



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Implementation Findings

This executive summary presents findings from an early implementation survey of **ten out-of-school time (OST) programs across Texas** using **Learning Beyond the Bell** during the **2025–2026 school year**. Although many participating sites had been using the curriculum for only a few weeks, directors consistently reported improvements in student engagement, staff efficiency, and overall program quality.

90%

Higher Student
Engagement

89%

Reduced Staff
Workload

8.2 / 10

Average
Satisfaction

10

Texas
Program

Across the ten participating programs, **90% reported higher student engagement, nearly 90% reported reduced staff planning time, nearly 90% reported increased staff confidence**, and respondents gave Learning Beyond the Bell an average **satisfaction rating of 8.2 out of 10**. One of the most significant findings was the speed at which these positive outcomes emerged, with many programs reporting measurable improvements within the first month of implementation. Participating organizations represented a diverse cross-section of Texas afterschool and summer programs, including private child care centers, faith-based organizations, and school-based sites serving primarily elementary-aged students. Despite differences in location, program size, and length of implementation, directors described remarkably consistent experiences with the curriculum.



Program leaders overwhelmingly reported that **students were more engaged, enthusiastic, and focused during activities than before implementing Learning Beyond the Bell**. Many also observed improvements in student behavior, including fewer disruptions, greater cooperation among peers, and increased excitement about participating in program activities. Directors attributed these changes to the curriculum's engaging, hands-on learning experiences that provide purposeful structure while encouraging creativity, collaboration, and active participation.

Learning Beyond the Bell also demonstrated **meaningful operational benefits for program staff**. Most respondents reported spending substantially less time planning lessons and preparing materials, allowing educators to focus more of their time and energy on interacting with students. Directors consistently described moving away from searching multiple online resources or creating activities from scratch in favor of ready-to-use lessons supported by clear instructions and organized supply lists. As planning demands decreased, staff confidence increased, with educators reporting greater comfort leading activities and greater enthusiasm for instruction. Many directors also noted improvements in staff morale, citing reduced stress, increased preparedness, and a stronger sense of support throughout the program day.



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Although family engagement naturally develops over time, encouraging indicators are already emerging. Several programs reported that children were talking about Learning Beyond the Bell activities at home and enthusiastically sharing what they had learned or created during the day. Directors also described positive feedback from families who appreciated the engaging, hands-on nature of the curriculum. Other respondents indicated they expect family engagement to continue growing as implementation progresses.

When asked to identify the curriculum's greatest strengths, directors consistently highlighted three themes: **dramatically reduced lesson planning time, engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students**, and **strong instructional support for educators regardless of their curriculum development experience**. Rather than replacing teacher creativity, respondents described the curriculum as providing a dependable framework that allows staff to devote more attention to student learning and relationship-building.

Feedback also identified several opportunities for continued refinement. Suggestions included expanding age-differentiated activities for older elementary students, adding additional teacher background information to support newer staff, increasing project-based learning opportunities, and resolving portal access issues experienced by one participating program. Importantly, these recommendations focused on enhancing implementation rather than concerns about the overall quality or effectiveness of the curriculum.

While additional survey waves will continue to measure long-term outcomes, these early findings demonstrate that Learning Beyond the Bell is already helping programs strengthen student engagement, reduce staff workload, and enhance the overall quality of out-of-school time programming. The consistency of these results across diverse program settings suggests the curriculum has strong potential to support successful implementation at scale. As organizations continue seeking evidence-based approaches that improve both student experiences and staff effectiveness, Learning Beyond the Bell offers a comprehensive curriculum that supports high-quality programming from the earliest stages of implementation.

Related Resource:

Learning Beyond the Bell. (2026). Program impact report: Early implementation wave (2025-2026): Findings from ten Texas afterschool and summer programs [Internal report].