marzano & Kendall, 1996; Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001; Marzano, Whisler, Dean, & Pollock, 2000; Metzger, 1998; Ngeow & Kong, 2001; Ohio Department of Education, 2004; Rosenshine & Meister, 1992; Slavin, 1993; Stevenson & Carr, 1993; Strong, Silver, & Perini, 2001; Sutton & Krueger, 2000; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Walberg & Paik, 2000; WestEd 2004.

#### Designing a Lesson (Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986)

1. **Review** of previous learning
2. State **goals** for lesson
3. Present **new concept/skill** in small steps, with practice after each step; incorporate previously learned content
4. **Guide** students during practice
5. Provide **feedback** during guided practice
6. Encourage **independent practice and application**

#### Providing extended academic learning time

One of the most important contributions of the OCCMSI is to provide extended academic learning opportunities in the non-school hours (beyond the traditional school day). There are the three primary types of activities that extend academic learning time for students:

- Tutoring programs;
- Homework activities; and
- Academic enrichment opportunities.

Worthwhile in their own right, all three are more powerful especially when they are combined with research-supported youth development principles, strategies and practices (as outlined in the youth development chapter of this guide).

### *Tutoring and supplemental services*

NCLB has important policy changes in relationship to student intervention. States and local districts must provide supplementary education services, including tutoring, remediation, and other academic instruction, to low-income students in Title I schools that do not show adequate yearly progress. These supports are known to have positive outcomes in relation to student achievement, self-confidence and overall motivation for learning (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Lauer, Akiba, Wilderson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2004; Merrill, 1995; Morris, Shaw, & Perney, 1990; Topping & Whitley, 1990; Wasik, & Slavin, 1993).

The following table overviews the key design principles and strategies identified in the literature that are critical within effective tutoring and related remediation programs.

<b>Table 5.8: Design principles and/or strategies for effective tutoring</b>	
<b>Connections with classrooms</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring is coordinated with state and district curriculum and state standards</li> <li>• Classroom educators work with tutors to develop programs and activities for individual students</li> <li>• Tutors provide regular feedback to classroom educators about student progress</li> <li>• Classroom educators serve as tutors, ensuring instruction is tied to classroom learning</li> <li>• Classroom educators serve as teacher liaisons who focus on linking the extended day programs to the classrooms</li> <li>• Tutors provide structured sessions that are intentionally focused on teaching certain content</li> <li>• Tutors use scripts when correcting errors</li> </ul>	
<b>Support and training for tutors</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and supervision is provided for tutors and instructors</li> <li>• Quality, effective, responsible tutors implement the programs</li> <li>• Tutors are motivated and committed to the tutoring program</li> <li>• Tutors and instructors are provided with intensive and ongoing training on content necessary for instruction</li> <li>• Tutors and instructors are provided with training in developing interpersonal skills and having patience</li> <li>• Tutors and instructors are provided with training in reinforcing and correcting responses</li> </ul>	
<b>Individualized</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors structure their support relative to the individual needs of students</li> <li>• Tutoring is one-on-one, if possible</li> <li>• Individual students are targeted who are in need of additional supports (referrals from educators, recruitment strategies, etc.)</li> <li>• Tutors monitor and reinforce student progress</li> <li>• When one-on-one tutoring is not an option, tutees are grouped according to their readiness, skill level, learning styles or interests</li> <li>• Tutors provide reading supports to younger students, but provide math supports for older ones (research suggests these strategies are more beneficial)</li> <li>• Tutors provide instruction that is understandable to the students</li> </ul>	

**Table 5.8: Design principles and/or strategies for effective tutoring**

<b>Practice and application</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors move from more structured guidance to allowing students to engage in independent work</li> <li>• Tutors engage students in opportunities that allow for the practice and application of content</li> </ul>
<b>Dosage</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring sessions are frequent and regular (2 to 3 times per week)</li> <li>• Tutoring sessions are of sufficient length; and not too long (60 minutes maximum)</li> <li>• Tutoring supports prevent loss of information (during summers, long school breaks, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Youth development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutors develop social competencies and life skills among students</li> <li>• Tutors establish relationships with students (mentorship role)</li> <li>• Students receive counseling and mentoring in addition to tutoring</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to engage in social recreation simultaneously</li> <li>• Students are motivated to attend the sessions (social recreation, extra credit options)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs have adequate resources, materials, instructional space, etc.</li> <li>• Programs have adequate technology to incorporate computer assisted instruction into their designs</li> </ul>

From: Anderson & Weiner, 2004; Caplan & Calfee, 1998; Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Jenkins & Jenkins, 1987; Juel, 1996; Lauer, et al., 2004; McArthur, Stasz, & Zmuidzinas, 1990; Reisner, Petry, & Armitage, 1990; Searl, 2004; Slavin, 1993; Snow, 2003. Venezky & Jain, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1997; Warger, 1991; Wasik & Webb, 1989.

A recent meta-analysis examining tutoring programs found that tutoring is most effective when it is one-on-one (Lauer et al., 2004). Other research has called attention to the role of peers in tutoring and mentoring. This appears to be an effective strategy; one that supports academic learning among tutees or mentees while also providing important meaningful youth development experiences and results for the tutors or mentors (Cohen, Kulik, & Kukik, 1982; Kalkowski, 2001; Webb, 1989).

### *Homework*

Homework is an effective strategy designed to enhance learning time for a multitude of reasons, the primary one being that students have the opportunity to review and practice the skills they have learned in the classroom. For younger students, homework completion has been directly linked to the development of organizational and study skills; whereas homework is directly connected to student achievement among older students (Cotton, 1991).

#### **Purposes of homework (Paulu, 1998)**

- Allow students to practice nearly learned skills
- Prepares students for the next day's lesson
- Develops time management, organizational and study skills
- Provides opportunities for students to use outside resources
- Allows for more in-depth examination of certain topics
- Encourages student application of material

Too often it is the case that homework assignments do not match students' abilities and skill levels. Homework assignments that are supposed to complement academic learning time end up being huge frustrations for students, parents and others who support student homework completion. Simply stated, these significant others become "educators" who don't always have the necessary skills, background knowledge or time to instruct and correct youth on various homework assignments which students are not prepared to complete. In the end, no one benefits, as students often return back to school with incomplete and/or incorrect homework.

To prevent these problems, several guiding principles and strategies should guide the design and assignment of homework.

**Table 5.9: Design principles and/or strategies related to homework**

- Educators assign homework that is relevant to learning objectives
- Educators assign homework that allows students to apply what they learned at school with tasks at home
- Educators assign homework regularly
- Educators assign homework in reasonable amounts (some suggest 10 minutes per night for each grade level; i.e., 1<sup>st</sup> graders get 10 minutes)
- Educators do not assign homework as punishments (students' motivation is significantly decreased)
- Educators explain homework assignments
- Educators collect and review all homework assignments
- Educators design homework so it provides feedback on where students are with their learning
- Educators create homework for younger students that focuses on the development of study and organizational skills
- Educators design homework for older students as it directly relates to achievement
- Parents support their children's completion of homework assignments
- Students are motivated to complete homework assignments
- Parents, after-school program staff and others charged with supporting homework completion have some knowledge of the skills students are working on in classroom
- Educators inform parents of homework expectations
- Educators assign homework with appreciation of parents' time and skill sets
- After-school program staff structure homework completion time so that students maximize learning and application time
- After-school program staff organize students according to grade or skill levels so they work together on homework assignments

From: Caplan & Calfee, 1998; Cooper, 1989; Cotton, 1991; Forum for Youth Investment, 2003.

### ***Academic enrichment and youth development***

Importantly, this new school improvement model takes advantage of new technologies and opportunities associated with 'anytime, anywhere learning.' This opportunity brings another; to bring the kinds of research-supported conditions for academic learning and achievement, which professional educators want and need, into out-of-school agencies, homes and contexts. In other words, the research-supported knowledge base about academic learning and instruction can be shared with family and community leaders to assist them in their work with children and youth.

When the above-mentioned, a harmonious relationship (involving academic learning in homes, community agencies, and schools) is established, two important goals are achieved:

- Because students experience academic programs, activities and experiences in homes and community agencies, they come to school ready and able to learn; and
- Because schools implement research-supported programs and activities—and build on what students bring to school—educators and schools are ready for the learning and academic achievement of all students.

These two goals are opposite sides of the same coin; each defines success. In brief, when you and your colleagues attain these twin goals, you are well on your way to school improvement, and you're also making progress in closing the achievement gap.

As such, individuals working with youth in various contexts in the community (i.e., Boys & Girls Clubs, school-based child cares, faith-based organizations, homes, etc.) can and should utilize the aforementioned design principles and strategies for teaching and instruction within the programs they offer, thus enhancing students' academic learning experiences outside of the traditional school day.

In addition, individuals within communities can also maximize extended academic learning time by offering high quality enrichment activities in the out-of-school hours. These enrichment activities typically have three major qualities (Academy for Educational Development, 2004).

First, quality enrichment activities are well-integrated with the academic content that is presented in classrooms. These activities explore ways in which math, literacy, science, citizenship, etc., can be applied in fun, engaging settings. The application of the academic content truly becomes the core reason for doing the activity; as opposed to the fun or engagement. In this case, learning becomes part of the process of the activity. This doesn't mean that the activity serves as the reward or incentive for learning (i.e., students can go to the zoo if they complete their final project on animals). It means that learning happens within the activity itself (i.e., students learn about animals when they are at the zoo). Students learn that learning is fun.

Second, quality enrichment activities are built upon the development and nurturance of quality relationships. Youth participants develop strong positive relationships with caring adult leaders. The adults who implement these programs must be invested and committed to students' healthy development and success. Relationships and trust are keys to these investments. Quality enrichment activities also provide youth with opportunities to meet and hang out with peers who have positive attitudes and beliefs about school and life. Youth may develop relationships with older youth who may serve as mentors, program leaders or volunteers. They also might develop friendships at these programs that serve as important recruitment and retention mechanisms.

Finally, quality enrichment activities also provide youth with opportunities to make decisions and display leadership. As described later in the youth development chapter, enrichment activities build initiative. Essentially, youth take ownership of the activities and make real decisions about programming. Youth participants determine what happens in the activity, what the outcomes are and what action steps are taken to get from here to there. An example is noteworthy.

Daryl Siedentop, a leader in youth sport and physical education, developed the sport education model to guide physical educators in their planning and teaching. In this model, physical education content and teaching is integrally linked with academic content in classrooms. It also is grounded in meaningful experiences for youth.

Specifically, lessons center around a specific sport, say basketball. Students determine what types of roles and responsibilities are necessary for the successful implementation of a basketball league. The class organizes the basketball league, its drafting process, the end of the year tournament and all other organizational aspects within the activity. Students take on meaningful roles within the league as referees, news reporters and statisticians, coaches, tournament organizers, public relation specialists and concession stand operators. By giving youth meaningful roles, and allowing them to make decisions, students feel they have a say in the activity, take pride in their work and know they contributed to the final product in an important way. They also have the chance to apply important math, writing, science, decision making and social skills within this targeted activity.

Remember to examine the design principles and strategies for youth development which also may provide guidance here

There are three additional things to consider when linking academic learning with youth development.

#### *Incentives and rewards for attendance*

For students who are struggling during the school day to meet expectations, it is essential that programs directly reinforce their participation in additional academic activities. Especially for older students who are likely to have long histories of academic failure (or, many years of receiving the message they are not doing well enough or "don't measure up"), youth development components give those students an initial reason to attend because, in many instances, parents have difficulties enforcing attendance.

Token economies (i.e., students earn something that can be exchanged for something desirable, such as free time, small prizes or fun activities) and paid wages also have been shown to be effective in increasing student attendance and, in turn, learning. Incentives can be helpful in getting students to the program, but the learning environment must then be reinforcing, which is the main reason students will return and make a commitment to the program.

### *Blending academic learning and youth development strategies*

As highlighted in the program and services overview chapter, enjoyable, activity-oriented youth development strategies are primary recruitment and retention mechanisms. Without relationships with caring adults, opportunities to belong, meaningful applications of skills, social recreation, etc., youth will have very little incentive to show up and participate in any program after school. Within extended academic learning times, you'll want to strike a good balance between academic rigor and youth development if you want to get and keep youth engaged.

### *Creating connections and linkages*

The design and implementation of quality extended academic learning activities requires that schools, home and community-based organizations are working together and understand what the other is doing in relationship to student learning. This is particularly true for teachers, as they must communicate and connect strategically with these outside supports if they are to maximize the impact these stakeholders can have in relation to student learning. For example, teachers can communicate with parents about student academic learning needs, allowing parents to encourage and support additional practice in targeted areas identified as in need of improvement. Teachers also can refer targeted students in need of extra academic support to extended academic learning and youth development programs. The staff in these programs can in turn work with students in identified areas using resources and materials guided by the teachers' input. Student learning will be enhanced as the classroom's academic learning is incorporated and reinforced in these other settings.

## ***Addressing barriers in academic learning***

No one ever said promoting academic learning among all students was going to be easy. In fact, several barriers emerge as schools and communities wrap their arms around academic learning. The following section examines some key challenges and highlights specific strategies for minimizing the impact of these various barriers.

### **Barrier: Teaching and instruction and the diversity of student needs**

In essence, academic learning is the primary mission of schools. Ensuring that all students learn and succeed in school, however, is an enormous challenge, especially given the multiple needs students bring with them to school. Finding ways to address the diversity in student needs, experiences, backgrounds and perspectives is indeed the true test.

**Table 5.10: Teaching and instruction and the diversity of student needs barriers and minimizing strategies**

<b>Barrier: Teaching and instruction and the diversity of student needs</b>	<b>Minimizing strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students have different background knowledge</li> <li>• Students have different skill sets</li> <li>• Students have different past experiences and histories</li> <li>• Students have language barriers</li> <li>• Students have different learning styles</li> <li>• Students have physical or mental disabilities that prevent or deter learning</li> <li>• Students have various non-academic barriers that prevent or deter learning</li> <li>• Educators are challenged to individualize instruction to meet all students' needs/levels</li> <li>• Educators are ill-equipped to deal with non-academic barriers to learning</li> <li>• Classrooms are overcrowded and a majority of students are in need of teacher's attention</li> <li>• Consistency within district-wide curriculum and instruction causes challenges for decentralization and individualization</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize a variety of teaching methods (lecturing, visual aids, classroom discussions, activities, small groups, movies, hands on activities, use of multiple senses)</li> <li>• Anticipate the diversity by being prepared with various levels of homework or assignment sheets which cover same material/content</li> <li>• Provide modifications of assignments for those who require it</li> <li>• Effectively implement IEPs and 504 plans and the accommodations that go with them</li> <li>• Provide classroom volunteers (parents, community members, key stake holders)</li> <li>• Promote peer teaching/tutoring in the classroom</li> <li>• Maximize academic learning time</li> <li>• Design smaller ability groups</li> <li>• Empathize with your families and students; challenge yourself to explore stereotypes and cultural biases you make be harboring</li> <li>• Provide targeted interventions to certain students in the after-school hours</li> <li>• Provide resources and activities to tutors and after-school program staff to coordinate their activities with classroom materials</li> <li>• Coordinate with after-school program providers to assist in classroom and reinforce content in after-school hours</li> <li>• Provide small group work where educators can monitor groups in larger classroom</li> <li>• Coordinate team teaching (two educators combine classrooms that match ability groups; use multidisciplinary teams)</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>

**Barrier: Multitude of non-academic barriers**

Students also have diverse needs and non-academic barriers that deter their learning and achievement. Teachers, schools and communities will struggle with gaining control over these conditions for learning.

Remember to examine the health and social services chapter for more highlights related to addressing non-academic barriers.

**Table 5.11: Multitude of non-academic barriers  
barriers and minimizing strategies**

<b>Barrier: Multitude of non-academic barriers</b>	<b>Minimizing strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outcomes are influenced by variables other than academic learning</li> <li>• There are community conditions that influence student outcomes</li> <li>• There are family conditions that influence student outcomes</li> <li>• There are peer conditions that influence student outcomes</li> <li>• There are individual skills, competencies, and assets that influence student outcomes</li> <li>• Some students have a many co-occurring problems or conditions that compact and deter student learning</li> <li>• Educators and school personnel are not trained in addressing non-academic barriers</li> <li>• Educators, principals, and health and social service providers are not highly qualified in their respective professions</li> <li>• Educators, principals, and health and social service providers are not knowledgeable about strategies for addressing conditions to learning</li> <li>• There are turf issues present among educators, principals, health and social service providers, etc.</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate teachers and school staff on how to identify and assess early signs and symptoms of risk and problem behaviors</li> <li>• Utilize and brainstorm with school social worker/counselor for strategies to address non-academic barriers</li> <li>• Educate teachers and school staff on how to effectively and efficiently link students and families to supportive service staff and other health and social service providers</li> <li>• Create referral systems and supports for educators</li> <li>• Develop a continuum of care that starts in the school and feeds to resources in the community</li> <li>• Create effective communication channels between supportive service staff/community service providers and teachers and classrooms</li> <li>• Teachers develop relationships with supportive service staff and community service providers professionals to work through barriers</li> <li>• Become familiar with out of school program services offered and make links and referrals when appropriate</li> <li>• Pair up with mental health providers to support students' needs</li> <li>• Work with families to ensure students' needs are met; partner with parents/families to determine possible solutions and resources needed</li> <li>• Break down turf issues by developing relationships and trust among various professionals</li> <li>• Develop case management and student assistance teams that address various needs and issues</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>

### **Barrier: Resources and time**

Another key barrier involves limitations in resources and time. Academic learning is maximized when there are resources, both human and financial, that are committed to the process. More resources can also be used to ensure that time spent in academic learning time - whether it is in schools, the community or in the home - is maximized.

**Table 5.12: Resources and time barriers and minimizing strategies**

<b>Barrier: Resources and time</b>	<b>Minimizing strategies</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are limited quality materials, books and resources for learning</li> <li>• There is a lack of space, desks, rooms, etc.</li> <li>• Educators do not have time in their days for planning and designing individualized interventions</li> <li>• Targeted interventions are based on eligibility and not all students qualify for the services that are offered (i.e., earmarked funds can only be spent on certain “types” of students)</li> <li>• Lack of time to get through all of lessons necessary to fulfill state standards within school day/year</li> <li>• Time in classrooms is not maximized</li> <li>• Educators struggle with maximizing time on task due to other challenges in the classroom (behavioral management, diversity in student needs, etc.)</li> <li>• Teachers and schools have trouble gaining control over students “time,” especially time in the out-of-school hours</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand your definition of funding source and get creative</li> <li>• Utilize community stakeholders who can donate resources and receive positive PR and tax deductions for help</li> <li>• Restructure the funding allocated to support school improvement plan</li> <li>• Educators receive training, professional development, and on-going support in effective teaching and instruction, as well as in classroom management</li> <li>• Provide classroom volunteers (parents, community members, key stake holders)</li> <li>• Promote donations from local business sector</li> <li>• Have community drives (community supports the school through various fund raising projects)</li> <li>• Promote parent volunteers to teach cultural traditional things (art, music, beadwork, history, etc.) along with certified teacher</li> <li>• Organize community members/ businesses to come in and teach electives (bank representative teach finance, etc.) with certified teacher</li> <li>• Coordinate with after-school staff and educators to have them continue and reinforce lessons learned in class</li> <li>• Promote quality and engaging assignments and homework</li> <li>• Utilize tutoring (peer, classroom volunteers, teacher, after-school staff, etc.)</li> <li>• Utilize effective classroom management strategies</li> <li>• Provide creative lessons that relate to real life experiences and engage learners (will keep kids interested)</li> <li>• Minimize transition time between activities</li> <li>• Actively engage students in exciting activities—educators teach with a passion and enthusiasm for teaching</li> <li>• Structure activities and transitions tightly and have ‘equipment’ necessary to go through lesson so students don’t have down time</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>

**Barrier: Classroom management**

One way to maximize time, as well as to ensure that educators have more time to spend on academic learning, is through addressing classroom management and behavior problems.

**Table 5.13: Classroom management barriers and minimizing strategies**

Barrier: Classroom management	Minimizing strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students display distracting behaviors which take away from instructional time</li> <li>• Time on task not maximized due to student problem behaviors</li> <li>• Educators do not use proactive techniques and strategies that deter the onset of problem behaviors</li> <li>• Educators are not trained in classroom management</li> <li>• Rules and policies are not well known</li> <li>• Rules and policies are not consistently enforced</li> <li>• Youth are bored or uninterested in classroom work and choose to provide their own entertainment</li> <li>• Youth have excessive 'down' time where activities are not structured</li> <li>• Youth do not have clear expectations guiding their behaviors</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anticipate problems before they arise</li> <li>• Ensure that rules in classroom coincide with and enforce school wide policies</li> <li>• Ensure that rules are posted, well known and consistently enforced</li> <li>• Have students decide classroom rules and consequences for behaviors</li> <li>• Make sure that natural consequences are given for inappropriate behaviors (the consequence matches the behavior)</li> <li>• Provide a demonstration of the model behavior and have peers also reinforce desired behavior</li> <li>• Promote and reinforce appropriate behaviors</li> <li>• Communicate with parents and others when students are doing well</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of external factors that impact students behaviors and the types of behaviors these may solicit</li> <li>• Know how to appropriately work with students who display certain types of problem behaviors</li> <li>• Promote relationships between teacher and students prior to punishment if possible</li> <li>• Put strategies in place to maximize academic learning time (see above)</li> <li>• Others...</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The school improvement strategies vital to the Ohio Community Collaboration Model are centrally designed around promoting academic learning in classrooms, in schools, in families and in the community.

Priorities for school improvement planning, including curriculum alignment, quality instruction, standards-based accountabilities, school climate, continuous improvement efforts, etc., are central to ensuring academic learning and student achievement. Here we have highlighted the top priorities for walled-in school improvement, reasserting their significance and value for ensuring overall school success. These research supported design principles and strategies are essential to effective quality instruction, extended academic learning programs, and school-wide reform efforts in general.

We've also taken these same improvement priorities and highlighted how these same strategies can be used for enhancing academic learning in homes and in community agencies. This allows schools to expand their reach by galvanizing additional resources in support of academic learning, as well as in relation to ensuring students have the right conditions for learning in their homes and communities.

In the end, you can appreciate the Ohio Community Collaboration Model for School Improvement because it is ultimately grounded in the strengths and contributions associated with the effective school reform efforts. It then compensates for the limitations of traditional school improvement strategies by expanding the focus by fostering the necessary conditions for learning that are vital for students' academic learning and achievement.

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