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Educators Face The Problem On How To Improve Education For Latch Key Kids

Yes, students in schools in the United States perform above average compared to other countries (Strauss 2013). The biggest problem facing education today for schools that teach kindergarten to twelfth grade is how best to help students after the final bell rings at the close of the school day. It is a problem educators face today because it is now known that it is not only the current school day that helps student to learn, but it is those crucial hours after school that prove to be an important area of whether or not a student succeeds. Now that many students once school is finished for the day leave the school premises and go home without parental supervision, offering students supplemental resources is paramount to their success. With the rise of many students going to school without English as their primary language, it is even more important that students receive the enrichment they need in those crucial hours after school, especially in those hours between two and six o'clock. In this paper, it will be argued that schools ought to help latch key kids to continue learning even when school is not in session.

It is true that with children who are not privileged to belong to wealthy families, they are quickly being outpaced in educational advancement. While school provides students opportunities to learn, especially when the school year begins, many students struggle. Now that the Summer is over, how many students return to school having learned something new? How many students have forgotten core essentials of what they learned? How often is learning occurring holistically during the course of a child's entire socio-

psychological development? Why is this the case? The reason is that the education system has failed them to provide structure to learn outside of traditional school time. Public school systems should provide students with areas of enrichment. While public libraries and non-profit organizations often have program to help raise learning outcomes for students, public schools should construct after school program on their campuses to help students with homework help, to provide quiet places to study after school, or even before school. It should not be taken for granted that students are receiving these enrichment activities after school. While schools provide excellent opportunities to learn, the eroding of learning happens without parent supervision. With so many children with parents in the workforce, it is becoming incumbent that state, county, and municipal education authorities raise taxes to help supplement student learning for latch key kids (De Kanter 2001). From these results, the public in a well-developed country like the United States is willing to pay more to help schools achieve more, even if this means hiring retired teachers to provide homework help, or creating public regional centers of enrichment to foster a love of learning during all times and development of children to adolescents.

What is happening to latch key kids? Latchkey kids are pupils who have no adequate supervision after school, or if they do it is with persons who are not competent to provide for their care. Studies from more than two decades ago have warned that students who go unsupervised during the critical hours before and after school are more at risk to engage in alcohol or drug consumption (Richardson 556). Family structure is important (Turner 2013). While it is not the responsibility of the school to replace the family, the

immediate reality is that schools can do more to ensure lower dropout rates, and to increase learning. They are more likely to get involved with older adolescents who may have a negative influence, or to just simply not do their homework, or lose out on critical learning. The reality is that this contributes to a deficit in society since a large number of unsupervised children who are also struggling in school are at risk to drop out of school. Not having a high school diploma puts a huge deficit on society since not having a high school diploma makes it harder to secure good paying jobs. 6, 000 hours may not seem like much time to help improve student learning, and it might be assumed that are already many opportunities for children. So why should schools worry about what happens after school? Isn't it enough to provide school learning during schooltime? However, psychologists and educators, and especially educators are realizing the holistic need for giving students the chance to learn during all critical times of the day. Students who are read to, have time to read, and engage in enrichment activities that other students do not have are getting an extra 6, 000 hours to boost their learning (Neufeld 2013). It is a huge amount of time. It is also creating an opportunity gap. The reality is that schools are educating students from a variety of income levels, English language proficiency and other challenges. To think that just giving students the school day is not enough. While families who are lucky to pay for private tutors, or who have the luxury to help and understand their children's homework, these extra resources do not matter. However, while the elite few may be benefitting, and the middle class may be benefitting, those students from low income, or at risk families are facing incredible deficits in learning.

Since so many students have parents that work, and even if they are being supervised it is not always the case that they are being given help in homework, or given time to read. In fact, studies show that kids who are at risk in the after school hours are liable to lose up to 6, 000 hours of learning. While more privileged students go to karate, or have professionals who read to them, children from less advantaged homes lose out on these resources. Alternatively, even families that have resources may not realize that their children ought to be read to regularly. Educators are learning that to improve overall learning outcomes for students it is becoming necessary to reach students at all areas of their learning development.

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