

RURAL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Best Practices for Providing Technical Assistance

Directions: *Consider, discuss and find solutions for what this after school program needs to know and needs to do.*



SCENARIO 1:

Stella is the site coordinator for her rural after school program which has 16 to 18 elementary youth who attend regularly. (The K-6 program is funded for 22 students; school population is 29 with bus transportation and parent pick-up.) She is the only adult on campus after 4 p.m. Her school principal seems to take the situation lightly, insisting that their rural area is safe and refuses to add additional staff, especially since the after school funding is so minimal and they are within the 20:1 ratio. Stella calls the after school consultant for assistance.

SCENARIO 2:

The small rural school is struggling to keep their only three busses running. During the past three months, the late bus that was provided for the after school program has broken down five times and a decision has been made to discontinue the use of a late bus. Therefore, more children are leaving as soon as classes are dismissed since many of their parents don't have a reliable car, thus, impacting the after school's attendance. The school does not have funding to acquire a new bus or a used one. The after school program director calls for assistance.

SCENARIO 3:

Bruce who moved from the bay area now works in a rural after school program. He is alarmed when the Site Coordinator calls a parent who is on a stand-by list in the case of a mountain lion sighting within close proximity of the school. The parent shows up with a rifle and by this time the children have been ushered safely indoors. He is seeking some guidance as to how to handle this situation.

SCENARIO 4:

As is common in many rural areas, a winter storm warning can occur at any time. The school is in session but by 2 p.m. a storm moves in with a vengeance. The after school program begins at 2:35 p.m. and is fully operational but shortly after 3 p.m. the lights go out. After 30 minutes, it's determined that the program needs to shut down. This has been a particularly bad winter, lasting much longer than a normal season. The program has shut down four times already this year and each time the attendance is greatly impacted. Parents would prefer if the weather is starting to get bad earlier in the day, that they should not have the program rather than take a chance on driving to and from the school when the weather is really bad. The staff doesn't want to do that for fear of the impact on attendance. What assistance can be offered?

SCENARIO 5:

The small rural community has been hit hard by the economic crisis in CA. The community has one gas station, two bars, a small church, a forestry/fire department 15 miles away with the nearest town 55 miles away. However, the one beacon of hope lies within the walls of their small rural school and especially the after school program. The school is the "hub" of the community. The site coordinator and staff are passionate about creating opportunities for their students and families. Each staff member draws upon the resources within themselves as well as within the community. They know that the snack may be the only food many of these children will eat each night. The program has done well despite the odds. Next year will look differently as the entire staff will turnover. They were able to build back a strong program when this situation happened three years ago. Now it appears there will be another setback. Why do you think it will be a hardship for the program and what assistance can you offer?