



February 12, 2009

Governor Sonny Perdue  
203 State Capitol  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Governor Perdue,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations speaking for Georgia's children and youth, as well as thousands of afterschool educators, we urge you to invest in Georgia's economy through **support of afterschool programs** in your commitment of funds from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*. Afterschool programs keep children safe, help parents work, and prepare children for further education and employment. The recommendations provided will **keep Georgia workers employed, provide new jobs, help parents find work, and prepare Georgia's future workforce.**

As you know, Georgia is poised to receive billions of dollars in both dedicated funding streams as well as unrestricted monies. The following recommendations could be funded through various streams outlined in the bill – the state fiscal stabilization fund and where applicable, Title I, Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). Recommendations to invest in Georgia's workforce through afterschool support:

- Prepare Georgia's Future Workforce and Keep Parents Working by Funding Down the Slate for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC): Georgia's Department of Education received 78 applications for this program in 2008 but was only able to provide funding for 37 due to limited funding. By extending funding to the full slate (presuming they meet specified quality standards), this would serve an additional 4000 youth and employ an extra 200 adults as afterschool educators. Georgia's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs provide students with the benefits of responsible adult mentors and additional learning opportunities outside the traditional school day.
- Provide 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Afterschool Programs with Bridge Money for Achieving Sustainability: Provide another year of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding for programs in good standing scheduled to lose funding at the end of FY09. Funding the 57 programs rotating out of the grant cycle would ensure 250 adults keep their jobs during this difficult economic time and 5,000 children continue to have a safe and enriching place to go after the school day ends. Georgia's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs prepare Georgia's youth for higher education and the workforce.
- Expand Georgia's Afterschool Services Program to Assist Working Families: This program, administered by the Department of Human Resources, serves more than 23,000 low-income youth across the state and employs more than 1,500 adult educators. Expanding the program would ensure more working adults have quality afterschool care for their children so that they can continue working or go back to work. An expansion of the program should provide priority to underserved populations such as severely emotionally disturbed children. Finding care for these children is especially difficult for working parents and afterschool programs need assistance to provide the array of services these children require.
- Support the Existing and Future Workforce by Funding Current Afterschool Services Grantees at their Requested Level: Due to limited resources, DHR was able to provide grantees with only a portion of their requested funding. By making the requested grants whole (presuming they meet specified quality standards),

existing programs will be able to serve more youth, employ more workers, and provide higher quality services. The program's focus on academics, youth development and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills helps build our next generation of workers.

- Invest in Quality: Studies show that high-quality programs have strong positive effects on children's academic, social and emotional lives. Working parents are more productive in the workplace when they know their children are safe and being provided opportunities and resources in afterschool settings. CCDBG "quality" dollars should be invested in existing efforts that promote best practices and high quality standards through expanded professional development, technical assistance, scholarships and incentives. Specific investment recommendations include:
  - 1) Increase Support for the Georgia Afterschool Institute (GAI) which provides intensive professional development to Georgia's afterschool educators to help them deliver program content aligned with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, academic goals, and youth development outcomes. Each GAI provides professional development to 100 adult educators who, in turn, support approximately 3,000 older youth in reaching academic and developmental goals and preparing for post-secondary education and the workforce. (GAI is a public-private partnership sponsored by organizations such as the Department of Human Resources, Governor's Office for Children and Families, Alston & Bird LLP, McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP, and United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, and implemented by the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council).
  - 2) Expand the Quality Initiatives Program, administered through the Department of Early Care and Learning, which funds community based trainings, financial and technical assistance and resources to increase the capacity of the afterschool field to provide high-quality programming. The program currently provides training and on-site technical assistance to over 1,000 school age professionals statewide using nationally recognized standards. For example, Georgia School Age Care Association supports 25 programs statewide each year with technical assistance and mini-grants for program improvement and the pursuit of national accreditation.
- Take Advantage of Afterschool Supper Funding to Promote Educational Achievement and Help Struggling Families: The House version of the stimulus package includes funds for afterschool supper for all states (currently this pilot operates in 8 states). Should this be included in the final bill, it is imperative that Georgia is ready to use these dollars so that our children do not go hungry during this downturn. Even moderate undernourishment can have lasting effects on children's growth, development and school performance. This program is especially timely given Georgia's current childhood obesity challenges and prevention efforts to ensure healthier children and reduce future health care costs.

*With your help we can keep afterschool working for Georgia today so we can build a better Georgia tomorrow.* We are happy to discuss these opportunities with your staff. Please contact Korynn Schooley at the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council at 404-527-7280 or [kschooley@afterschoolga.org](mailto:kschooley@afterschoolga.org).

Sincerely,

Jill J. Riemer  
Executive Director  
Georgia Afterschool Investment Council

Laurie Iscaro  
Executive Director  
Georgia School Age Care Association

Cc. Trey Childress, Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget  
Hannah Heck, Director of Policy, Office of the Governor  
Erin Hames, Education Policy Analyst, Office of the Governor