



# Afterschool Alliance

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January 2008

## **2007 AFTERSCHOOL YEAR IN REVIEW** **A YEAR OF CHALLENGES AND GROWTH**

*“Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle”*  
-- Napoleon Hill

2007 was a year of challenges for the afterschool community, but thanks to the hard and productive work of afterschool supporters across the country, it ended on a high note for providers, advocates and especially for the children and families who need more afterschool opportunities. Congress made some difficult spending decisions in 2007 and, despite cuts to a number of critical programs for kids and level funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Members gave 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) a badly needed and long overdue funding increase. On December 26, the President signed an omnibus spending bill that provided a \$100 million increase for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC for fiscal year 2008, putting funding for the initiative at an all time high of \$1.1 billion. As a result, 100,000 more kids will have access to afterschool programs in 2008.

Funding wasn't the only area of growth for afterschool in 2007. In addition to funding reaching a historic level, support for afterschool grew in other ways, including:

- New research underscoring the benefits associated with participation in afterschool;
- New and/or increased state and local funding for afterschool;
- New demonstrations of support for afterschool;
- New efforts to meet the needs of older youth during the after school hours; and
- New resources to help provide high quality afterschool opportunities.

Over the course of 2007, a number of environmental factors helped reinforce or expand support for afterschool:

- Many cities experienced increases in youth violence.
- Policy makers, corporations and the public recognized a *dropout crisis* that can influence productivity and economic prospects in coming years.
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and global competitiveness were high on the list of concerns for lawmakers, business leaders and others.
- A task force of researchers, foundation leaders, afterschool experts, education leaders, municipal officials, business people, and school reform experts released “A New Day for Learning” – a report funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It calls for a national dialogue on how to re-imagine education in the United States - how, where and when it occurs, its goals, and the best methods to achieve them.
- School district officials, education policy makers, lawmakers and community leaders across the nation began considering extending the school day as a way to bolster students'

academic performance, improve their science, math and technology learning, and better prepare them to compete in the global economy.

In local, state and national conversations and legislative efforts this year, afterschool programs were seen as part of the solution to address these concerns. For example, the “New Day for Learning” Task Force challenged policy makers to re-imagine the learning day and recognize the role afterschool programs can play in restructuring. Federal lawmakers responded with a variety of ideas and proposals as work to reauthorize the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) began in earnest. Some proposals presented opportunities to improve and expand afterschool; others presented potential obstacles.

The biggest potential obstacle came from a congressional proposal to divert 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool funding to schools seeking monies to extend the academic day. The afterschool community urged policy makers to increase the overall funding for youth programs and not pit already under-funded programs against one another. More than 150 national, state and local organizations signed onto a letter to the Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee urging its members to strike this diversion from NCLB legislation. As a result, the public drafts of NCLB circulated by Senators Edward M. Kennedy (D-NY) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) did not include language allowing extended day programs to use 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds.

That collective effort to preserve afterschool funding by the community may have helped remind lawmakers about the depth and strength of support for afterschool. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed the first increase to afterschool funding in more than five years. The efforts of the afterschool community thus turned a real threat into an opportunity. As a result, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC was one of very few Department of Education initiatives to receive a funding increase in FY2008.

In this document, the Afterschool Alliance reviews key afterschool developments in 2007 – what worked, what didn’t, what strategies were most effective, which environmental factors contributed to progress and which stood in the way. This report provides a snapshot of afterschool and highlights examples of activities across the nation that helped transform the landscape and lay a foundation for continuing progress in years ahead.

## **GROWING RESOURCES**

In addition to the growth in federal 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding, a number of states, cities and small towns made progress in meeting the demand for afterschool programs, often in spite of budgetary pressures.

A number of state and federal funding sources are helping support afterschool in **California**. In November, 498 grantees received \$30 million in elementary and middle school grants and 100 grantees shared \$43.6 million in 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) grants. As a result of the implementation of Proposition 49, an additional \$428 million was available in 2007 for the After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program. The California Department of Education awarded 1,914 new ASES grants and 200 transitional grants for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs to transfer to ASES funding.

According to data from the California Afterschool Network, ASES and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants (including ASSETS) have been awarded to 4,095 unique schools. Many hoped that the new state dollars for afterschool would provide programs to all low-income children across the state, but in the end it was not enough. \$170 million worth of grant requests could not be met in this round of funding. Fortunately, due to the transitional grants and other changes in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding, a total of \$50 million in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC became available late in the 2007 and will be awarded to afterschool programs in 2008.

In **Missouri**, Governor Blunt recommended \$1 million for afterschool programs in math, science and health, based on a proposal developed by the Missouri statewide afterschool network. The legislature approved the funding for two new afterschool initiatives: METS – Math, Engineering, Technology and Science – and Healthy Lifestyles programming to address poor nutrition and childhood obesity. The legislature funded each initiative at \$500,000 for a total of \$1 million. Late in 2007, the governor announced that his 2008 budget will include an increase to \$1.1 million for the afterschool programs.

The **Minnesota** legislature approved \$5.3 million in new funds for afterschool programs. This was aided by a challenge grant offered by the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis. The foundation offered to provide \$1.5 million if the legislature would appropriate \$5 million. The general assembly did not reach the challenge grant criteria from McKnight, only approving \$5.35 million over two years, not each year. However, this is the first new money allocated to afterschool in the state in at least five years. All funds were awarded to 21 grantees for two years, since the funding was ‘one-time only.’ More than 241 applications were received in this grant competition, requesting a total of approximately \$60 million in funds. Again, demand far outstripped supply.

The **Iowa** general assembly approved two new sources of funds for afterschool programs totaling \$3.5 million. One is a competitive grant program specifically for afterschool programs. The other is a competitive grant program to help at risk students, especially with reading and math achievement. Seven grantees received the afterschool funding and nine school districts received the at risk student support grants. All funded projects include an afterschool component.

This growth in state afterschool funding would not have been possible without a growing evidence base demonstrating the difference afterschool programs make for children, youth and families. Fortunately, a number of new studies added to the growing base of research in 2007.

## **GROWING THE EVIDENCE BASE**

Released in the fall of 2007, the *Study of Promising Afterschool Programs* was one of several studies released this year that found promising outcomes associated with afterschool participation. Conducted by Deborah Vandell and Kim Pierce of the University of California, Irvine, and Elizabeth R. Reisner of Policy Studies Associates, Inc., this Mott Foundation-funded study found significant academic gains for middle and elementary students in quality afterschool programs. In addition, the study found that middle schoolers in programs were less likely to use alcohol, tobacco and drugs than their peers who were unsupervised in the afternoons.<sup>1</sup> This

research is the latest, and one of the most compelling, in a long line of studies demonstrating that strong afterschool programs produce positive, measurable results for students.

Other studies released in 2007 include:

- Researchers at UCLA's National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (UCLA/CRESST) found that students who regularly attend Los Angeles' largest afterschool program serving elementary students, LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow), are less likely than their peers to have juvenile crime records later on. Specifically, 87.5 percent of the non-LA's BEST students and low-engagement LA's BEST students had no criminal records as of 2005, but 91.4 percent of moderately engaged LA's BEST students and 93.1 percent of intensely engaged students had no records. A related finding supports the view that afterschool is a sound investment. Using a conservative cost-benefit analysis, researchers concluded that every dollar invested in afterschool saves society \$2.50 in future costs related to juvenile crime.<sup>2</sup>
- The Chapin Hall Center for Children, a research center at the University of Chicago, found that youth in Chicago's After School Matters program have better class attendance, lower course failures and higher graduation rates. The finding of improved academic performance is particularly noteworthy because the program does not aim to improve academics. Rather, it focuses on improving students' work skills by creating internship and apprenticeship opportunities in the arts, technology, sports and communications. But the program requires that students attend school on days they are participating in program activities. So by creating an incentive for students to attend school regularly and giving them something to look forward to after school, researchers conclude, After School Matters helped improve academic performance even though the program is not designed specifically for that purpose.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2007, new research also underscored the importance of the summer learning programs that many afterschool programs organize and run. In "Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap," released in spring 2007, Johns Hopkins University sociologists Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle and Linda Steffel Olson found that the difference in children's academic success can be explained, in large part, by their summer activities. The study concluded that two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth could be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. The study found a summer learning gap that begins during elementary school. Higher-income children were more likely to have access to magazines and books and to have their parents read to them than lower-income children. This gap accumulates over the years and, once students get to high school, it results in unequal placements in college preparatory tracks and increases the chance that children from low socio-economic families will drop out.<sup>4</sup>
- Lastly, a meta-analysis of data from more than 70 existing studies concluded that afterschool programs employing evidence-based approaches to improving students' personal and social skills "were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth" and those benefits include improving children's personal, social and academic skills, and their self-esteem. Funded by the William T. Grant Foundation, "The Impact of After-School Programs that Promote Personal and Social Skills" was conducted by Roger P. Weissberg, President of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning and Professor Joseph Durlak of Loyola University – Chicago.<sup>5</sup>

## GROWING SUPPORT

As the research base for afterschool grows and programs reach into more communities, displays of public support for afterschool increase as well. From simple steps like joining *Afterschool for All* (a project designed to show the depth and breadth of support for afterschool), to organizing, hosting and/or attending *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations, more Americans publicly demonstrated support for afterschool in 2007. Federal and state policy makers also took steps to demonstrate support for afterschool, and a number of polls and surveys showed that support for afterschool remains strong and comes from diverse constituencies.

### *Afterschool for All*

2007 was a year of tremendous growth for *Afterschool for All* (formally known as *Afterschool for All: Project 2010*), highlighting the continuing high level of public support. The number of *Afterschool for All* partners skyrocketed in 2007, from 11,000 to more than 17,000, including two new governors and several new mayors.

A pilot program of the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council (GAIC) and the Georgia PTA continues to grow. *Afterschool for All Georgia* unites Georgians in support of the goal of afterschool for all. Close to 3,000 parents, guardians, and other concerned citizens have already been recruited. The Afterschool Alliance is supporting this campaign by providing technical assistance, materials and links to resources such as customized web pages. The GAIC reports that *Afterschool for All* is strengthening coalition-building with members of its council and has contributed to the growth of its database of afterschool supporters.

### *Lights On Afterschool*

Lights were on in big cities and rural townships on October 18 as communities across the country joined the eighth annual *Lights On Afterschool*, the only nationwide rally for afterschool programs. The 2007 *Lights On Afterschool* featured more than one million students, parents, teachers, policy makers and business and community leaders participating in more than 7,500 events around the nation and at U.S. military bases around the world. For the first time ever, the Empire State Building in New York City was lit with yellow lights in honor of *Lights On Afterschool*.

In Seattle, Washington, hundreds of people came together at the Pacific Science Center for the local *Lights On Afterschool* event. T-Mobile USA was presenting sponsor of the gala, which was hosted by School's Out Washington, Pacific Science Center and the Afterschool Alliance.

In Augusta, Maine, the Maine Afterschool Network sponsored an event at the Hall of Flags at the State Capitol. The Chair of the Governor's Children's Cabinet and the state's first lady, Karen Baldacci, attended. Attorney General Steven Rowe shared emcee duties with a student and Commissioner of Labor Laura Fortman, who discussed the importance of afterschool. Parents wrote letters, which organizers presented to policy makers in bound books.

In New York City, Mayor Michael Bloomberg used *Lights On Afterschool* to announce new funding for afterschool through the Out-of-School-Time (OST) initiative. The funds will provide 14,000 additional slots for youth in 112 new programs.

In Cincinnati, Ohio, some 800 students attended a region-wide event at the Music Hall downtown featuring comedian and television personality Wayne Brady. Also at the event, Mayor Mark Mallory presented a *Lights On Afterschool* Proclamation, and students participated in a bicycle give away, resource fair, face painting, MadCap puppets, double-dutch and more. It was hosted by the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati.

In Charleston, the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance hosted a rally on the steps of the State House. Speakers included Congresswoman Yvette Clark representing U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton; Chris Hart representing former U.S. Senator John Edwards; Danielle Holley representing U.S. Senator Barack Obama; and Mitt Romney's son and daughter-in-law. Organizers recognized "Champions of Afterschool." More than 1,000 people attended.

### **Support from Elected Officials**

2007 saw an increase in bipartisan federal support for afterschool programs. The Congressional Afterschool Caucuses grew to 117 members – 82 in the House Caucus and 35 in the Senate Caucus. Fifteen new members joined the House Caucus this year, perhaps most notably veteran Congressman Ralph Regula (R-OH), a longtime afterschool supporter and key appropriator who not only joined the Caucus but became its Republican co-chair. First term Senators Bernard Sanders (I-VT) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) joined the Senate Caucus. The Senate Afterschool Caucus hosted a briefing for Senate staff entitled "Preparing Youth for the Future: The Role of Afterschool in Preparing a Competitive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce." The briefing featured prominent business leaders discussing why they invest in afterschool and an afterschool provider describing how programs have been effective in setting youth on a path toward college and productive jobs.

In May, more than 300 afterschool advocates met with 200 members of Congress and staff to discuss the importance of federal funding for afterschool as part of the *Afterschool for All Challenge*. The day of congressional meetings kicked off with a "Breakfast of Champions," where Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and John Sununu (R-NH) were recognized for their support for afterschool.

Elected officials helped make *Lights On Afterschool 2007* a huge success, and this year it marked the start of a year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers. Elected officials at all levels showed their support for afterschool by signing proclamations, passing resolutions and participating in *Lights On Afterschool* events.

- On the federal front, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution, introduced by Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT) and John Ensign (R-NV), declaring October 18 "*Lights On Afterschool Day*." The resolution highlights the important role that afterschool programs play in providing safe places for children after school.
- All 50 governors and the mayor of Washington D.C. signed proclamations declaring October 18 "*Lights On Afterschool Day*".
- Numerous mayors and local elected officials, including Providence Mayor David Cicilline, Spokane Mayor Dennis Hession, Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, and Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory, participated in *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations.

In addition to the ongoing work on NCLB reauthorization, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) introduced two stand-alone pieces of legislation that could be beneficial to afterschool programs. *The Teaching Fellows for Expanded Learning and After-School Act of 2007* (T-FELAS), cosponsored by Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), John Kerry (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), would authorize the U.S. Secretary of Education to award competitive grants to recruit, select, train and support teaching fellows to strengthen expanded learning initiatives and afterschool programs. This bill would give afterschool programs the chance to expand the quality and capacity of services offered in targeted communities. Kennedy also introduced the *Keeping PACE Act (Parents And Communities Engaged)*, which would expand parent and community involvement in school by placing parent and community outreach coordinators in schools and authorizing money for community based organizations to provide integrated support services.

Members of Congress addressed the need to increase funding for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. Early in the year, Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) organized a letter asking President Bush to increase funding for afterschool in his budget proposal; all 14 women senators signed on. Members of the House and Senate Afterschool Caucuses signed on to letters, organized by Senators Dodd, Ensign and Collins and Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI), requesting increased funding. Representatives Lowey and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) requested more funds for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC at appropriations hearings. When the final omnibus spending bill was released, including the \$100 million increase for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, Representative David Obey (D-WI), Chair of the Appropriations Committee, talked about the increased investment in afterschool programs as a highlight of the bill.

States are also looking into policy supports for afterschool programs. Several states are exploring afterschool in relation to student success strategies; others are looking into opportunities and prevention strategies for older youth. Some states are looking to build a system of support to strengthen afterschool programs and provide positive outcomes.

In **Arkansas**, Governor Mike Beebe established the Governor's Task Force on After-School and Summer Programs to explore ways to make out-of-school programs accessible to as many Arkansas students as possible. The Task Force includes parents, educators, child advocates and school officials. Further, Arkansas was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices to convene leaders and stakeholders from across the state to discuss expanded learning opportunities. They will have the chance to provide feedback to the newly created Governor's Task Force.

The General Assembly in **Massachusetts** convened the Special Commission on Afterschool and Out of School Time to complete a study of afterschool in the state. Co-chaired by Senator Thomas M. McGee and Representative Marie P. St. Fleur and made up of representatives from state agencies, community providers and key institutions, the commission developed a framework for afterschool in the state that addresses funding, quality, accountability, priorities, sustainability and integration of policies for children from birth to age 18. The commission's recommendations provide a blueprint for future policy actions by the governor's office, the state legislature, and state agencies.

### **New Surveys and Polls Show Strong Support**

Continuing strong public support was evident this year in several new studies and polls that affirm the need and demand for more afterschool programs.

- In South Carolina, results of a large, comprehensive study examining the state's public education system were released. The Riley Institute at Furman University in South Carolina conducted in-depth discussions with nearly 800 stakeholders across the state including parents, teachers, principals, school board members, superintendents, students and business leaders. They discussed strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for improving all public K-12 schools. The study found broad consensus on a small group of strategies for improving the schools, including afterschool programs, tutoring and transforming the schools into community learning centers.<sup>6</sup>
- In New Hampshire and Rhode Island, surveys of education leaders and city leaders, supported by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, demonstrated that support for afterschool comes from many sectors. According to *Spotlight on New Hampshire*, New Hampshire education leaders strongly support afterschool. Almost all superintendents and public school principals who responded to the survey say that afterschool is an absolute necessity for children and youth, and they see a wide range of benefits for students who participate in afterschool programs. Principals and superintendents throughout the state are concerned that there are not enough resources for afterschool, and almost all report that there are children in their school or district who are currently unable to participate in afterschool programs. These education leaders say that federal and state elected officials are not doing enough to support afterschool, and want to see investments increased.<sup>7</sup>
- According to *Spotlight on Rhode Island*, also supported by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, nine in ten municipal leaders who responded agreed that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity in their communities. Rhode Island city leaders cited "keeping kids safe and out of trouble" as the top reason they support afterschool and more than three in four said federal and state governments are not doing all they should to meet the need for afterschool.<sup>8</sup>
- *The T-Mobile Huddle Up Afterschool Survey*, conducted in July, shows the high level of importance parents place on afterschool programs. Eight in ten parents said that their child needs a safe, positive place to go after school, and parents said their children want the same (82 percent). Based on responses from 603 parents, it's clear that parents believe afterschool programs are critical in steering kids away from crime and improving academic performance and overall well-being.<sup>9</sup>
- A study released in October by the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO), *Afterschool Programs as an Oasis of Hope for Black Parents in Four Cities*, found that low-income and working class African American parents express a strong need for afterschool programs and feel hopeful that these programs will improve their children's life chances. In a study funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, researchers interviewed 407 African American parents, grandparents and caregivers regarding the quality and importance of public school and community based afterschool programs, and the factors that lead parents to enroll their children in them. The study showed that parents and caregivers hoped to see the programs improve their children's academic motivation, school engagement and achievement, and social skills.<sup>10</sup>



## GROWING QUALITY

Research affirms that quality afterschool programs have tremendous academic, social and behavioral benefits for children and youth, and polling and surveys show strong public support for afterschool. However, afterschool programs also need to incorporate quality practices employing well-trained and qualified staff, developing sustainable funding streams, and adopting clearly defined goals, assessments and standards if they are to generate positive outcomes for kids. In 2007, it became easier for afterschool practitioners to build skills, increase knowledge, advance their careers and develop the infrastructure necessary to deliver sustainable, quality services to children and youth as professional development, credentialing and system standards resources became more available.

### Federal Efforts to Enhance Afterschool Quality

On June 6, Senators Dodd and Ensign, who Co-Chair the Senate Afterschool Caucus, introduced the *Improving 21st Century Community Learning Centers Act of 2007*. The bill is designed to reauthorize 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and eventually be folded into the larger NCLB legislation. Specifically, the legislation aims to enhance program sustainability and quality by increasing the training and technical assistance set-aside from three to five percent, allowing state agencies to increase spending on staff training and technical support. Senators Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Robert P. Casey (D-PA), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Susan Collins (R-ME), Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) signed on as cosponsors. Dozens of national, state and local organizations endorsed the bill, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, YMCA of the USA, National Education Association, First Focus and America's Promise Alliance, National Recreation and Park Association, the American Heart Association, Communities in Schools, Save the Children, American Association of School Administrators, National Community Education Association and the National Afterschool Association.

### State Initiatives to Support Quality Afterschool

Policy makers, afterschool practitioners and experts are addressing the need to improve quality in a variety of ways. In 2007, a number of state-level efforts began to take hold:

- In a special session of the Connecticut General Assembly in June, language changes were made to the education bill governing state supported afterschool programs to include more aspects of quality programming. A parental involvement component was added, increasing accountability and assigning up to four percent of state afterschool funds to technical assistance, evaluation, professional development, program monitoring, and accreditation support.
- In August, the Maine Legislature passed LD 1369, which will create a study group to review and make recommendations for administrative or legislative action on ways to promote high-quality before and afterschool programs. The Maine Afterschool Network was asked by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the state legislature to conduct a study on the quality of programs and to make recommendations for policy, rules and standards.
- In California, as more than 4,000 school-linked afterschool sites opened in the fall, the state Department of Education worked to provide technical assistance and program

support. Efforts are focused on crafting a self-assessment tool to help afterschool programs achieve and maintain quality.

### **Developments in Achieving Quality: Credentials and Assessment Tools**

Credentialing opportunities for afterschool practitioners have emerged across the country over the past two decades as leaders in the field looked for ways to professionalize their work and sought opportunities to improve their practice. In 2007, Johns Hopkins University School of Education and the Center for Summer Learning developed its own credential, the graduate certificate in out-of-school-time (OST) learning. This online graduate certificate program launches in January 2008. The program features 15 credits that prepare program directors and managers at schools and community-based organizations to meet the unique challenges of leading and managing high quality afterschool and summer programs.

The OST learning certificate adds to options already available such as the Master of Education degree with a specialization in OST education developed by Citizen Schools in partnership with the Lesley University Department of Education. The fully accredited graduate program is currently only open to Citizen School's teaching fellows, but there is a possibility the program will be made available to others in the future. The two-year, 33 credit program combines classroom instruction with full-time work experience in a Citizen Schools program. It acts as a collaborative peer-to-peer support network creating a unique experience that prepares students to meet the challenges and needs of the field and their communities.

As states incorporate quality standards into their afterschool programming, it becomes increasingly important to have valid, quality assessment tools. In March 2007, the Forum for Youth Investment, with support from the William T. Grant Foundation, released *Measuring Youth Program Quality: A Guide to Assessment Tools*.<sup>11</sup> The guide outlines eight field-tested, high-quality assessment and evaluation tools that program practitioners can use to evaluate their programs. The guide outlines the purpose, structure, available supports and appropriate uses of each tool. Several systems across the country are already using the tools featured in the guide, in some cases providing training on how to implement them and making them a requirement. For example:

- The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) developed the Program Quality Self Assessment tool, one of the tools outlined in the Forum for Youth Investment guide. NYSAN also developed training sessions specifically designed to instruct program providers on how to meet the standards in the self-assessment.
- Another tool outlined in the guide, the High/Scope Youth Program Quality Assessment which focuses on evaluating the quality of the experience young people have in programs, is a mandatory requirement for the California Commission on Youth and Children in Long Beach, California; Prime Time PBC in Palm Beach, Florida; the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development and Polk County Youth Development Partnership; the Maine Department of Education 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program and Communities for Children and Youth Vista Team Program; the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan School-Age Care Alliance; the Minnesota Youth Work Institute – Center for 4-H Youth Development at the University of Minnesota; the New York State Office of

Children and Families; and KidsCount and the Providence After School Alliance in Providence, Rhode Island.

## **AFTERSCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER YOUTH**

Amid increasing concern about juvenile crime and rising drop-out rates, the demand for afterschool programs for older youth grew in 2007. With the exception of the Child Care and Development Block Grant which covers children up to age 13, most existing funding streams are not explicitly limited to younger children but nonetheless, most of their funds go to programs serving elementary-age children. For instance, only one-third of current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funding supports programs for middle and high school age youth.

### **Federal Activities at a Glance**

Along with Senator Boxer, Representatives Lowey and Regula, who co-chair the House Afterschool Caucus, are considering introducing legislation for an afterschool initiative for older youth. It would propose an investment in local and national afterschool “centers of excellence” that give low-income middle and high school students marketable skills, academic assistance, civic engagement/service learning opportunities, and connections to the community, thereby increasing their preparation for, and success in, high-quality college-track high schools.

The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS-Ed) Conference Committee demonstrated support for older youth programming by supporting a proposal to encourage increased funding for programs serving middle and high school youth. The L-HHS-Ed Conference Report includes language encouraging grantees to serve older youth: “The conferees intend the Department of Education to encourage states to use 40 percent of their additional allocations over fiscal year 2007, as practicable, to provide supervised and supportive after-school activities to middle and high school students.”

Numerous bills have been introduced that support middle and high school reforms and would explicitly make afterschool an allowable use of funds: the Graduation Promise Act introduced by Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM); Getting Retention and Diplomas Up Among Today’s Enrolled Students Act introduced by Senator Harry Reid (D-NV); and the Success in the Middle Act introduced by Representative Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) and Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Jack Reed (D-RI). Part or all of these bills have been incorporated into drafts of NCLB, which is currently in the reauthorization process.

On August 9, President Bush signed the *America COMPETES Act*, a comprehensive competitiveness bill focusing on improving STEM education. It authorizes a number of new afterschool and summer programs - providing for some \$33.6 billion for education programs at five federal agencies over the next three years. It will open some new avenues of funding for afterschool programs, if lawmakers appropriate the authorized funds. The law directs the U.S. Department of Energy to establish a new summer internship program for middle - and high school youth at the National Laboratories to promote experiential, hands-on learning in STEM disciplines and authorizes it to establish new outreach and experiential-based programs targeting underrepresented minority students to encourage them to pursue careers in STEM.

## State Initiatives

As mentioned earlier, in **California**, the infusion of \$428 million new dollars from Prop 49 allowed the state Department of Education to transfer 200 eligible 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantees to ASES funding. The transition of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants to ASES grants created the opportunity to increase funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETS) Program, which provides incentives for establishing before and afterschool programs that include academic assistance, educational enrichment and family literacy services at schools serving grades 9-12. As a result, 190 high schools across the state now receive ASSETS funding and \$27.5 million more will be awarded in early 2008.

**Colorado, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio and Rhode Island** received \$50,000 grants to expand and improve afterschool and summer learning programs for students as part of the Supporting Student Success initiative, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors Association for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The grants will be used to develop, adopt and implement state policies that better integrate afterschool, summer and extended day and extended year programs into state education systems. Each state will focus on improving or expanding different aspects of its current out-of-school time opportunities, including: recovery of high school dropouts; expanding afterschool for middle and high school students; developing state of the art systems to coordinate funding and align standards and evaluations; and expanding science, technology, engineering and math education.

Middle school students in **Kansas** will have more to do in the afternoons thanks to the leadership of Senator Laura Kelly who spearheaded the effort to pass the Kansas Middle School Afterschool Activity Advancement Grant. It will provide \$400,000 of new state funds for the next school year. The new grants will support afterschool programs promoting physical activity, career and higher learning opportunities, and academic enhancement for students in grades six through eight during the school year.

Given the continued focus on high school reform and ongoing concerns about global competitiveness and STEM skills, it is likely that meeting the needs of older youth will remain a concern for policy makers and the afterschool community in 2008.

## LOOKING AHEAD – OPPORTUNITIES IN 2008

2007 saw impressive accomplishments for the afterschool movement, however millions of children and families are still without access to the quality, affordable afterschool programs they need.

The coming year poses a variety of opportunities and challenges. The elections offer a chance to educate candidates at all levels and encourage them to incorporate positive afterschool messages into their platforms. Yet, with the country focused on elections, it may be harder to advance policy. Although *No Child Left Behind Act* is being discussed on Capitol Hill, reauthorization may not occur before the elections. Afterschool supporters must continue to reach out to members of Congress and build the support needed to influence reauthorization, whenever it does occur.

The afterschool community will continue to face a variety of threats: there remains an active movement to extend the school day or year at the expense of afterschool programs; states and cities are struggling to balance their budgets in a troubled economy, putting afterschool programs at risk. No matter what the threat, the afterschool community will have to protect and expand its funding and keep lawmakers focused on the need for more afterschool programs. Only consistent, effective advocacy can protect these programs.

Fortunately, the afterschool community is strong. It will celebrate the 10 year anniversary of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers in 2008 with real reason for pride. Programs are improving and stakeholders are becoming more sophisticated. But this collective work is far from over. In the U.S. today, 14.3 million children—one in four youth—are on their own after the school day ends. The parents of another 15 million children say their child would likely participate in an afterschool program, if one were available. In most cases, it isn't. The lack of afterschool programs is denying children important opportunities to grow and learn and instead leaving them vulnerable to risky behaviors that put their futures in jeopardy.

Strengthening afterschool programs means strengthening families, communities and the country. It is, quite simply, a mission that must succeed. The Afterschool Alliance will work closely with the community in 2008 and beyond to advance its goal to make afterschool available to all.

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