



fterschool Advocate

A media outreach newsletter published by the Afterschool Alliance

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MARCH MADNESS

[Education funding is hanging in the balance](#) as lawmakers continue to haggle over the fiscal year 2011 budget, which should have been completed in September of 2010, before the fiscal year began on October 1. Since then, Congress has passed six continuing resolutions – the most recent on March 14 – which fund the government bit by bit. These continuing resolutions have brought with them cuts to education and a very real [threat to the future of the 21st Century Community Learning Center \(21st CCLC\) funding](#) – the chief federal funding stream for afterschool.

The continuing resolution that is in place now will expire on April 8. Lawmakers have vowed this will be the final stopgap funding measure, and that the next step will be to produce a budget to take the government through the remainder of FY11.

At stake in the negotiations taking place in Congress right now are two years of education funding, with discussions about the budget for fiscal year 2012 happening concurrently with the discussions about funding for the rest of fiscal year 2011. President Obama has indicated he does not want to see any additional cuts to education as the process moves forward, but leaders in the House of Representatives say deep cuts, including to education programs, are needed.

“This is a precarious time for afterschool and education funding, and we look to afterschool champions, on Capitol Hill and around the country, to [keep the pressure on](#) all lawmakers and to remind them what’s at stake with afterschool funding,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant.

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PUTTING RESEARCH ABOUT AFTERSCHOOL TO WORK: NEW TOOLS FOR ADVOCATES

With local, state and federal budget battles putting the squeeze on afterschool programs, two new publications from the Afterschool Alliance should serve as powerful tools for advocates seeking to demonstrate programs’ effectiveness to school administrators, policymakers, potential funders, parents and others.

The first publication is an updated version of the Alliance’s [Evaluations Backgrounder: A Summary of Formal Evaluations of Afterschool Programs’ Impact on Academics, Behavior, Safety and Family Life](#). It includes short summaries of 25 separate independent evaluations of afterschool programs, including a number of evaluations of multi-site, nationwide or regional programs. Some of the studies date back as far as ten years, and three were released as recently as last year – a Policy Studies Associates evaluation of programs run by Citizen Schools in *Research continued on page ten...*

CALLING ALL ARTISTS!

The Afterschool Alliance’s [Lights On Afterschool poster contest](#) is officially underway! Students in afterschool programs are invited to submit [artwork](#) for consideration. The winning image will be printed on 70,000 posters sent to afterschool programs from coast to coast to use at their *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations. The image will also be featured on our *Lights On Afterschool* website. The deadline is May 11. *For more information, click [here](#).*

OUTREACH

Your Voice Makes a Difference – The 2011 *Afterschool for All Challenge*

The time is fast approaching for youth, parents, program providers, local lawmakers, and anyone who cares about afterschool to come to the nation's capital for the 10th annual [*Afterschool for All Challenge*](#).

The [*Challenge*](#), May 16 and 17, provides afterschool supporters with two days of empowerment and education, beginning with dozens of [afterschool-specific workshops](#) and culminating with vitally important one-on-one meetings with lawmakers.

Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) afterschool activities will be the special focus of this year's *Challenge*, celebrating the [Year of Science in Afterschool](#).

Be sure to [register before April 1](#) to take advantage of reduced rates!



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has resources for afterschool providers, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities. *To learn more, click [here](#).*

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

Grants for Youth Technology Education

The Entertainment Software Association Foundation is sponsoring grants of up to \$50,000 for programs that use technology and/or computer and video games to educate youth. Nonprofits and certain governmental units may submit project proposals, to be implemented in 2012 nation-wide or in a minimum of two states. The deadline is May 15. *For more information, click [here](#).*



IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

“As I’m working on the education committee in Washington, we’re looking around the country for programs that are working and I am very, very impressed with what I saw here today. I can’t wait to take this back to Washington with me and talk to the committee about it. These kinds of after-school programs are critical to the future development of so many of these students... The enthusiasm was very obvious, not only from instructors but the students as well. They are making learning exciting... We’re trying to look at ways to put Americans back to work. Part of that puzzle is education and we’re trying to find better ways to educate our students. On the national level, we doubled our education budget in the last two years but yet scores in reading, math and science have not improved. We’re throwing money at programs that are not working. Programs like this are something that we can get behind.”

-- Representative Lou Barletta (R-PA), after visiting the SHINE 21st Century afterschool program in Pennsylvania, *Times News Inc.*, March 23, 2011

“Few people would argue with the fact that students who are influenced by positive mentors to do homework, athletics and practice social skills in an after-school program will do better academically than students who are left to their own devices. However, public policy and funding virtually ignore the need to provide the after-school and evening programs necessary to turn struggling students into exceptional students... If as a society we are serious about closing the achievement gap, reducing crime and saving lives, we need to support programs that provide educational and athletic opportunities for social interaction that students need from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m....”

-- Dale G. Caldwell, president of the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission and former deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community

Affairs, [Home News Tribune](#), February 26, 2011

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

“FYC provided me with positive role models. I considered our mentors part of my extended family. We all shared a similar experience and they understood my identity formation. Growing up as a first generation Filipino-American, it was challenging to strike a balance between becoming Americanized and honoring the Filipino traditions. As much as FYC was a safe and nurturing place to hang out after school, I enjoyed it because it made me feel part of something that was bigger than me and bigger than my school.”

-- Diana Delfin, Washington, D.C.

To read Delfin’s story, and read more afterschool voices from across the country, [click here](#). Share your story [here](#).



IN THE NEWS...

California – As the reputation of a notoriously dangerous street in Citrus Heights has improved, so has enrollment in the area’s afterschool program. Demolition crews began knocking down vacant apartment buildings on Sayonara Drive last year, driving drug dealers and gangs out of the area. The afterschool program at the Sayonara Community Center, housed in two apartments on the street, has since seen its enrollment increase to an average of 70 children a day. Gladys Standard, director of the community center, attributes the increase to a greater sense of security in the neighborhood. “It’s wonderful,” she told the *Sacramento Bee*. “It’s quiet, it’s clean. We don’t have that negative influence hammering us.”

Colorado – Fifteen new afterschool programs are going strong at Emerald Elementary School this year, thanks to a grant from the

Broomfield Community Foundation which has allowed the school to start clubs and afterschool enrichment programs. Interest in the new programs – which range from yoga to guitar to computer lessons – has been high, and many are filled to capacity. The school is already looking for ways to ensure the afterschool programs will be able to continue next year, the *Broomfield Enterprise* reports.

Louisiana – A 21st Century Community Learning Center grant is helping students at three schools in St. John the Baptist Parish break into the movie industry and improve their grades in the process. With assistance from a local acting studio, the students are filming 22-minute movies that will premiere this summer at a red-carpet event. Students can only participate in the film project, and in other activities offered by the afterschool program, if they attend and show active participation in at least two days of tutoring for statewide achievement tests.

Oklahoma – Thanks to a grant from the Cherokee Nation, Grand View School will again be able to offer free before- and afterschool programs that were in peril when their 21st Century Community Learning Center grant wasn't renewed. Enrollment had dropped from 115 to 30 students last year after the school was forced to begin charging a fee for the program. The *Tahlequah Daily Press* reports that enrollment has more than doubled on some days since officials announced the removal of the fee, and the district expects participation rates to continue to increase.

Washington – Attorney General Rob McKenna says the state made the wrong decision cutting funds for afterschool programs, the *Tri-City Herald* reports. McKenna has proposed that some of the funds his office wins in lawsuits, which now go into a general state fund, be set aside for afterschool program grants. The proposal is part of his plan to reduce student involvement

in gangs. “Too many children go home to empty houses if they go home when school lets out for the day,” he said. “We need afterschool alternatives.” *Read more [here](#).*



LESSONS AND EXPERIENCES FROM CALIFORNIA'S PROP. 49

The Partnership for Children and Youth and the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families recently released a [report examining the impact of Proposition 49](#) (Prop. 49) on afterschool programs in Oakland and San Francisco. A ballot initiative approved by California voters in 2002, Prop. 49 (also known as the *After School Education and Safety Act*) created a specific funding stream of \$550 million for afterschool programs – the largest statewide investment in afterschool programming in the country.

The report finds that because of the legislation and investment, more youth were served across both cities, and the focus on and commitment to quality afterschool programs has increased. Additionally, it finds that more accountability for positive youth outcomes has led to a perception of increased program quality overall.

The report says, “both communities attribute the increased focus and attention to after school to the scale and magnitude of the anticipated Prop. 49 resources. One key informant in Oakland emphasized that, by virtue of the amount of funds available, planning for after school became a priority at the district-level for the first time.”

A challenge created by Prop. 49, according to the report, is a perceived loss of funding for programs that provided specialized enrichment (arts, recreation or tutoring, for example), as programs put a greater emphasis on academics. The report recognizes that the shift toward academic programming was caused by several external

factors, but recognizes that Prop. 49 played a role in this trend.

In addition, the report notes how Prop. 49 has changed relationships between city agencies, school districts and community-based organizations, affecting perceived power dynamics. For example, it notes that school principals became much more involved and played a bigger role in afterschool programming after the legislation took effect.

“The experiences of San Francisco and Oakland provide valuable information and perspective for other cities in California working through similar dynamics with Prop. 49 funding, and for other states or communities that may be considering creating dedicated after school investments,” the report says. The Oakland and San Francisco “experiences with Prop. 49 can also inform other collaborative, inter-agency efforts, for example those focused on community schools, summer, and other out of school time efforts.”

Download the report [here](#).



STEM IN THE AFTERSCHOOL STORYBOOK

Do you know an exceptional afterschool program that focuses on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)? Did an afterschool program spark your interest in the STEM field, or do you know of a program that is making a marked difference in your community? We want to hear about it!

As part of the [effort to expand STEM](#) in afterschool and summer learning programs, the Afterschool Alliance is looking to highlight exceptional programs that offer a successful STEM curriculum in the [Afterschool Storybook](#).

The Afterschool Storybook is a collection of stories of people and communities that have been transformed by afterschool programs. It features stories from around the

country, in the words of those who have been profoundly impacted by afterschool.

If you have an afterschool story to share, or would like to nominate a program from your community to be featured, we want to hear from you! [Submit your story](#) for the *Afterschool Storybook*, or get more information [here](#).



TEN YEARS OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

[Project Exploration](#), a Chicago-based afterschool program, has released a retrospective study of its science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education program. Based on 10 years of surveys and interviews with participating students, “[Project Exploration: 10 Years of Changing the Face of Science](#)” finds positive outcomes above and beyond generating interest in science for students traditionally overlooked by the field - particularly minority youth and girls. The study was conducted by evaluators from the Center for Research, Evaluation and Assessment at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley.

Notable findings include:

- Ninety-five percent of the program’s students graduated high school or are on track to graduate, which is nearly double the overall graduation rate at Chicago Public Schools.
- Additionally, 60 percent of the program’s alumni who are now enrolled in a four-year college are pursuing degrees in STEM-related fields.

In addition, the study finds that the afterschool program increased science capacity, provided opportunities for positive youth development and meaningful engagement in a community of practice that

nurtured relationships, and helped students learn from each other, envision careers in science and conceptualize their futures.

“These young adults have become engaged in a community of science learners whom they highly value and feel encouraged and supported by, with the result that they seriously consider pursuing science in their schooling, their work, and their lives,” the report says.

Learn more about Project Exploration and read the report [here](#).



NOMINATE AN INNOVATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM TODAY!

The Afterschool Alliance and MetLife Foundation are partnering again to develop and disseminate a series of Issue Briefs that address topics related to middle school youth and afterschool programs. [Nominate a program](#) by May 31, 2011 for a chance to receive a MetLife Foundation Afterschool Innovator Award and be highlighted in one of our [Issue Briefs](#).

Awardees and other notable nominees will be recognized in the related Issue Brief and in the final compendium. Winners will be notified this summer, and awards will be given out by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with the 2011 [Lights On Afterschool](#). Each of the five recipients will receive an award of \$10,000 to be used to continue or improve upon the highlighted program.

We need your help in finding programs that are:

- **Providing Opportunities for Service Learning for Middle School Students** – For exemplary middle school programs that are offering service learning opportunities to middle school youth by integrating

community service with instruction to enrich learning experiences, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen their communities.

- **Aligning Afterschool with the School Day for Middle School** – For afterschool that reinforces and complements the students’ regular academic programming in school and innovatively assists students in meeting state and local academic achievement standards in core academic subjects while also broadening their learning experiences.
- **Addressing Middle School Bullying** - For afterschool programs that address the issue of bullying in a novel and creative way to teach children the dangers of ostracizing their peers and ways to deal with bullies.
- **Supporting Literacy for Middle School Students** – For innovative afterschool programs that are excelling in promoting increased literacy, competent writing skills and a passion for reading among participating youth.

For more information click [here](#).



COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS MODEL GETS THUMBS UP IN NEW EVALUATION

A new and extensive evaluation of Communities In Schools (CIS) finds that its model of building local networks of support for students and schools is having positive effects around the nation on dropout rates, student academics, behavior, and attendance. Afterschool programs play an important role in the CIS model.

Those findings come from a new evaluation of CIS, conducted by the research firm, ICF International, with a grant from the

Atlantic Philanthropies. The five-year study examined the organization's efforts at the national, state and local levels, looking for evidence of impact on students, families, schools and communities.

The CIS model surrounds students with a community of support, with the goal to empower them to stay in school and achieve in life. At the invitation of local school systems, CIS provides a site coordinator to work with school administrators to identify student needs in the school and then builds a plan to address those needs. The coordinator then assembles a team, drawing on resources both in and out of the school. In addition to afterschool programming, the team members arrange such services as mentoring, tutoring, food assistance, family counseling, health services, and more. Along the way, CIS coordinators develop relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, and parent and volunteer organizations.

According to the evaluation, the more rigorously the local CIS program adhered to the model, the stronger the results, particularly in the area of dropout and graduation rates.

Other findings from the study addressed CIS's impact on families, schools and communities:

- Researchers found that, "Many principals and other school personnel [credited] Communities In Schools [with] helping them meet or make progress toward meeting their AYP [adequate yearly progress measurement]."
- "Many parents shared with the National Evaluation team that Communities In Schools helped them by helping their children. For some parents [who] felt ill-equipped to assist their children with homework, Communities In Schools provided the academic assistance that they were

unable to provide. This reduced stress for the parent and the child."

- Some stakeholders expressed the view that, "communities will be better positioned to attract businesses that will provide jobs for the local community because Communities In Schools is investing in the future of every community by investing in students and families today."

The full report is available for download [here](#).



DEFINING AFTERSCHOOL

The National AfterSchool Association is now accepting public comment on its official platform, a document that is reviewed and updated annually. The draft addresses a wide range of topics, from the needs of students, to the afterschool workforce, to quality in afterschool programs. *Read the platform [here](#), and email comments to National AfterSchool Association President and Chief Executive Officer Paul G. Young at pyoung@naaweb.org.*



LET'S MOVE!

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) is encouraging afterschool programs, physical educators, parents, school administrators and policymakers to host events during [National Physical Education and Sport Week](#), May 1-7, as part of the [Let's Move in School](#) initiative.

The Let's Move in School initiative works to increase physical activity before, during and after school through comprehensive physical activity programs, helping students get the movement they need to improve health and academic performance.

More than 800 schools and afterschool programs have already signed up to host an event during National Physical Education and Sport Week. The first 10,000 to register will receive a Let's Move in School poster.

Learn more about Let's Move in School and register your National Physical Education and Sport Week event [here](#).



FOOD FOR THOUGHT AT AFTERSCHOOL SNACK!

Learn what a “dinonaut” is and much more! Are you hungry for the latest news on afterschool? Be sure to check out [Afterschool Snack](#), the Afterschool Alliance’s up-to-the-minute blog on afterschool news, trends and information from across the country. Recent posts include:

- [For Effective STEM Learning, Afterschool is Key](#)
- [President Urges Youth to Enjoy the ‘Great Outdoors’](#)
- [Take the Challenge!](#)
- [New Issue Brief Calls for Quality Afterschool](#)
- [Afterschool Featured in National Collaboration for Youth Policy Agenda](#)
- [New Evaluation Backgrounder](#)
- [What HR 1 Would Mean for Afterschool Programs](#)

And be sure to tune in every Wednesday for a national news round-up, and throughout the week for your daily dose of afterschool. Check out Afterschool Snack [here](#).



RESOURCES

Afterschool Best Practices for Minorities

Child Trends has released [two reports](#) on the approaches that work best for African American and Latino children in afterschool and out-of-school programs. Researchers examined programs that target outcomes in areas such as reproductive health, substance use, physical health and nutrition. Among the findings: programs for African American children should meet more frequently than programs for other children; and programs for Latino children that target and support entire families produce positive outcomes. For more information, click [here](#).

Structuring STEM for Girls

Afterschool programs that focus on getting [girls interested in STEM](#) (science, technology, engineering and math) are important for getting women into male-dominated fields, the Harvard Family Research Project at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education concludes in a new report. It profiles six programs that have successfully implemented STEM programs for girls and generated positive outcomes, and outlines the challenges these gender-specific programs face. For more information, click [here](#).



March continued from page one...

“Time and again, research has demonstrated that quality afterschool programs are a wise investment. These programs keep kids safe, support student learning and helping working families – which is especially important as the economy starts to rebound and more parents return to the workforce.” [For more on the proven benefits of afterschool, read “Putting Research About Afterschool to Work: New Tools for Advocates” in this issue.]

Next on the Horizon

Speaking on March 14 at a middle school in Virginia, President Obama pressed for

reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (formerly known as *No Child Left Behind*) before the next school year begins this fall.

It is a goal shared by many lawmakers, though whether they can reach agreement is unclear. The President's remarks echoed those in the [Blueprint for Reform](#) his administration released last year.

"We are encouraged by the President's proposal to increase funding for 21st CCLC by \$100 million next year, but concerned about his plan to open 21st CCLC funds to other programs," Grant added. "Afterschool programs offer opportunities to engage students and offer opportunities for hands-on learning. We need to support these programs and ensure that as many students as possible have the chance to attend afterschool programs. Diverting afterschool dollars to other programs will mean fewer students are safe and supervised, with opportunities to learn, after the school day ends."

To keep informed of the latest in federal policy news, go to the [Afterschool Alliance's policy and action center](#).



Research continued from page one...

Boston, an evaluation by the state superintendent of schools in Wisconsin of that state's 21st Century Community Learning Centers program and a Policy Studies Associates study of the Beacon Community Centers Middle School Initiative in New York City.

In addition to short summaries of each of the studies, the backgrounder groups the lessons learned into a series of common themes. So, for example, the theme of improved school attendance and engagement in learning is supported by bulleted data points from 12 separate studies demonstrating afterschool's positive impact. The theme of improved test scores and grades is supported by 10 bulleted data points.

Other themes supported by data from the included studies are: frequency and duration of afterschool participation increases benefits; students at greatest risk show greatest gains; positive impact on children's self-concept and decision making; afterschool programs keep children safe; afterschool programs reduce truancy and improve behavior in school; afterschool programs help keep children healthy and afterschool programs help working families and encourage parental participation.

"We've tried to accomplish two things with this document," says Jen Rinehart, the Afterschool Alliance's Vice President for Research and Policy. "First, we want it to be scrupulously faithful to the data and the findings of the researchers. And second, we wanted to organize the researchers' findings in a way that would be most useful to advocates. With budget battles raging everywhere, we wanted this to be in a form that advocates could put these overwhelmingly positive findings to work immediately. The research is too rich and too telling for it to just sit on shelves gathering dust."

The second new publication from the Alliance is an Issue Brief, "[Quality Afterschool: Helping Programs Achieve It and Policies Support It](#)." The nine-page brief covers some of the same territory as the longer backgrounder, offering data from various studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of afterschool programs in a number of areas, including academic impact, attendance, dropout rates, parental involvement, health and safety and more.

It goes on to examine research that has identified characteristics of successful afterschool programs and synthesizes that research to highlight eight quality characteristics, including prepared staff; intentional programming; alignment with the school day; promotion of varied youth engagement; strong community partners; an emphasis on safety, health and wellness;

sustained student participation and access and ongoing assessment and improvement.

Finally, the brief summarizes and provides online links to a number of evidence-based tools to support afterschool programs as they strive for quality. These include offerings from the Southwest Education Development Laboratory's National Center for Quality Afterschool, the Forum for Youth Investment, the federal Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences' What Works Clearinghouse, Public/Private Ventures, the California After School Resource Center and The Wallace Foundation.

The new evaluations backgrounder is available for download at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/document/s/EvaluationsBackgrounder2011.pdf>.

The new issue brief is available for download at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_47/quality.cfm.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

April 6 – 9, 2011

The National Youth Leadership Council is sponsoring the National Service Learning Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. More than 2,200 people will participate in three days of general sessions, interactive workshops, thought leader spotlights, service-learning projects, and networking. The conference will include more than 100 exhibits, and more than 200 hands-on workshops and service-learning projects. *For more information, click [here](#).*

April 16 – 18, 2011

The National AfterSchool Association (NAA) will hold its annual convention in Orlando, Florida, featuring more than 200 member-led workshops designed to obtain new ideas, share best practices, and gather solutions to the challenges in the workplace. The 2011 NAA convention will focus on five primary themes addressing the key issues that afterschool professionals face every day: STEM Beyond the Classroom; Global Learning in Afterschool; Advancing the Afterschool Profession; Leading Afterschool; and Learning in Afterschool. *For more information, click [here](#).*

April 27 – 30, 2011

The Best Out-of-School Time Collaborative (BOOST) is sponsoring the BOOST Conference in Palm Springs, California. The conference will offer a blend of networking and team-building opportunities, exceptional workshop presenters, and the latest trends and research in out-of-school time programming. More than 125 exhibitors will share the newest resources, products and services to enhance programs. *For more information, click [here](#).*

May 16 – 17, 2011

The Afterschool Alliance will host the 10th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* in Washington, D.C. The annual event brings together afterschool leaders, advocates, educators, and local and state officials to discuss the hottest issues in afterschool, meet with Members of Congress and celebrate afterschool accomplishments. *For more information, click [here](#).*

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Alliance is proud to count among its founding partners the Mott Foundation, U.S. Department of Education, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

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