



## After-School Programs Prove to be Beneficial



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SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS (WWLP) New research finds students who do something productive outside of school get better grades, and grow-up to be more well-rounded individuals.

Research conducted by the Massachusetts Special Committee on after school and out of school time, says students who regularly participate are more likely to get a job, be involved in the community, and have stable relationships.

On Tuesday, a group of Springfield students performed "The Swing" in front of a large crowd. They weren't forced to learn the moves, or display them for others rather they volunteered to do it as part of a comprehensive after school program.

The special state commission has been researching the effect out-of-school activities have on students for the past seven months. It found that these types of integrated before and after school programs are not only considered by most as 'fun', but they also help mold students into better people.

State Senator Tom McGee of Lynn is the Co-chair of the Special Committee. He says, "The more research we see, the more convinced we are the kids that are in programs--- their test scores go up, particularly their math scores, their ability to interact with their peers, have confidence in themselves..."

McGee and Boston State Representative Marie St. Fleur met with Springfield educators on Tuesday at the North End Youth Center to highlight the importance of after school programs.

Many of the students 22News spoke with admitted that if it weren't for programs like these they may be out on the street causing trouble. Here's what Commerce H.S. Senior and after-school program participant Reubben Fontanez has to say to students who think they may be too cool for after school activities like those offered at the North End Center. "Try it out and if you don't like it, then you don't have to come here, but you can come here to get help; you don't have to be shy, like you can come here to get help with homework, you can play on a basketball team, you can just be yourself here."

From here, the report recommendations will go to a number of committee's on Beacon Hill; after that, Senator McGee hopes legislators will begin drafting bills that help more students gain access to after school programs.

Written by 22News Reporter Julie Tremmel