What's New in Research
April 2010

The Report: "AfterZones: Creating a Citywide System to Support and Sustain High-Quality After-School Programs"

Where It's From: Public/Private Ventures

The Findings: The AfterZone model in Providence, Rhode Island has created neighborhood campuses of after-school programs. With each "campus" anchored by a middle school, students from several middle schools have access to programming at participating schools and other community-based sites.

Some Specifics:

- Over 50% of students at participating middle schools take part in the AfterZone program
- Funding from the Wallace Foundation and strong support from the city's mayor have been critical; other funding includes 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- A complex transportation system, to get students to and from programming outside of their schools and back home again, is one of the biggest costs and challenges to the AfterZone system
- Strong relationships between after-school activity providers, AfterZone coordinators, and school staff are needed

The Full Report Is Available At:

http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication.asp?section_id=23&search_id=&publication_id=318

The Report: "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics"

Where It's From: American Association of University Women

The Findings: This report pulls together findings from a variety of research projects, as a way to better understand why a gender gap still exists in the STEM fields. The report looked at factors such as education, high school preparation, social assumptions, cultural barriers, workplace environment, and biological differences as a way of better understanding this important issue.

Some Specifics:

- More girls than ever before are performing well in STEM courses at a young age
- Girls are performing just as well as boys on STEM-subject tests in high schools; their grades even tend to be slightly higher
- College is when gender disparities by subject really begin
- Implicit biases still exist, and associations between "female" and "humanities," and "male" and "science" still need to be addressed and overcome
- Social and cultural changes – for example, to university STEM departments and STEM workplaces – are needed to close the gender gap

The Full Report Is Available At: http://www.aauw.org/learn/research/whysofew.cfm