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STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND
EMOTIONAL HEALTH

GREATER ROCHESTER AFTER SCHOOL ALLIANCE (GRASA) AFTER-SCHOOL ASSESSMENT 2008-09 FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

MOLLY SAWEIKIS, B.S.
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OCTOBER 2009

GRASA AFTER-SCHOOL ASSESSMENT 2008-2009 Fourth Annual Report

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This report would not be possible without the contributions of many partners including after-school programs, foundations and other organizations – each consisting of individuals who gave their time, ideas, hard work, energy, resources, and support to this initiative, the GRASA After-School Assessment.

Financial support was provided by Greater Rochester Health Foundation and Rochester Area Community Foundation. Other contributing partners include ArtPeace, Inc.; Boys and Girls Club of Greater Rochester, Inc.; Cameron Community Ministries; Charles Settlement House; Children's Institute, Inc.; City of Rochester Bureau of Parks, Recreation and Human Services; The Community Place of Greater Rochester, Inc.; Generations Child and Elder Care; Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA); Ibero-American Action League, Inc. School-Age Program; Quad A for Kids; Railroad Junction School-Age Program and Summer Day Camp; Rochester Childfirst Network (RCN); Rush-Henrietta School District's School-Age Child Care Programs; Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC); Wilson Commencement Park Early Learning Center; and YMCA of Greater Rochester.

We thank the after-school program staff and administrators in Monroe County who work closely, on a daily basis, with thousands of children when they are not in school. Their personal attention to the children's health, safety, development, and enjoyment is a major contribution to the overall well-being of our community. We appreciate GRASA members who provided feedback and helpful insights to inform our processes and overall support of our work in the youth program community.

This project could not be a success without the skillful Master Observers who, over four years, achieved a highly respectable level of inter-rater reliability.

We are excited about the GRASA Assessment and its impact on youth through improving the quality of after-school programs. With a shared vision, we will continue to work towards a unified standard of quality for after-school programs that will enrich the experiences of youth, parents, and staff.

Introduction

The GRASA Assessment began in Rochester, New York in 2005 as part of a community-wide initiative to learn about the quality of after-school programs in Monroe County. This partnership is supported by the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA), including program staff members, administrators, parents, policymakers, and funders. The three-fold mission of GRASA is to improve the quality of after-school programming, to increase children's access to quality programs, and to understand the funding streams that are available to improve quality and access.

The GRASA Assessment provides an integrated process for ensuring that after-school programs have the information they need for making informed decisions to improve practice and outcomes. It provides useful data analysis on the status of after-school program quality. Confidentiality of all participants is maintained in all areas and is of the utmost importance to our partnership.

Program Director Survey

This year we introduced an additional component to the after-school program assessment – a director survey. Twenty-three (23) respondents participated in a survey that included questions from the *Self-Assessment Tool for After-School Providers* (Healthy Kids, Healthy New York After-School Initiative, 2007). The questions focused on program policy and practice within three areas: 1) nutrition, 2) physical activity and 3) screen time. One survey per location/facility within which the agencies agency provides after-school programs was requested. The survey took less than 15 minutes for respondents to complete.

Program Observations

Fifty-four (54) after-school program observations took place at 27 sites this year. Observations took place for the first time in programs serving youth in two age groups: grades four through six and grades seven through nine. The content of programs observed ranged from sports programs to tutoring, leadership development to theater, representing the broad spectrum of positive youth development opportunities in Monroe County.

- ❖ ArtPeace, Inc.
- ❖ The Boys and Girls Club of Rochester, Inc.
- ❖ Cameron Community Ministries
- ❖ Charles Settlement House
- ❖ City of Rochester Department of Recreation and Youth Services
- ❖ The Community Place of Greater Rochester, Inc.
- ❖ Generations Child and Elder Care
- ❖ Ibero-American Action League, Inc. School-Age Program
- ❖ Quad A for Kids
- ❖ Railroad Junction School-Age Program and Summer Day Camp
- ❖ Rochester Childfirst Network (RCN)
- ❖ Rush-Henrietta School District's School-Age Child Care Program
- ❖ Society for the Protection and Care of Children (SPCC)
- ❖ Wilson Commencement Park Early Learning Center
- ❖ YMCA of Greater Rochester

Description of the GRASA After-School Assessment

Director Survey – Nutrition, Physical Activity and Screen Time

In response to current nationwide and local emphasis on nutrition and physical activity in relation to overweight and obesity prevention, this year the GRASA After-School Assessment included a survey of participating after-school programs. The intent was to learn more about existing policies and practices in relation to the nutritional quality of food offerings and aspects of physical activities within programs.

Using Survey Monkey, an online survey application, program directors responded to 26 questions within three categories: 1) nutrition, 2) physical activity, and 3) screen time. Questions were phrased positively and represented standards of good practice in each area. Respondents indicated “always,” “sometimes,” or “never” to each. Program directors also indicated whether there was a written policy regarding each practice using “yes” and “no” responses. Twenty-three out of 27 (85%) program directors provided responses to the survey. Some recipients did not respond to certain items.

Summary of Results

Nutrition Practice

Table 1 summarizes results for the nutrition practices section of the survey.

	Always		Sometimes		Never	
Does your program participate in one of the after-school food reimbursement programs (CACFP or NSLP)?	16	70%	1	4%	6	26%
Is water always available?	23	100%	0	0%	0	0%
When milk is offered, are low-fat or fat-free milk the only options?	19	83%	4	17%	0	0%
Are vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen, or canned) offered without added sugar, salt, or fat?	20	87%	3	13%	0	0%
If juice is offered, is it only 100% fruit or vegetable juice and offered no more than two times per week?	13	57%	10	43%	0	0%
Do all grain products that are served have a whole grain listed as the first ingredient?	5	22%	16	70%	2	9%
Is pre-packaged food served in single-serving quantities according to the label?	16	70%	5	22%	2	9%
Have parents been informed of the Healthy Kids, Healthy New York After-School Nutrition Guidelines?	6	26%	9	39%	8	35%
Does food offered for special occasions meet the guidelines?	6	26%	16	70%	1	4%
Do the vending machine choices meet nutritional guidelines?	1	8%	6	46%	6	46%
Do after-school staff eat and drink the same items as the children when children are present?	12	52%	11	48%	0	0%

Items with the highest number of positive results, as indicated by “always” from survey respondents, included: participation in food reimbursement programs (70%), vegetables/fruit quality (no added sugar, salt or fat) (87%), availability of water (100%), and appropriate serving sizes (70%). Items suggesting areas for improvement included: 70% indicated that “sometimes” grain products served have whole grain listed as the first ingredient, 43% indicated that “sometimes,” if juice is offered, it is only 100% fruit/vegetable juice and offered two times per week maximum and, for those respondents answering questions about vending machines, 92% indicated either “sometimes” or “never” about whether choices in vending machines meet nutritional guidelines.

Nutrition Policy

Table 2 shows results from the nutrition policy portion of the survey.

Table 2. Summary of responses to the Nutrition Policy items from Director Survey				
	Yes		No	
Does your program participate in one of the after-school food reimbursement programs (CACFP or NSLP)?	15	68%	7	32%
Is water always available?	11	48%	12	52%
When milk is offered, are low-fat or fat-free milk the only options?	12	55%	10	45%
Are vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen, or canned) offered without added sugar, salt, or fat?	11	48%	12	52%
If juice is offered, is it only 100% fruit or vegetable juice and offered no more than two times per week?	9	41%	13	59%
Do all grain products that are served have a whole grain listed as the first ingredient?	2	9%	20	91%
Is pre-packaged food served in single-serving quantities according to the label?	4	18%	18	82%
Have parents been informed of the Healthy Kids, Healthy New York After-School Nutrition Guidelines?	4	17%	19	83%
Does food offered for special occasions meet the guidelines?	5	24%	16	76%
Do the vending machine choices meet nutritional guidelines?	1	8%	12	92%
Do after-school staff eat and drink the same items as the children when children are present?	10	45%	12	55%

Despite the existence of many favorable results with nutrition program practice, responses indicated that for all but one item in this category (participation in food reimbursement programs), 45% or more of the respondents indicated that there is no written policy in place for these program practices.

Physical Activity Practice

Table 3 presents results from the physical activity section of the director survey.

Table 3. Summary of responses to the Physical Activity Practice items from Director Survey						
	Always		Sometimes		Never	
Do you have regularly scheduled PA time - at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA every week?	20	87%	3	13%	0	0%
Is an activity break provided after no more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity?	12	52%	10	43%	1	4%
Do children have an opportunity to play outside most days of the week?	16	70%	7	30%	0	0%
Are physical activity opportunities age-appropriate?	21	91%	2	9%	0	0%
Does staff encourage non-competitive play and physical activity opportunities for children of all abilities?	18	78%	5	22%	0	0%
Does staff receive training in providing age-, developmentally- and ability-appropriate physical activities, including modifying or providing alternative activities for children with disabilities?	14	61%	9	39%	0	0%

Ninety-one percent of respondents indicate that physical activities are “always” age-appropriate and 87% indicate that there is always regularly scheduled physical activity at least 30 minutes once a week. In comparison, 70% indicated that children “always” have opportunity to play outside most days of the week. Approximately half of the respondents (44%) indicated that only “sometimes” is there an activity break after no more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity. Thirty-nine percent indicated that only “sometimes” staff receive training in developmentally appropriate physical activities for youth.

Physical Activity Policy

Table 4 shows results from the physical activity policy items of the director survey.

Table 4. Summary of responses to the Physical Activity Policy items from Director Survey				
	Yes		No	
Do you have regularly scheduled PA time - at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous PA every week?	13	59%	9	41%
Is an activity break provided after no more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity?	11	50%	11	50%
Do children have an opportunity to play outside most days of the week?	10	45%	12	55%
Are physical activity opportunities age-appropriate?	19	86%	3	14%
Does staff encourage non-competitive play and physical activity opportunities for children of all abilities?	11	48%	12	52%
Does staff receive training in providing age-, developmentally- and ability-appropriate physical activities, including modifying or providing alternative activities for children with disabilities?	11	52%	10	48%

Eighty-six percent of the responding program directors indicated that there was a written policy regarding age-appropriate physical activity, and 59% reported that it was agency policy to have at least half an hour of regularly scheduled physical activity each week.

Screen Time Practice

Screen time practices are summarized in Table 5.

	Always		Sometimes		Never	
Is there a policy limiting TV and/or recreational screen time?	9	53%	6	35%	2	12%
Is television and recreational screen time limited to less than 2.5 hours per week (5 day week)?	12	63%	5	26%	2	11%
Are the television, movie, and software ratings systems used in choosing age-appropriate selections?	16	89%	1	6%	1	6%
Are all selections educational in nature?	1	6%	16	89%	1	6%
Are all programs non-violent?	15	83%	2	11%	1	6%
Is snacking prohibited while children are watching TV or movies?	2	11%	12	67%	4	22%
Is snacking prohibited while children use video games or the computer?	9	47%	6	32%	4	21%
If children are watching someone else use a computer or video game, is that time included in their total viewing time?	5	28%	8	44%	5	28%
Are alternatives to screen time provided for children who do not want to participate?	16	80%	1	5%	3	15%

Sixty-three percent (63%) indicated that television and recreational screen time is always limited to 2.5 hours per week, 89% indicated that ratings systems are always used to choose age-appropriate selections and 83% indicated that selections are always non-violent. Opportunities for improvement in practice are evident from the result of 67% of respondents indicating that snacking is only prohibited some of the time during TV/movie viewing, with another 22% never prohibiting the practice. Only 6% indicated that all selections are always educational in nature.

Screen Time Policy

Summarized responses to the screen time policy questions are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Summary of responses to the Screen Time Policy items from Director Survey

	Yes		No	
Is there a policy limiting TV and/or recreational screen time?	11	69%	5	31%
Is television and recreational screen time limited to less than 2.5 hours per week (5 day week)?	7	41%	10	59%
Are the television, movie, and software ratings systems used in choosing age-appropriate selections?	11	61%	7	39%
Are all selections educational in nature?	4	25%	12	75%
Are all programs non-violent?	9	56%	7	44%
Is snacking prohibited while children are watching TV or movies?	1	6%	15	94%
Is snacking prohibited while children use video games or the computer?	5	29%	12	71%
If children are watching someone else use a computer or video game, is that time included in their total viewing time?	3	19%	13	81%
Are alternatives to screen time provided for children who do not want to participate?	5	26%	14	74%

As seen in the physical activity and nutrition categories, there is a lack of written policies for several items in the screen time category. For specific items in this category, 31% to 93% of respondents indicated that there are no written policies.

Program Observations

Program observations occurred in the months of February through May. Each program offering was observed one time using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA). The observations take approximately two hours followed by a brief interview with the program staff in order to score indicators that were not observed. Scoring of the measure is completed off-site and requires approximately one additional hour. The Master Observers submit the observation score sheets to Children's Institute within two business days. Within five days, the score sheet is reviewed for accuracy and processed. A report is generated and returned to the program staff members that were observed, along with a photocopy of the score sheet. Staff members are able to immediately access observation feedback and use the information to affirm good practice and to identify areas for improvement and goal setting.

Program Observation Process

- ❖ Master Observer contacts the program staff member to schedule the observation date
- ❖ Program observation occurs (2 hours)
- ❖ Two observers may be present to achieve inter-rater reliability
- ❖ Observer(s) may need to conduct an interview (10-15 minutes) with program staff member(s) immediately after the observation to obtain information not evident during observation
- ❖ Observer(s) completes the score sheet and submits it to Children's Institute for processing
- ❖ Project coordinator reviews the score sheet for accuracy, follows up with observer if necessary
- ❖ Score sheet is checked again for accuracy by a data clerk, the information is entered into the database; a summary report is produced
- ❖ Photocopy of original score sheet and summary report are mailed directly to program staff member(s)
- ❖ Program staff member reviews information and shares with supervisor (optional)
- ❖ If program staff member disagrees with any item(s) in the report and wants to formally address this, he or she may initiate a collaborative review process (outlined below).

Collaborative Review Process

As part of the classroom observation process using the Youth PQA, Children's Institute provides a review process so that if any program staff member believes that the report does not accurately represent the program, there is a formal mechanism to address this. In the collaborative review, program staff members are welcome and encouraged to raise questions they have about the score of any of the quality indicators.

This year we received no formal collaborative review requests.

1. If a program staff member disagrees with the scoring of any item(s) and wishes to formally address this, he or she contacts the project coordinator to obtain a Collaborative Review Request Form. In this form the staff member outlines the details of the item(s) in question with additional supporting information. This must be submitted within 15 days of receipt of the original score sheet.
2. Upon receipt of the Collaborative Review Request, the project coordinator reviews the information provided by the staff member, consults the independent observer who completed the observation, and conducts a detailed re-examination of each quality indicator score. After consideration of these references, a determination is made whether any items may be scored differently.
3. In a detailed letter to the program staff member, the project coordinator formally addresses each questioned indicator and whether the indicator score has been changed. A revised copy of the score sheet is returned with any applicable adjusted scores as well as a new summary report.

4. If the scores are revised, they are entered into the database.
5. If the staff member remains dissatisfied with the results of the process thus far, the project coordinator will make arrangements for a second independent observer to conduct a complete observation and submit a formal report.

Partner Development

Introductory Youth PQA Training

All program and administrative staff members are invited to attend an Introductory Training session in which they are introduced to the Youth PQA. This session provides history and background of GRASA, the GRASA Assessment project and an in-depth overview of the scale. Participants learn observation and scoring techniques, discuss the benefits of using the scale in program assessment and quality improvement processes, and review the observation process/logistics overall. Program providers are encouraged to complete a self-assessment on their program as part of their familiarization with the scale.

In addition to group training sessions, individualized on-site training overviews were provided to those staff members unable to attend sessions at Children's Institute.

Master Observer Training

Master observers are selected on the basis of their experience in youth programming, program observation, and interest to participate. The training includes a fifteen-hour program in the first year of participation. Knowledge of the measure, refinement of observation skills, inter-rater reliability standards, logistics of the observation process, observation guidelines, and protocol are studied in depth. This year, a series of interview questions were developed and provided to master observers in order to more consistently acquire information and score indicators not evident during the program observation. Observers were briefed on the appropriate use of these questions, along with pre-existing questions provided in the Youth PQA manual.

Master observers are trained to attain and maintain a high level of inter-rater reliability ($a/a+d > .85$). They do not conduct independent observations without achieving 85%. For observers beginning a second year of training and in each subsequent year, an additional training of four to five hours is required.

This year, four new master observers participated in the fifteen-hour training program. Six master observers returned from year three for debriefing and retraining.

Quality of After-School Programs

Youth Program Quality Assessment (Youth PQA)

The Youth PQA was developed by HighScope Educational Research Foundation (2005). The tool is a landmark in the emerging field of youth program quality assessment, both in validity and reliability. The measure is scored through program observations and focuses on the experiences of youth, using rubrics for scoring. Each of the four subscales contains three to six items for a total of 18 items. Each item contains two to six indicator rows for a total of 60 indicator rows. Each indicator row is scored 1, 3, or 5, with 1 representing low quality and 5 representing high quality. The indicator row scores are averaged to determine the item's score. The item scores are then averaged to find the subscale score. Independent, well-trained master observers rated the quality of GRASA programs measuring four subscales, with the following items:

I. Safe Environment

- A. Psychological and emotional safety is promoted.
- B. The physical environment is safe and free of health hazards.
- C. Appropriate emergency procedures and supplies are present.
- D. Program space and furniture accommodate the activities offered.
- E. Healthy food and drinks are provided.

II. Supportive Environment

- F. Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- G. Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth.
- H. Activities support active engagement.
- I. Staff support youth in building new skills.
- J. Staff support youth with encouragement.
- K. Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict.

III. Interaction

- L. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging.
- M. Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups.
- N. Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors.
- O. Youth have opportunities to partner with adults.

IV. Engagement

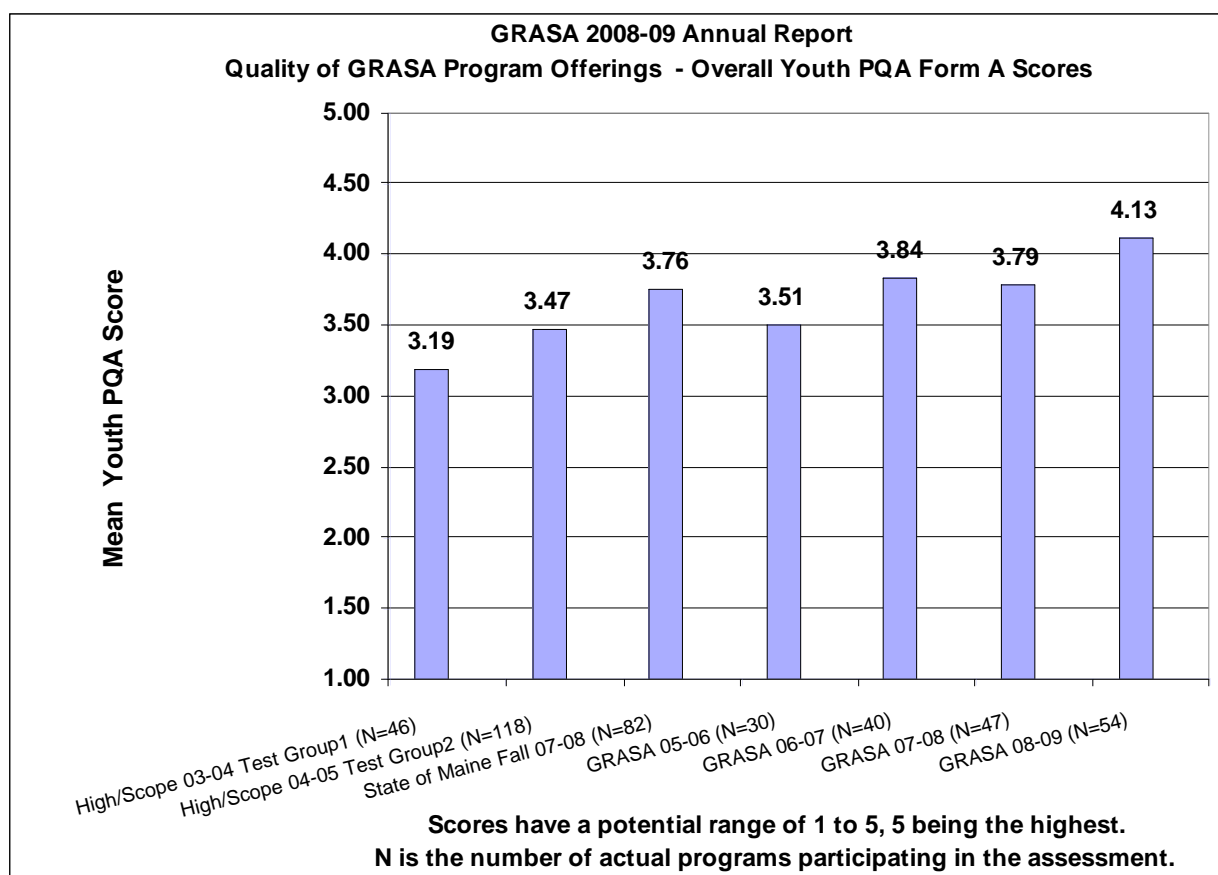
- P. Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans.
- Q. Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests.
- R. Youth have opportunities to reflect.

Overall Quality of GRASA Program Offerings Year Four

The overall quality of 54 GRASA program offerings in grades four through nine was 4.13 in 2008-09. The overall quality of 31 GRASA programs grades four to six was 4.03 and the overall quality of 23 programs for grades seven to nine was 4.26. For 2007-08, the mean score for 47 programs in grades four to six was 3.79. No programs for grades seven to nine were evaluated in previous years. HighScope Educational Research Foundation (the authors of Youth PQA) performed a Youth PQA validation study during 2003-05. They reported results on two waves of data from two years. For comparison purposes, the resulting mean scores using the Youth PQA Form A are shown for both GRASA and HighScope's findings in Figure 1 below. Also included in Figure 1 are recently reported Youth PQA results in the state of Maine.

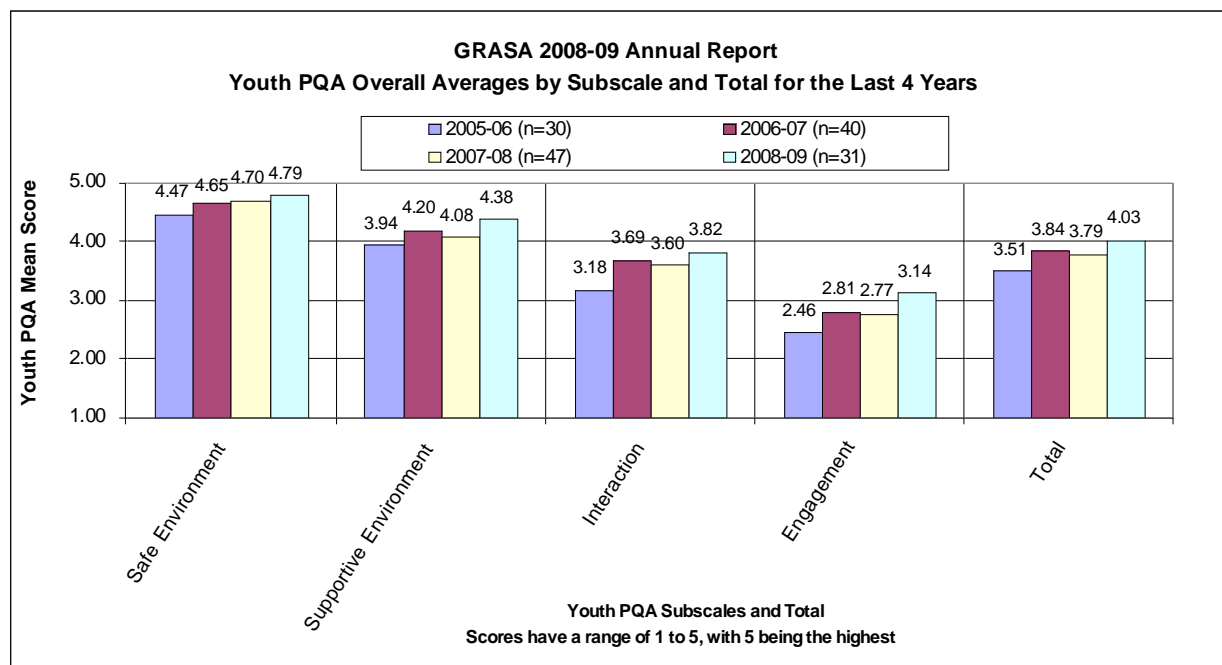
When comparing the GRASA programs to the HighScope programs, the difference in scores for Year One are not statistically significant. However, there is statistical significance (at or equal to .05) in the scores from GRASA years two, three and four, which are both higher than either HighScope years (significant at $\leq .05$ in t-Tests).

Figure 1. Overall Quality of GRASA Program Offerings



Scores by Subscale – Grades 4 – 6 only

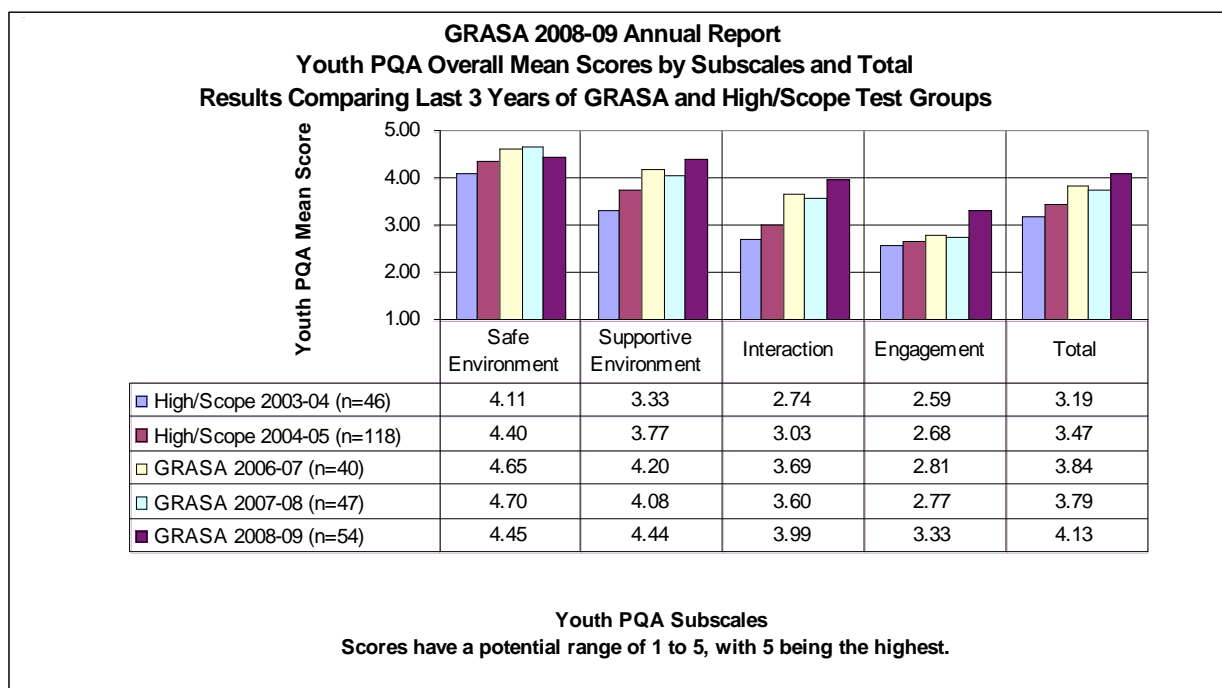
Figure 2. GRASA Overall Mean Scores by Subscale



GRASA 2008-09 Annual Report					
4th to 6th Grade Youth PQA Overall Averages by Subscale for the Last 3 Years					
School Year	Subscale				
	Safe Environment	Supportive Environment	Interaction	Engagement	Total
2005-06 (n=30)	4.47	3.94	3.18	2.46	3.51
2006-07 (n=40)	4.65	4.20	3.69	2.81	3.84
2007-08 (n=47)	4.70	4.08	3.60	2.77	3.79
2008-09 (n=31)	4.79	4.38	3.82	3.14	4.03

In general, first year scores were lower than subsequent years on each subscale and total. There were improvements in all subscales from Year One to Year Two. The only significant improvement from Year Two to Year Three is found in the Safe Environment subscale, but all Year Three scores were higher than Year One. The decrease in scores between Year Two and Year Three may be explained by an influx of programs new to the assessment process and Youth PQA. All Year 4 subscales and total scores are higher than any other year. There is evidence of a trend toward a program quality improvement process emerging in programs participating for multiples year of this partnership.

Figure 3. Comparing GRASA and HighScope Scores by Subscale – Grades 4-6 and 7-9



Significance of Differences in Figure 3 above:

2006-07 Results

Comparing the 2006-07 GRASA scores to the two HighScope studies scores in Figure 3 above, all of the 2006-07 GRASA scores except for Engagement were significantly above both the HighScope 2003-04 and the HighScope 2004-05 study scores (based upon *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$).

2007-08 Results

Comparing the 2007-08 GRASA scores to the two HighScope studies scores in Figure 3 above, all of the 2007-08 GRASA scores except for Engagement were significantly above both the HighScope 2003-04 and the HighScope 2004-05 study scores (based upon one-sample *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$).

Comparing the 2007-08 GRASA scores to the 2006-07 GRASA scores in Figure 3 above, none of the 2007-08 scores were significantly different than the 2006-07 scores (based upon *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$).

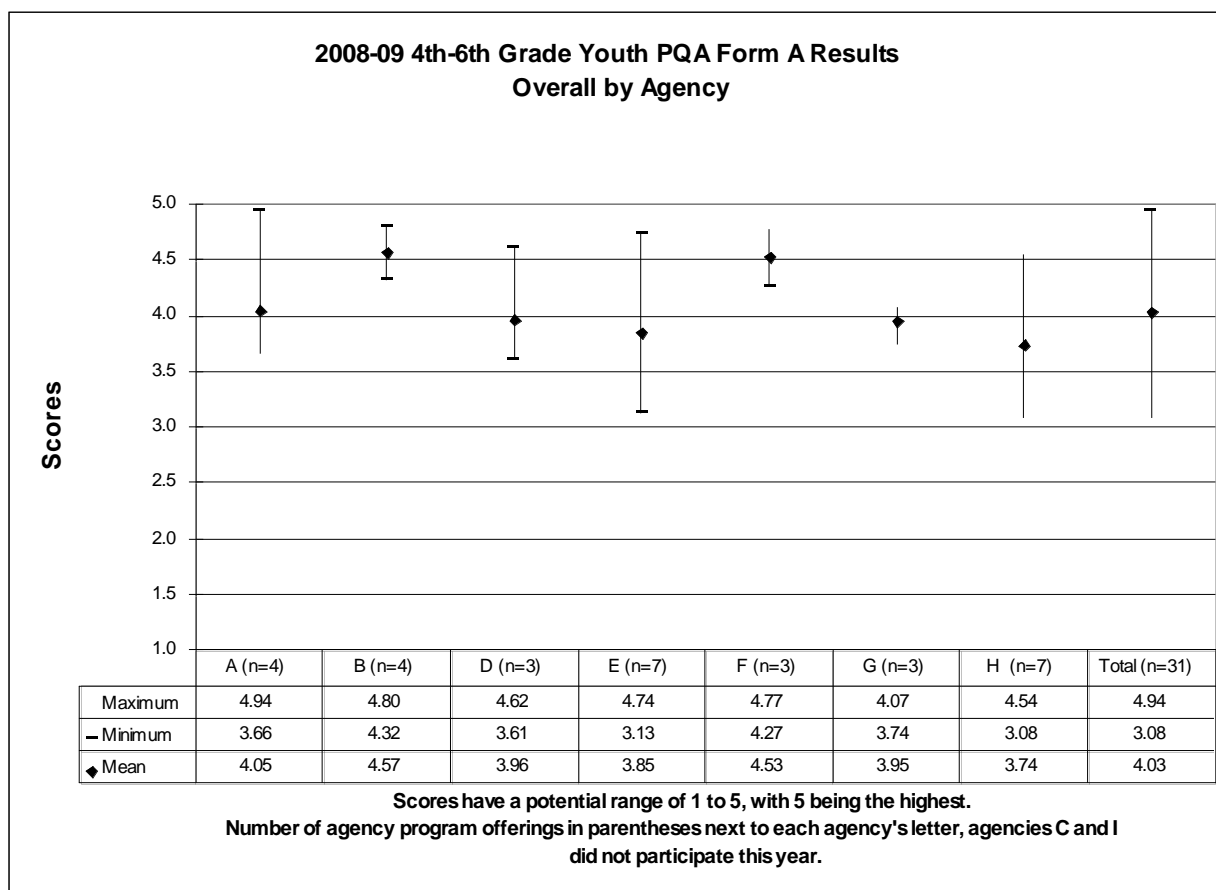
2008-09 Results

Comparing the 2008-09 GRASA scores to the two HighScope studies scores in Figure 3 above, all of the 2008-09 GRASA scores except for Engagement were significantly greater than both the HighScope 2003-04 and the HighScope 2004-05 study scores (based upon one-sample *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$).

Comparing the 2008-09 GRASA scores to the 2007-08 GRASA scores in Figure 3 above, none of the 2008-09 scores were significantly different than the 2007-08 scores (based upon *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$).

Scores by Agency – 4th to 6th Grade Programs

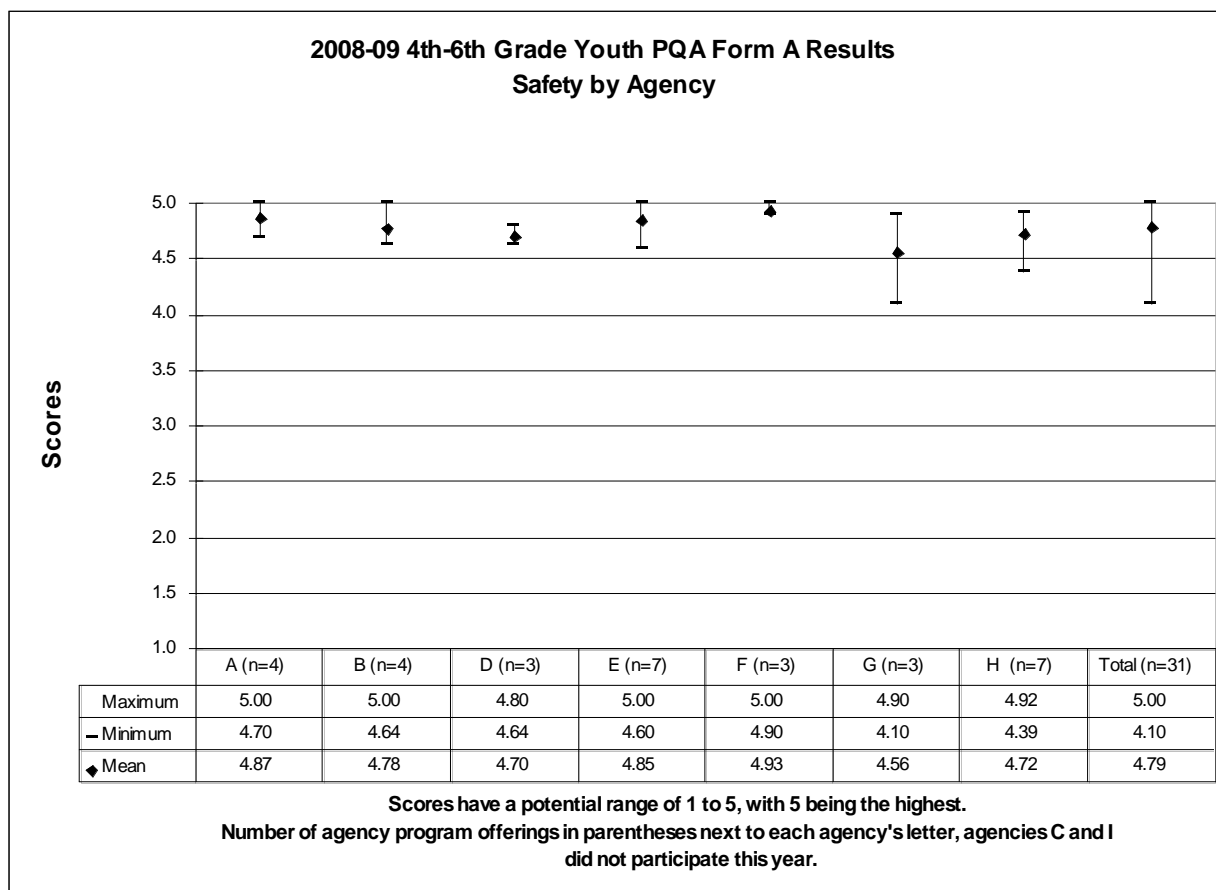
Figure 4. Overall Score for all Four Subscales Combined – 4th to 6th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency									
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
3-3.9	3	0	2	5	0	1	4	15	48.4%
4-4.9	1	4	1	2	3	2	3	16	51.6%
5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%

All programs in all agencies scored above the 3.0 average. This is an indicator of program quality.

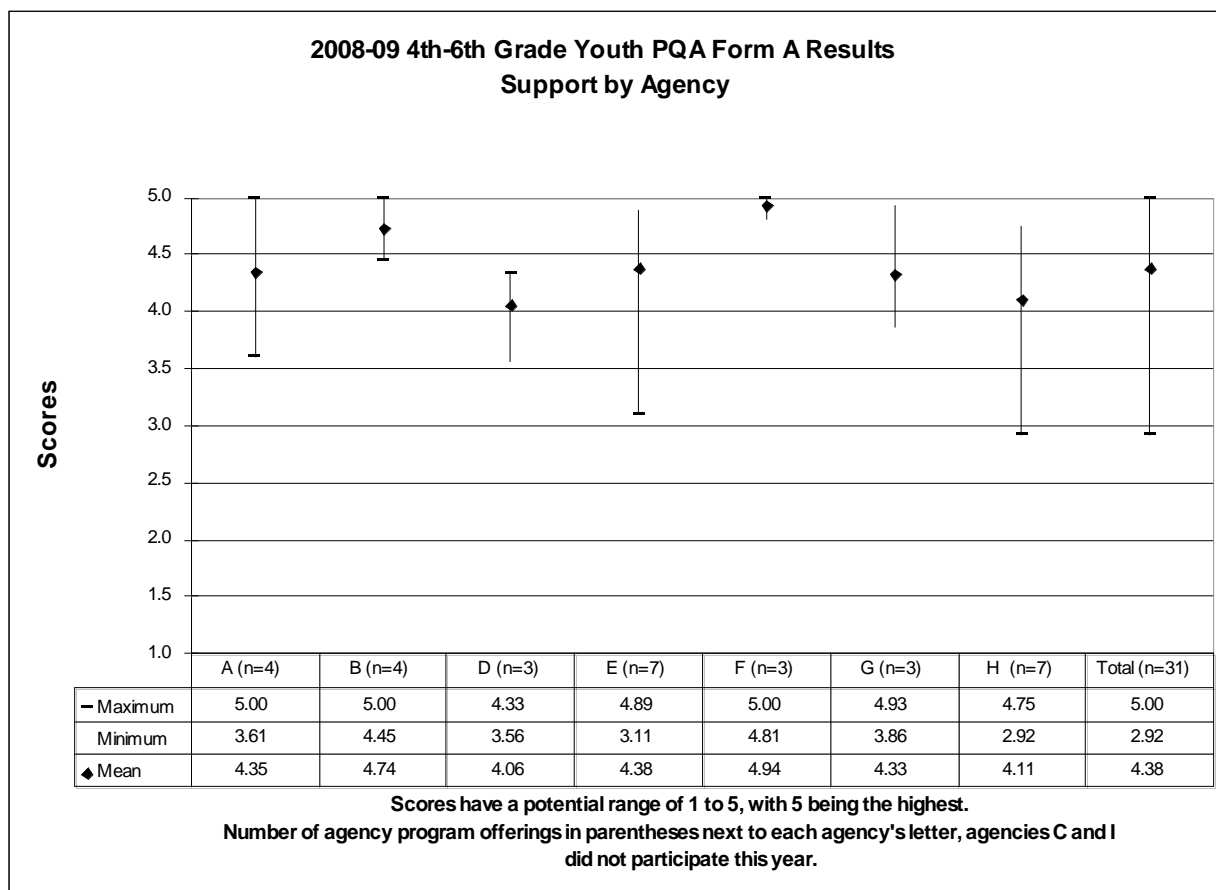
Figure 5. Safe Environment Subscale – 4th to 6th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency									
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
3-3.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
4-4.9	2	3	3	3	2	3	7	22	71.0%
5.0	2	1	0	4	1	0	0	8	25.8%
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%

Agencies are providing safe after-school options for youth in grades four through six. The lowest score of 4.10 and the lowest mean of 4.56 indicate that the quality is fairly high across the board in this subscale.

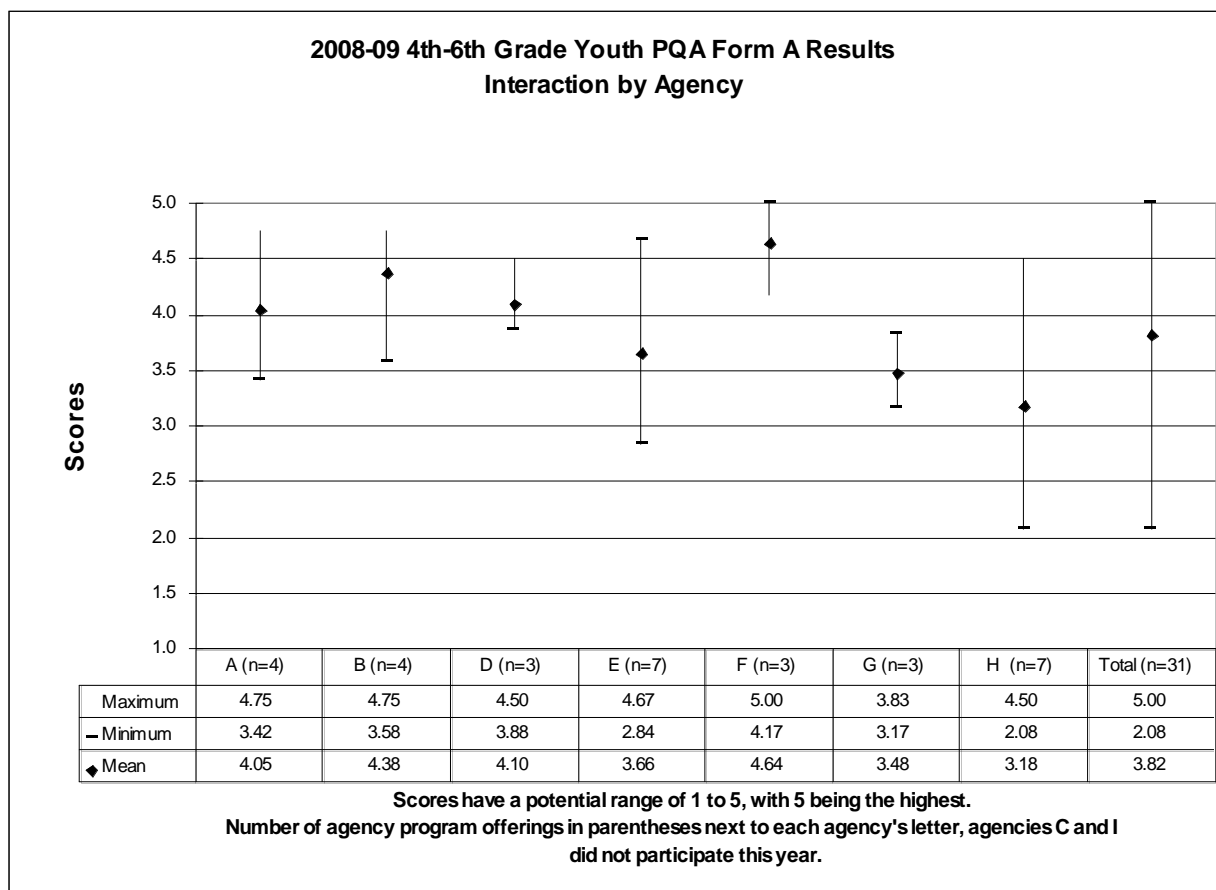
Figure 6. Supportive Environment Subscale – 4th to 6th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency									
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3.2%
3-3.9	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	6	19.4%
4-4.9	2	3	2	5	1	2	5	20	64.5%
5.0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	12.9%
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%

In general, agencies scored fairly well in the Support subscale. The minimum item score of 2.92 is near 3.0/average and the overall mean of 4.38 shows that most programs are supporting the development of the young people in their programs.

Figure 7. Interaction Subscale – 4th to 6th Grade Programs

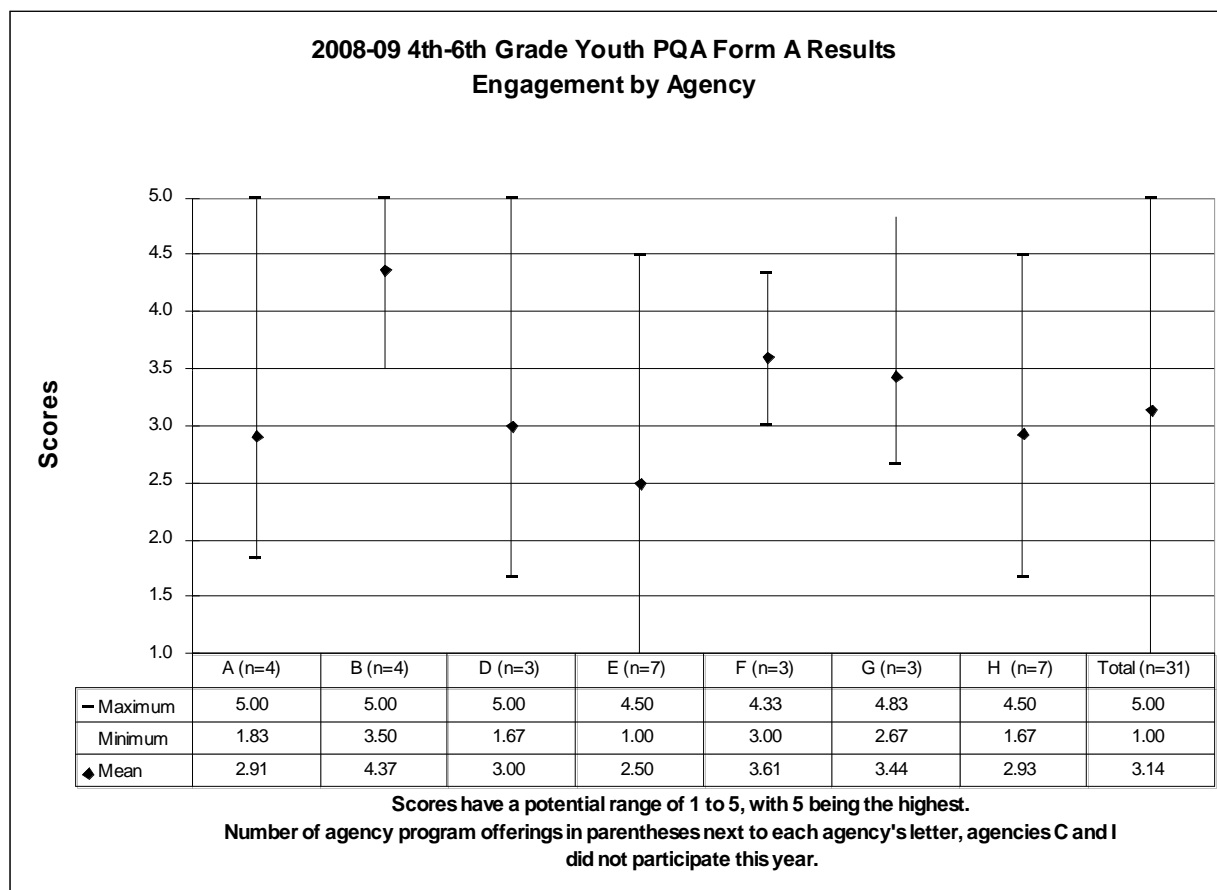


Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency										
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent	
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
2-2.9	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	12.9%	
3-3.9	2	1	2	4	0	3	3	15	48.4%	
4-4.9	2	3	1	2	2	0	1	11	35.5%	
5.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3.2%	
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%	

Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency										
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent	
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	
2-2.9	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	12.9%	
3-3.9	2	1	2	4	0	3	3	15	48.4%	
4-4.9	2	3	1	2	2	0	1	11	35.5%	
5.0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3.2%	
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%	

Some programs are struggling with the items in this subscale, however, all agencies have a mean above 3.0/average. Note that some of the items on this subscale deal with small groups and those items do not fit well with child care center-based programs as they do not use exclusively small groups in their programming structure.

Figure 8. Engagement Subscale – 4th to 6th Grade Programs

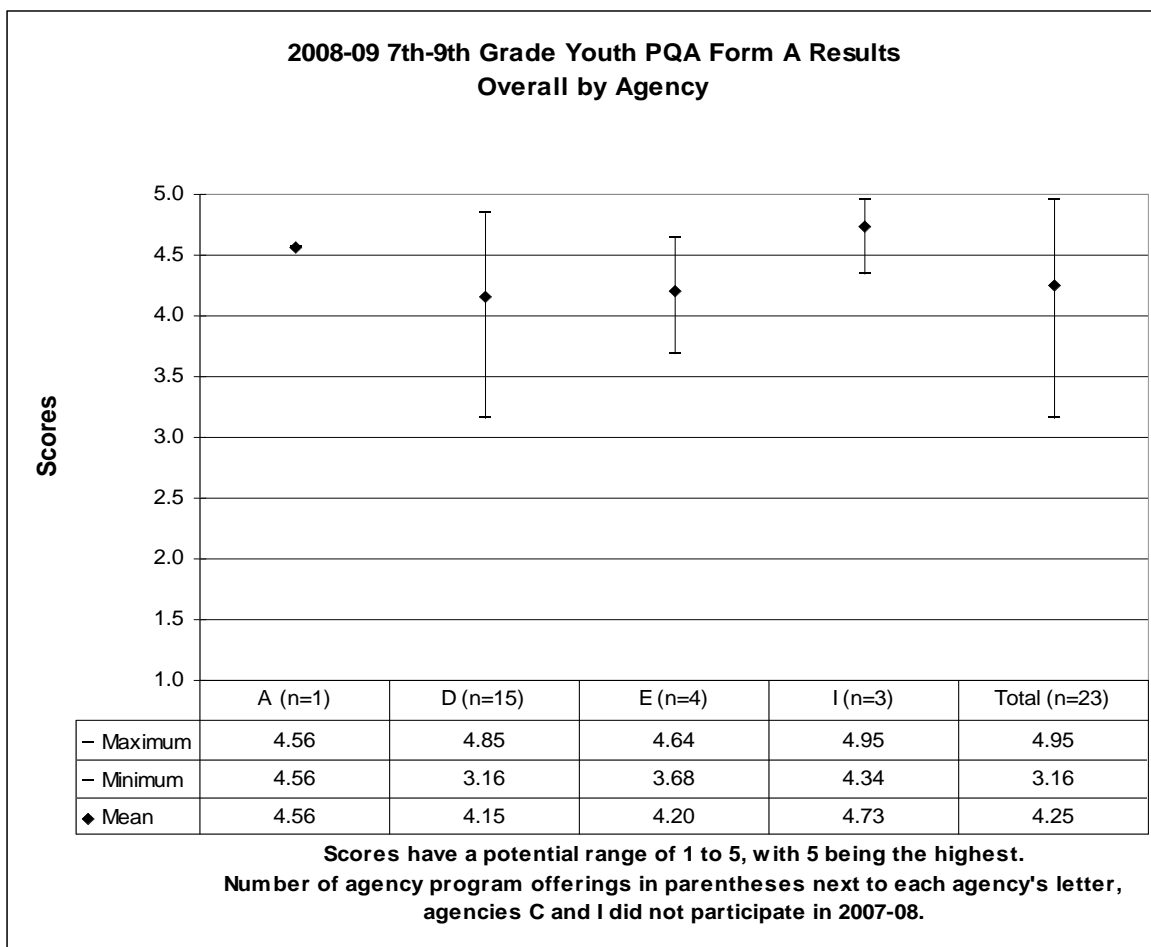


Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency									
Score Range	A	B	D	E	F	G	H	Total	Percent
1-1.9	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	6	19.4%
2-2.9	2	0	1	3	0	2	2	10	32.3%
3-3.9	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	4	12.9%
4-4.9	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	8	25.8%
5.0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	9.7%
Total	4	4	3	7	3	3	7	31	100.0%

The overall mean of 3.14 has risen from 2.77 the previous year (see Figure 2) on this subscale. Engagement is still the lowest scoring of the four subscales and an area to focus on for future quality improvement efforts. This could take place in many ways, e.g., youth could participate in planning projects and activities, youth might decide how activities take place, youth could reflect on activities, youth might publicly present their work and/or accomplishments, or youth could have structured opportunities to share feedback on activities.

Scores by Agency – 7th to 9th Grade Programs

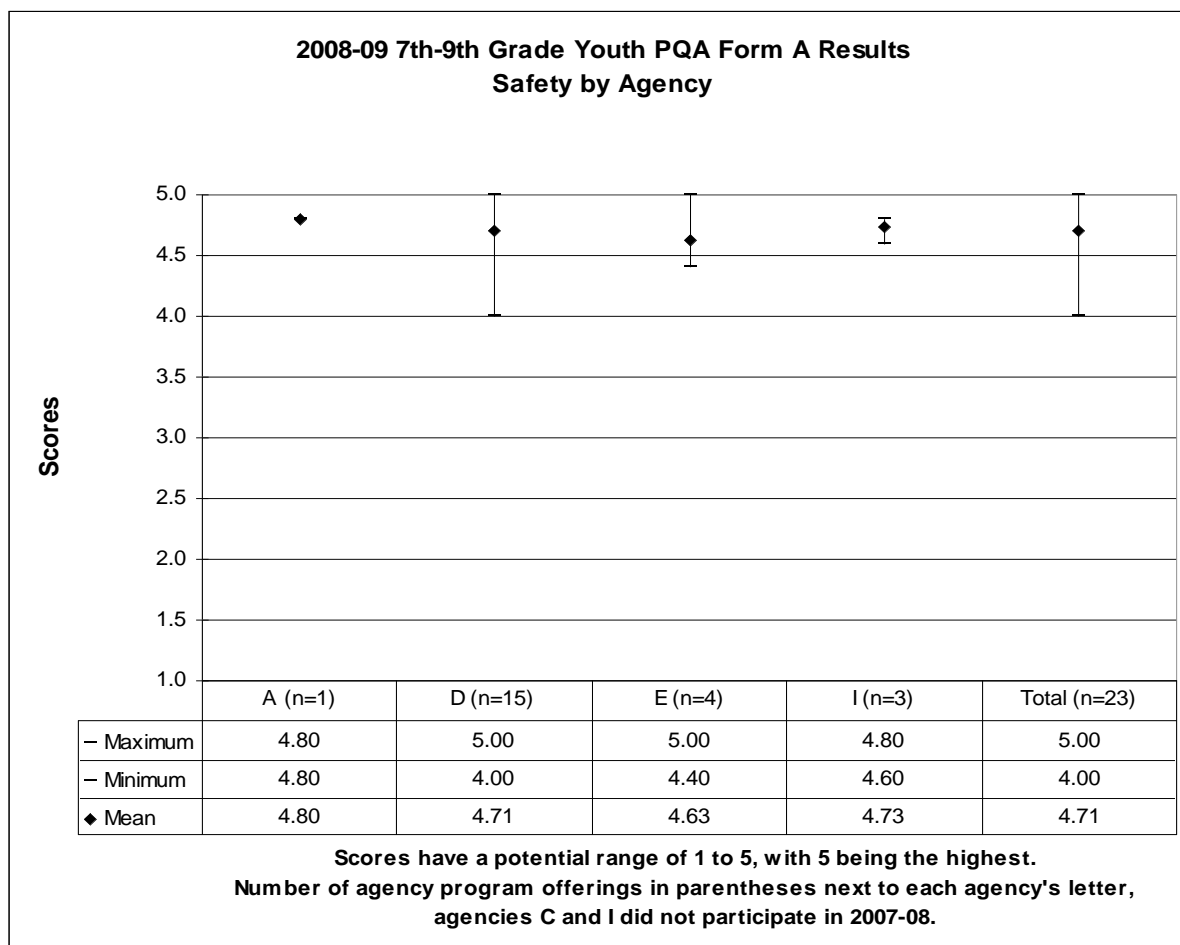
Figure 9. Overall Score for all Four Subscales Combined – 7th to 9th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency						
Score Range	A	D	E	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
3-3.9	0	6	1	0	7	30.4%
4-4.9	1	9	3	3	16	69.6%
5.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	1	15	4	3	23	100.0%

All programs in all agencies scored above the 3.0/average. Each agency's average score was above 4.0. This is clear indicator of program quality.

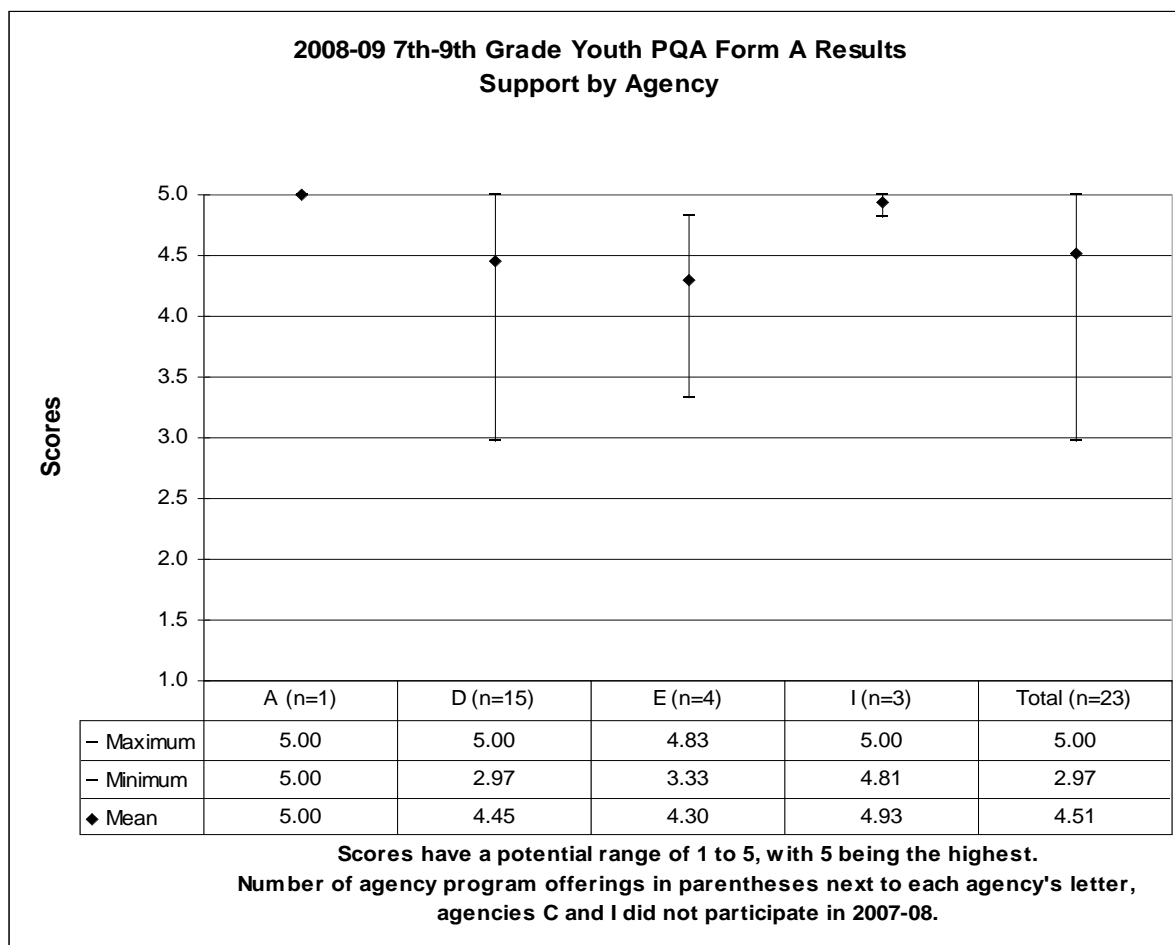
Figure 10. Safe Environment Subscale – 7th to 9th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency						
Score Range	A	D	E	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
3-3.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
4-4.9	1	10	3	3	17	73.9%
5.0	0	5	1	0	6	26.1%
Total	1	15	4	3	23	100.0%

Agencies are providing safe after-school options for youth in grades seven through nine. The lowest score of 4.00 and the lowest mean of 4.71 indicate that the quality is fairly high across the board in this subscale.

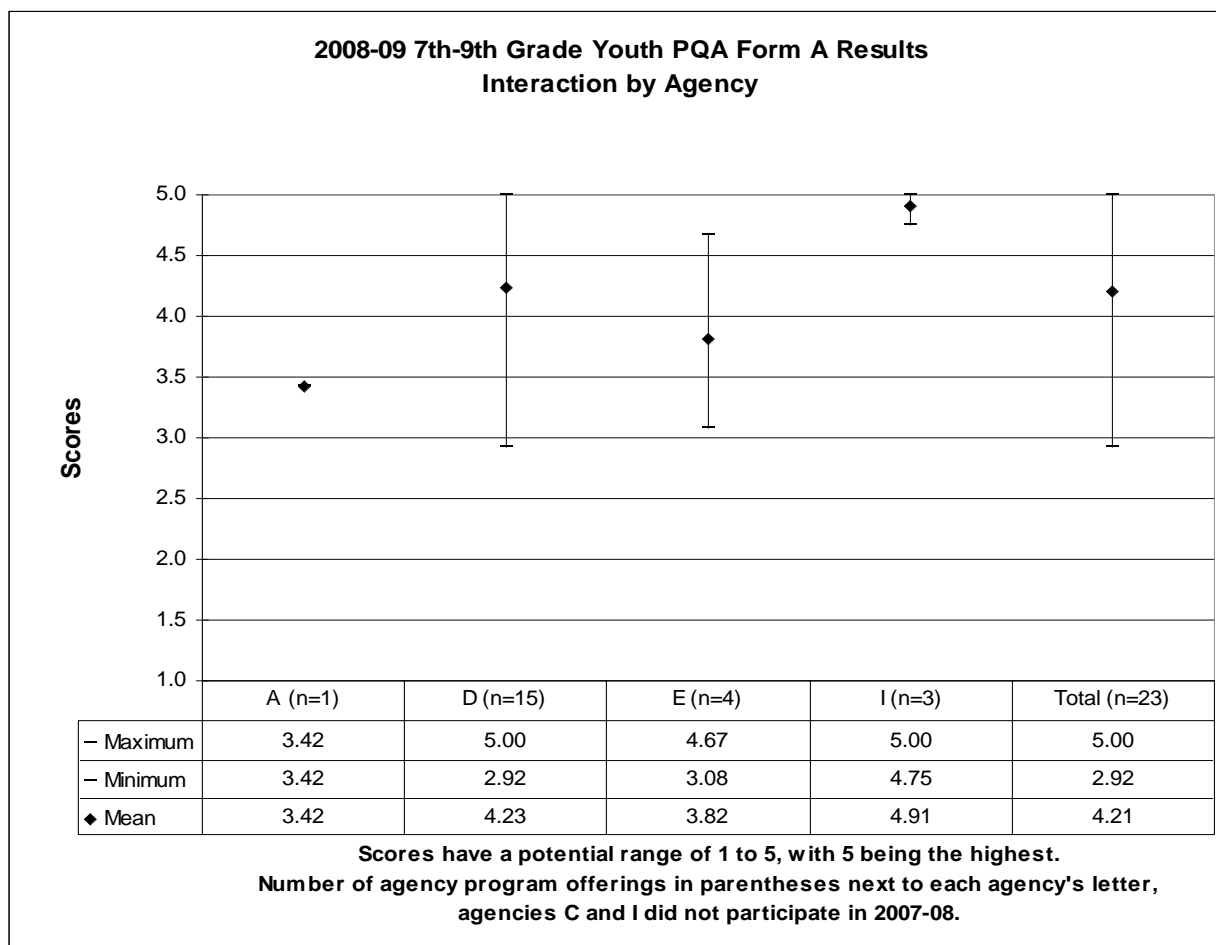
Figure 11. Supportive Environment Subscale -7th to 9th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency						
Score Range	A	D	E	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	1	0	0	3	13.0%
3-3.9	0	0	1	0	13	56.5%
4-4.9	0	12	3	1	30	130.4%
5.0	1	2	0	2	1	4.3%
Total	1	15	4	3	23	100.0%

In general, agencies scored fairly well in the Support subscale. The minimum item score of 2.97 is near 3.0/average and the overall mean of 4.51 shows that most programs are supporting the development of the young people in their programs.

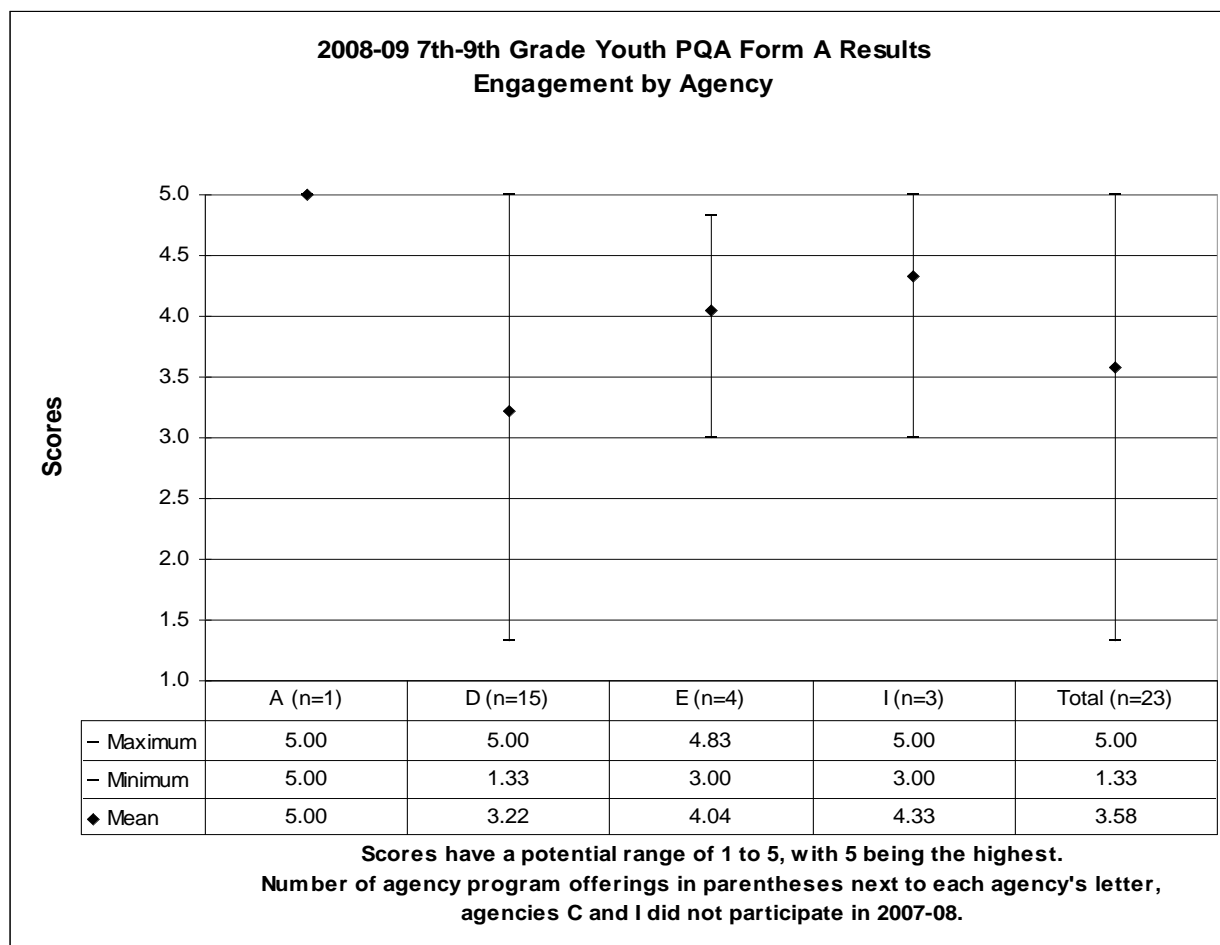
Figure 12. Interaction Subscale-7th to 9th Grade Programs



Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency						
Score Range	A	D	E	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
2-2.9	0	1	0	0	1	4.3%
3-3.9	1	4	2	0	7	30.4%
4-4.9	0	9	2	1	12	52.2%
5.0	0	1	0	2	3	13.0%
Total	1	15	4	3	23	100.0%

In general, agencies scored fairly well on the Interaction subscale. The minimum item score of 2.92 is near 3.0/average and the overall mean of 4.21 shows that interaction quality is high in most classrooms.

Figure 13. Engagement Subscale - 7th to 9th Grade Programs



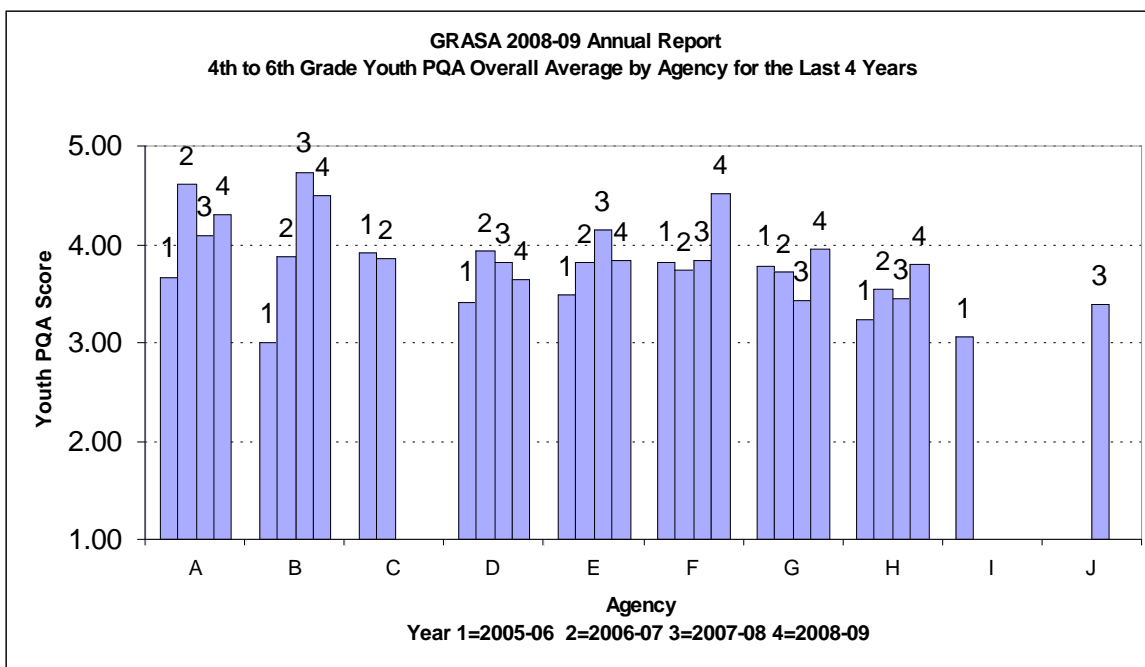
Number of Program Offerings Within Score Range by Agency						
Score Range	A	D	E	I	Total	Percent
1-1.9	0	1	0	0	1	4.3%
2-2.9	0	5	0	0	5	21.7%
3-3.9	0	4	2	1	7	30.4%
4-4.9	0	4	2	0	6	26.1%
5.0	1	1	0	2	4	17.4%
Total	1	15	4	3	23	100.0%

The overall mean of 3.58 indicates an above average level of overall quality on this subscale. Though all agencies had a mean score above 3.0/average, there were some agencies with particularly low-scoring programs. This indicates that engagement is an area to focus on for future quality improvement efforts. This could take place in many ways, e.g., youth could participate in planning projects and activities, decide how activities take place, reflect on activities, publicly present their work and accomplishments, or have structured opportunities to share feedback on activities.

Four Years of Youth PQA Scores

Overall Averages by Agency for the Last Four Years

Figure 14. Overall Youth PQA Average by Agency for the Last Four Years – 4th – 6th grade

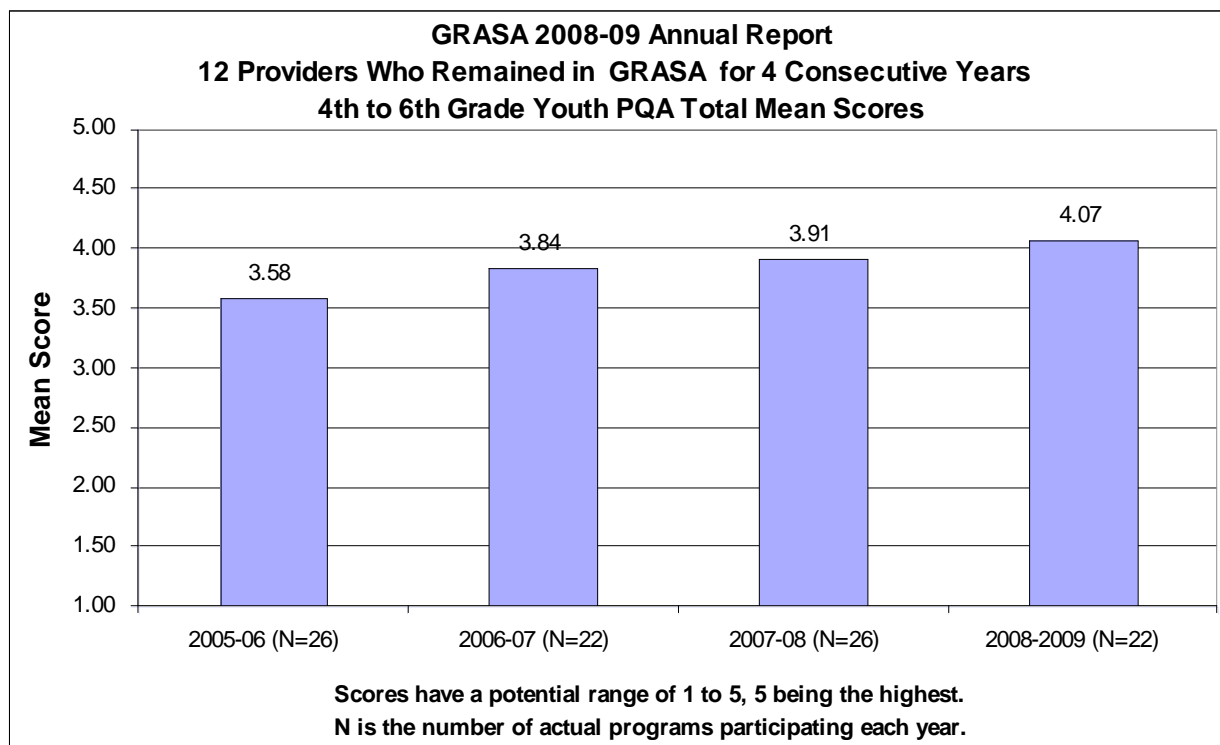


4th to 6th Grade Youth PQA Overall Average by Program for the Last 4 Years													
				Agency									
School Year	Average Overall	n	Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
2005-06	3.51	30	1	3.67	3.00	3.91	3.42	3.49	3.83	3.79	3.23	3.06	.
2006-07	3.84	40	2	4.62	3.88	3.86	3.93	3.82	3.74	3.73	3.55	.	.
2007-08	3.79	47	3	4.09	4.74	.	3.82	4.15	3.84	3.43	3.45	.	3.39
2008-09	4.06	31	4	4.31	4.50	.	3.64	3.85	4.53	3.96	3.81	.	.

Please note that agencies without scores did not have participating 4th to 6th Grade programs for those years.

Programs Participating in All Four Years

Figure 15. Programs Participating in All Four Years



For individual programs units that participated in the project four consecutive years, 2008-09 scores are significantly higher than 2005-06 scores (based upon *t*-tests, significance at $p < .05$). Differences between consecutive years (2005-06 to 2006-07, 2006-07 to 2007-08 and 2007-08 to 2008-09) were not significant.

Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A

Cronbach's alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a test of a measure's internal consistency. It is sometimes called a "scale-reliability coefficient." For any assessment process it is important to know whether the same set of questions measures a similar construct – do the items in the subscale fit well together? Are they referring to the same thing or are they unrelated? Are the items, when grouped together, measuring what they are designed to measure?

Measures are declared to be reliable only when they provide consistent responses. Cronbach's alpha assesses the internal reliability of a measure's answers. By measuring and reporting Cronbach's alpha values, we have what is considered a numerical coefficient of reliability. Table 7 below displays the Cronbach's alpha values for the last 3 years of the GRASA Youth PQA measure results. For comparison purposes, the HighScope reported results* from their testing are also included in Table 7.

Table 7												
2008-09 GRASA Annual Report												
Internal Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A Measure												
Sample Size and Standardized Cronbach Alpha Values												
	GRASA								HighScope			
	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09		Test Group 1 2003-04		Test Group 2 2004-05	
Youth PQA Form A	N	Alpha	N	Alpha	N	Alpha	N	Alpha	N	Alpha	N	Alpha
Total for 4 all Subscales	30	0.86	40	0.91	47	0.88	53	0.75	22	0.84	118	0.74
Safe Environment (5 Items)	30	0.55	40	0.66	47	0.45	53	0.11	22	0.38	118	0.43
Supportive Environment (6 Items)	30	0.73	40	0.79	47	0.69	53	0.68	22	0.85	118	0.84
Interaction (4 items)	30	0.81	40	0.85	47	0.79	53	0.55	22	0.72	118	0.64
Engagement (3 items)	30	0.64	40	0.84	47	0.84	53	0.81	22	0.71	118	0.70

Note: *The HighScope Educational Research Foundation is the author of the Youth PQA measure. The HighScope Test group's results were reported in the Youth PQA Administration Manual, published by HighScope Press 2005.

The Youth PQA has consistent internal reliability with the exception of the Safety subscale. The reason for this involves the content of the five items: 1) psychological and emotional safety promoted, 2) environment free of health hazards, 3) emergency supplies and procedures present, 4) space and furniture accommodates activities, and 5) healthy food and drinks provided. The items are not closely correlated, thus the subscale is not as reliable as it could be if the items were closer in content.

Inter-Rater Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A

As part of an ongoing effort to assure the accuracy of the measures used, approximately 25% of program offerings are observed by two observers so that we can calculate the level of agreement or inter-rater reliability between different observers.

Table 8 below shows the inter-rater reliability of Youth PQA total score and subscales using a simple correlation (r) and the median inter-rater reliability for exact matches (a/a+d); where a=agreement and d=disagreement. The GRASA inter-rater reliability for exact matches was found to be 0.86 for seven observations this year. For comparison, the developers of the Youth PQA reported an inter-rater reliability 0.65 (N=48). The inter-rater reliability findings for each subscale and total in Table 8 show that the administration of the Youth PQA by GRASA conforms to high standards and is of high quality. HighScope's test findings* are also included in Table 8 for comparison.

Table 8					
2008-09 GRASA Annual Report					
Inter-Rater Reliability of the Youth PQA Form A Measure					
	GRASA				High Scope
	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Test Group 1 2003-04
Sample size N	7	8	8	7	48
Median Inter-rater Reliability for Exact Matches ¹	0.89	0.79	0.85	0.86	0.65
Safe Environment (r)	0.86	0.53 ²	0.98	0.74	0.48
Supportive Environment (r)	0.88	0.90	0.95	0.80	0.69
Interaction (r)	0.76	0.80	0.93	0.95	0.83
Engagement (r)	0.89	0.63 ²	0.94	0.98	0.72
Total Youth PQA Form A (r)	0.86	0.89	0.96	0.98	0.66
Notes: ¹ Inter-rater reliability for exact matches is calculated as a/a+d; where a=agreement and d=disagreement.					
² Signifies that all GRASA inter-rater reliability values are significant at p<.05 except those designated.					
(r) Signifies that these values are Pearson Correlation Coefficients.					

* The HighScope Educational Research Foundation is the author of the Youth PQA measure. The HighScope test group's results were reported in the Youth PQA Administration Manual, published by HighScope Press 2005.

Summary of Findings

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Screen Time Survey

There are many indications of quality practices in place, although some opportunities for improvement are evident.

- In general, the survey results pertaining to nutrition suggest that there is an awareness of good practice, but mixed levels of implementation. The majority of respondents indicated that their programs participate in food reimbursement programs and have quality elements of menu offerings (water accessibility, fruits/vegetables, appropriate serving sizes). However, 26% of the programs do not participate in food reimbursement programs such as CACFP or NSLP, even though these are available to them. While not all sites necessarily have food or drink vending machines, the machines which are present typically contain items which do not meet nutritional guidelines. Additionally, only 26% of the programs always inform parents of NYS nutrition guidelines for their children.
- Most programs indicated that practices involving children's physical ("big-muscle") activities are well-established. Eighty-seven percent of the programs always have regularly-scheduled physical activity time, and 70% always provide children with opportunities to play outdoors most days. However, 47% of the programs do not always provide an activity break after 60 minutes of sedentary activity.
- A substantial majority of programs employ appropriate selection procedures for television, movie, and software content selection. Eighty-nine percent report using rating systems to ensure age-appropriate material and 83% have only non-violent programming. Despite this, only one program (6%) has all its selections educational in content. Eighty percent of the programs always provide alternatives to screen time for children who wish to perform another activity.
- Possibly the greatest opportunity for improvement has to do with establishing policies to support and reinforce consistent quality practices. A significant number of survey items indicate that though good practice is evident at some (or even most) programs, it is not always consistent, and there is a lack of policy in place to support consistency of quality practices in programs.

We recommend that program directors review their procedures regarding nutrition, physical activity, and screen time, in light of these results, and consider whether addition to, or alteration of, policy in these areas would be advantageous.

Program Youth PQA Observations

- This is the first year the after-school assessment included programs serving youth in grades 7 – 9. Results indicate quality programming in place.
- A consistent strength in program quality continues to be within the Safety subscale. However, there is a need for focus upon improvement within the Engagement subscale as this is the subscale with the greatest variability of quality including scores within the low range.
- For those programs that participated in the assessment for four consecutive years, there is a quality improvement trend. Also, for all participants over four years, the average overall quality has improved each year.
- The Youth PQA and program observation process continues to be reported by participating agencies as a valuable component of their program improvement processes.

The domains assessed by the Youth PQA are hierarchical in nature, so the areas of environmental safety and support are viewed as being predecessors to the areas of interaction and, finally, engagement. We recommend that program directors determine which Youth PQA stage to address first with their program, and not attempt to impact all areas at once. Given the sequential aspect of the domains, trying to increase Engagement (for example) before adequate levels of Safety, Support, and Interaction are in place, would be difficult to achieve.

Limitations

This evaluation has a number of limitations which should be considered when interpreting the results presented in this report.

The survey of program directors provided responses based on the perspectives and interpretations of only the respondents themselves. We cannot be certain that each respondent interpreted the questions or the metric in the same way, and, since the perspectives of other potential groups of informants (e.g., staff) were not solicited, we cannot determine the extent to which the views of such groups coincide with the responses from the program directors. Since 85% of the program directors responded to the survey, we are reasonably confident that the results are generally representative of the overall sample.

The program observations, using the Youth PQA instrument, were conducted by highly trained independent observers using a valid and reliable instrument. However, each program offering was observed only one time. While provision was made for challenges to the accuracy of the Youth PQA scores by program staff and administration, it is possible that any single assessment might not be representative of a particular program offering. We note, however, that we received no review requests for Youth PQA assessments in 2008-09 for the observations considered in this report.