



Blog about Your Trip to Washington, D.C.

Many school districts around the country have blogs where parents, faculty, and other community members can learn about news and events related to the district and education. If your school district has a blog, you might consider submitting a post about your trip to Washington, D.C. for the *Afterschool for All Challenge*.

Blog posts are usually short, so keep yours fairly brief. You also want to communicate the excitement and importance of the *Challenge* and what it was like to meet with your Members of Congress and their aides, and to participate in this national advocacy effort.

Sample Blog:

Advocating for Afterschool

This week, I joined hundreds of afterschool directors, staff members, students and other advocates from across the country to spend two days in Washington, D.C., for the 10th annual [Afterschool for All Challenge](#), sponsored by the [Afterschool Alliance](#). We learned about how to educate policymakers, networked, and met with Members of Congress and their aides to encourage them to increase funding for afterschool.

Highlights of the *Challenge* included a day-long visit to Capitol Hill during which afterschool leaders met with hundreds of Members of Congress and their aides. The day began with the annual “Breakfast of Champions,” honoring afterschool leaders and supporters, including Members of Congress. Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway and founder of FIRST Robotics was honored for his work to promote science and engineering through afterschool programs. Other speakers at the Challenge included Robin Schepper of First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* Initiative and Kumar Garg, Policy Analyst, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President., **[Insert information on anyone from your state who was honored or participated in the program. Or make note of any locally recognizable speakers.]**

Later that day, I had the opportunity to meet with **[list any Senators or Representatives from your state who met with your group, or “aides to” Senators or Representatives]** about how important afterschool programs are in our community and all they do for children and working families. **[Add interesting information about what Senators, Representatives or their aides said to you, being careful not to overstate what they said.]**

We carried critical messages about the proven track record of afterschool programs. President Obama’s recent budget proposal for fiscal year 2012 would increase funds for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, by \$100 million. It would also add \$1.3 billion for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), about a third of which would be used to provide services for school-age children. His proposals for 21st CCLC and CCDF deserve support, and we let lawmakers know that.

From 2007 through 2010, we saw modest progress on federal funding for afterschool, but that progress stopped this year, when afterschool took a cut in the 2011 budget. Nevertheless, we’re hopeful that as lawmakers learn more about the work we do in afterschool, we can sustain the federal commitment to our work.

Recent [research](#) from the Afterschool Alliance, sponsored by jcpenny, illustrates just how far we are from making afterschool available to all who need it. Among the most telling findings was that the parents of more than 18 million children not already in afterschool programs say they would sign their kids up if a program were available to them locally. That's exactly the problem, of course: not enough programs to meet demand.

We believe that by educating lawmakers about how afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire students to learn and help working families, we will have a chance at securing the funding afterschool programs need so that they may continue to provide their vital services to the community, here, across the state, and across the nation. That was a message our lawmakers needed to hear, and we were proud to deliver it!

For more information on how you can help, visit the [Afterschool Alliance](#) web site.