



HOUSE BLOCK GRANT PROPOSAL PUTS FEDERAL AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING IN JEOPARDY

A key education committee in the U.S. House of Representatives has voted to merge the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs into an education block grant, as part of legislation to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*.

The House Education and the Workforce Committee is proposing to combine 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) and other education programs into a general block grant that each state would decide how to apportion. “These [recent developments](#) make it more important than ever that afterschool leaders and supporters come to Washington, D.C. for the Afterschool Alliance’s [Afterschool for All Challenge](#) in May, and in other ways make the case to lawmakers for a greater federal investment in afterschool programs,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant.

Mark Your Calendars

[Registration is open](#) for the 11th annual [Afterschool for All Challenge: Transforming Research into Action](#). Afterschool leaders and supporters are invited to join the Afterschool Alliance in the nation’s capital on May 8th and 9th to help make the case to lawmakers that afterschool programs work.

The *Afterschool for All Challenge* brings together program leaders and staff members, *Federal continued on page five...*

FOUNDATIONS UNITE TO INFORM EXPANDED LEARNING EFFORTS, SHARE NEW RESEARCH

A coalition of foundations, including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the David & Lucile Packard Foundation, the Noyce Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, have joined together in a new initiative to support expanded learning efforts. The [Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project](#) is dedicated to sharing research and best practices to help schools and communities leverage time out of school in ways that accelerate student achievement. The Project launched with an overwhelming show of support that included the Afterschool Alliance and 450 other local, state and national organizations that have signed on as supporters of this important effort and its principles for expanded learning.

The Project identifies the following principles that quality expanded learning and afterschool opportunities incorporate:

- school-community partnerships;
- engaged learning;
- affordability and scalability;
- learning time after school and during the summer;
- family engagement; and
- health and wellness.

The Project’s website, www.expandinglearning.org, provides educators, parents and community leaders across the country with access to more than a decade of research and practice into how we can advance education through high-quality *Expanded learning continued on page nine...*

OUTREACH

We've all heard about Twitter, and some of us even tweet. But are afterschool providers and program leaders getting everything they can out of this fairly new—and very brief—form of social media?

[Twitter](#) is a micro-blogging system that uses posts of no more than 140 characters on any topic. It's an informal method of communication that often includes a link to a website, blog or image. Afterschool program providers and advocates can use Twitter to disseminate messages about the benefits offered by afterschool programs and engage in dialogue with members of the community.

Twitter can be a great way to:

- Promote new materials or studies;
- Build interest in upcoming events;
- Drive traffic to your website;
- Share news of interest to fellow afterschool providers or parents who follow you or your program;
- “Cover” live events, such as a *Lights On Afterschool* rally, that interest your followers;
- Support other afterschool programs in your area; and
- Gather feedback from parents.

If you're new to Twitter, getting started is easy. Consider signing up to follow the [Afterschool Alliance](#) (@afterschool4all).

Go to www.twitter.com, sign up for a free account and search for @afterschool4all. Click on the Afterschool Alliance's name, and then click “Follow.” You'll begin to receive Twitter updates from the Afterschool Alliance. You can also search for other Twitter users and follow them, too. Many of them will follow you back, and you'll start to build an audience!

Here are some tweeting tips:

- Don't forget that it's important to write interesting tweets. Look out for what captures your attention and develop your own “Twitter voice,” whether it's substantive, wry and/or upbeat, that meets your communications needs.
- Remember to tease readers: Give them enough information to pique their interest and get them to click through to your website for more information.
- Be accurate but forgo comprehensive—it's impossible in 140 characters!
- Don't forget to include URLs in your tweets so your followers can learn more about your work. But remember to use a URL shortener, such as bit.ly, goo.gl, or ow.ly.
- **Remember to be fully respectful of students' privacy in all your tweets.**
- And, of course, be careful about who has the login information for your Twitter account. You want to be sure you know exactly who is able to tweet in your or your organization's name!



FUNDING NEWS

The Afterschool Alliance's website has numerous resources for afterschool providers looking for new ways to raise money for their programs, including tips for initiating relationships with funders and businesses, and for identifying funding opportunities.

GRANTS/AWARDS AVAILABLE

World of Children Awards

The World of Children is accepting nominations for its 2012 awards, including the Humanitarian Award, which recognizes an individual who has made a significant contribution to children in the areas of social services, education or humanitarian services. The nominee must have created, managed or otherwise supported a sustainable program that has significantly contributed to children's safety, learning and growth for at least 10 years. The nominee must do this work over and above his or her normal employment, or work for little or no pay, and have a relationship with an existing nonprofit organization in good standing that can receive grant funds if awarded. A maximum grant of \$50,000 is available. The nomination deadline is April 1. *More information is [online](#).*

Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes

Each year the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes honors outstanding young leaders who have made a significant positive difference to people and the planet. Nominees may range from 8 to 18 years old and must have been the prime mover of a service activity and demonstrated positive spirit and high moral purpose in accomplishing their goals. Youth are nominated by responsible adults with solid knowledge of the young person's activities and who are not related to the nominee. Winners of the Barron Prize receive \$2,500 for higher education or their service project, as well as other honors. Nominations are due April 30 and winners will be notified in July. *Click [here](#) for more information.*

State Farm Service-Learning Grants

State Farm's Youth Advisory Board is interested in funding service-learning projects that address access to higher education or closing the achievement gap; financial literacy; community safety and natural disaster preparedness; social health and wellness issues; and environmental responsibility. Grants of \$25,000 to \$100,000 will be awarded to schools or nonprofit organizations with service-learning projects that will affect student achievement in their communities. The deadline is May 4. *More information is available [here](#).*



VISTA VOLUNTEERS GIVING TIME AND ENERGY TO AFTERSCHOOL

In 11 states across the nation, AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers participating in a unique Afterschool Alliance project are working to extend the reach of afterschool programs in their states and communities.

Founded as Volunteers in Service to America and incorporated into AmeriCorps in 1993, VISTA is nearly five decades old. The program was the brainchild of President John F. Kennedy. Building on the success of the Peace Corps, Kennedy envisioned a national service corps to “help provide urgently needed services in urban and rural poverty areas.” A year after Kennedy’s death, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation creating VISTA. Since then, more than 185,000 VISTA volunteers have served their nation. Today’s VISTA volunteers commit to one- or two-year terms working full time for a nonprofit organization or local government agency, with the goal of strengthening those organizations as they fight poverty, illiteracy and a host of other ills.

The Afterschool Alliance’s VISTA program places volunteers with state or local afterschool organizations to work on one of two types of projects. Some of the volunteers help afterschool programs achieve sustainability by working with school districts, parents, community organizations, businesses and others to find and secure the funding needed to carry on after their 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CLCC) grants have expired. A second group of VISTA volunteers works to expand afterschool programs’ participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) At-Risk Afterschool Meals and Summer Food Service programs.

Emily Harris is a 23-year-old VISTA volunteer working in Richmond for the Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School-Time, the state’s afterschool network. She reports

that she’s doing outreach to at-risk communities throughout the state, working to “make the USDA-funded nutrition programs accessible to out-of-school-time programs. I’ve been working with various organizations,” she says, “like the YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Department of Education, to get the word out and to try to create awareness about the reimbursements for snacks and meals.”

Harris says she comes to the program primarily out of an interest in hunger issues. “When applying to this VISTA program, I had already been very interested in food justice and the inequity involved when it comes to privilege and accessibility of good food. I felt that working as a VISTA for the Afterschool Alliance would be a great way to give the structural support that so many programs need to offer food to as many children as possible who may not have it otherwise.”

A few hundred miles up the road, 26-year-old VISTA volunteer Lisa West is working with her state network, the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, also to increase participation in USDA programs. “My work has primarily focused on conducting outreach in communities of need, especially Camden, Newark and Trenton, on the At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program,” she says. “Right now I am trying to recruit community organizations to administer this nutrition program for afterschool sites that do not have the administrative or financial capability to run it themselves. I am now organizing two events in Trenton aimed at this goal.”

“The At-Risk Afterschool Meal Program is new to New Jersey and is very much underutilized,” West says. “I am a native of New Jersey and I realize that poverty and hunger are often overlooked issues in our state.... The afterschool programs that have begun to use the Afterschool Meal Program have expressed to me the positive impact it has had on their students and how they now wish to do more by accessing backpack programs run through many of the area food

banks that provide children with food for the weekend. I have learned so much about the impact that quality afterschool programs can have on youth!”

Across the continent, VISTA volunteers Danielle Biselli and Mary Masla are helping programs in Salem and Springfield, Oregon, to achieve sustainability. Their work includes engaging community volunteers, creating long-term sustainability plans, gathering data and research to show the positive impact of these programs, and examining other programs’ sustainability models.

They, too, are working under the auspices of the statewide afterschool network, Oregon Afterschool for Kids (OregonASK). “Before starting my work, I didn’t know much about the world of afterschool,” says Masla. “After spending six months working with six school districts to create sustainability plans for their 21st CCLC-funded afterschool programs, I’ve learned an incredible amount! Every day, the true value of afterschool becomes clearer and clearer, as does the sheer quantity of things quality afterschool programs give to kids—including a healthy meal, academic support and engaging educational enrichment activities. I feel really lucky to be one of the first AmeriCorps VISTAs hosted by the Afterschool Alliance.”

The Afterschool Alliance launched its VISTA program in August 2011, naming its first six volunteers. Five more have come on board since then, with another set to join the program in April 2012. The program will eventually have 16 volunteers in 15 states and a 17th volunteer in Washington, D.C., helping to coordinate the volunteers’ work around the nation. The VISTA volunteers will be participating in the *Afterschool for All Challenge*. Learn more at a [session focused on sustainability](#).



STEM GETS AN ONLINE FACELIFT



The Afterschool Alliance has redesigned the [STEM](#) section of its website to make it more user-friendly.

Improvements include:

- Easier-to-find STEM [funding opportunities](#).
- Revamped [policy updates](#), including real-time bill tracking and ways to contact members of Congress.
- Easy ways to [get involved](#) with local programs and share passion and expertise with the next generation of STEM professionals.
- A [resources](#) guide with curriculum, assessment tools and partnership opportunities all in one spot.
- An interactive STEM [calendar](#) with upcoming events, program opportunities and funding deadlines. Afterschool programs can submit their events to alert the field.
- A [STEM Professionals in Afterschool](#) series, a new feature of [America’s Afterschool Storybook](#), where STEM professionals can share their experiences with volunteering in afterschool programs.

Check out the new STEM site [here](#).



Federal continued from page one...
community and business leaders, youth, parents, educators, advocates and elected officials from across the country to discuss the hottest topics in afterschool and meet face-to-face with policy makers to discuss the importance of federal support for the afterschool programs that keep our kids safe,

inspire them to learn and help working families.

At this year's *Afterschool for All Challenge*, afterschool supporters will explore the evidence for afterschool—how before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs are supporting a wide range of positive outcomes for students, families and communities. Afterschool experts and professionals working in the field will be on hand to discuss the latest research and describe how programs are already putting it to work to support continuous improvement.

Workshops and plenary sessions will address digital learning, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), physical fitness and program sustainability. Participants will also receive federal policy updates and analysis from Washington insiders, as well as in-depth advocacy and message training for those with all levels of experience. [Download Challenge session descriptions.](#)

Day 2 of the *Afterschool for All Challenge* kicks off with the “Breakfast of Champions,” at which state and national [Afterschool Champions](#) will be honored for their leadership and dedication to the goal of afterschool for all children and families who need these programs. Members of Congress and youth afterschool leaders will also deliver remarks. Following the breakfast, *Challenge* participants will head to meetings with members of Congress and their staff members. Last year, advocates from more than 40 states sat down with 220 members of Congress and their senior staff, in Washington and in district offices across the country, to express their support for a stronger federal investment in afterschool, before-school and summer programs.

Federal Update

Advocates come to Washington, D.C. as 21st CCLC is facing multiple challenges, as are many education, health and other programs. The House Education and the Workforce Committee vote to pass both

the *Student Success Act* (HR 3989) and the *Encouraging Innovation and Effective Teachers Act* (HR 3990) as part of ESEA reauthorization was 23-16 and along partisan lines. The *Encouraging Innovation and Effective Teachers Act*, originally introduced by the committee's chairman, Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.), fails to reauthorize the 21st CCLC initiative and instead establishes the [Local Academic Flexible Grant](#), which would replace 21st CCLC with block grants that local communities could use for any purpose. The legislation does not provide guidance or preference for afterschool activities or school-community partnerships. These block grants are likely to be less effective than the current 21st CCLC initiative in leveraging local resources and enhancing student success, the Afterschool Alliance warns; the organization outlined these concerns in a [letter](#) to Rep. Kline in January.

Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.), the ranking member of the committee, introduced a [substitute amendment](#) that would have reauthorized the 21st CCLC initiative and maintained a dedicated funding stream for expanded learning opportunities through school/community based organization partnerships such as afterschool and summer learning programs. The Afterschool Alliance sent a [letter](#) to Miller last month in support of his approach and in opposition to the block grant included in the *Encouraging Innovation and Effective Teachers Act*. Miller's amendment failed when the committee voted.

Eliminating 21st CCLC could lead to more than 1.1 million young people losing access to engaged learning programs that keep students safe, reinforce lessons taught during the school day and help working families.

“The actions by the House Education and the Workforce Committee were disappointing but not entirely surprising,” Grant said. “We are hopeful that the Senate won't pass this bill for a host of reasons, including that it would put afterschool programs in real jeopardy. But we have a tremendous amount of work ahead to educate lawmakers about how

heavily their constituents rely on afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs, and how essential they are to our country's future."

[Register](#) for the Afterschool for All Challenge by March 31 for the early registration rate of \$150 per person.

[Take action now](#) to support funding for afterschool programs in the appropriations process.



'GROWING UP IN A DOWNTURN': REPORT LOOKS AT ECONOMY AND KIDS, FAMILIES

A new report from the Salvation Army finds that the recession and its aftershocks have had a major impact on children and families. Four in five Salvation Army social service centers in cities throughout the United States have seen increases in requests for youth programs and services, including education, food, arts, athletics and youth ministries. Yet, since 2008, 41 percent of Salvation Army youth programs have been forced to cut back services or close completely.

As demand for Salvation Army youth services has increased over the past three years, the economy has pushed a majority of programs to capacity. Forty percent of Salvation Army programs are at full capacity, while another 16 percent are beyond capacity. "As a result, resources, including funding and staffing for these programs, are stretched to provide the same level of assistance as before the recession," according to the report, "[Growing Up in a Downturn](#)."

In October 2011, the Salvation Army surveyed 100 of its youth programs. The report represents the experiences of Salvation Army officers and employees who work directly with young people who participate in

its programs and examines trends in donations and volunteer rates for youth programs.

"Parents are struggling to meet essential needs such as rent, utilities, food and clothing," said Captain Katherine Jache, a corps officer in Pennsylvania, in the report. "Parents are no longer able to afford extracurricular athletics, proper tutoring, and at times even proper child care. The Salvation Army will try to meet as much of the need as we can, for as long as we can."

"Growing Up in a Downturn" also includes comments from youth on how the recession has affected them, such as:

- Savannah, age 7: "My mom has less time with us because she has to work a lot more hours."
- Thomas, age 11: "There is no space for me. My large family has had to move in together and now there are a lot of people in one small house."
- Indaizah, age 16: "We used to go to the beach, shopping and family activities, but that has stopped. Mom complains about taking us places because of gas prices."

Read the full report [online](#).



IN MEMORIAM: JOY DRYFOOS

The afterschool movement lost a fast friend this month with the passing of Joy Dryfoos, a founder of the Coalition for Community Schools.

Dryfoos was a prolific researcher and author who came to the community school movement by way of her work on teen pregnancy issues for the Alan Guttmacher Institute. From there, she once said, "I began to get interested in the fact that the schools couldn't really handle the increasing problems of educating kids without different kinds of interventions."

"More than any single person, Joy Dryfoos was the inspiration behind the

revitalization of the community schools movement in this country and the development of the Coalition for Community Schools,” wrote Martin Blank, director of the Coalition for Community Schools, after Dryfoos passed. “Joy was a rigorous researcher, who sought to help people understand the truth about the lives of disadvantaged young people. Joy was not content just doing the research; she pushed people to act and make changes to better the lives of young people.”

Afterschool Alliance Board Chairman Terry Peterson worked with Dryfoos over the years. “Whenever we met,” he said, “I was impressed by her unwavering enthusiasm for community schools and her unfailing commitment to improving the schools and communities in which our young people grow up. Her legacy is rich, and it includes more than 5,000 community schools across the nation. In the afterschool movement, we’re particularly grateful for Joy’s contribution, as reflected in the close relationship between community schools and afterschool programs. We’ll miss her deeply, but we’re reassured that her accomplishments will live on in the lives of the children her work has touched.”

In celebration of her life, the Coalition for Community Schools posted a [special page on its website](#) to showcase the work Dryfoos did during her life and tributes from her collaborators.



IN THE NEWS

CALIFORNIA—The state’s Department of Education has formed a new After School Division that will work to strengthen the department’s contribution to making before-school, afterschool and summer learning an integral part of K-12 education. Michael Funk has been appointed as the director.

CALIFORNIA—Last month, students from afterschool programs at Marina and Seaside

high schools began a 10-week project to build “solar suitcases.” The suitcases serve as power units and are “shipped to developing countries to use in emergency rooms to provide lighting and power medical devices to improve care and decrease infant mortality,” the *Monterey County Herald* reports. The afterschool program has a budget to build three suitcases, which cost about \$1,000 each. The students are documenting their efforts and raising funds in the community to build more units.

FLORIDA—Fourth-grade teacher Dan King founded the Ruediger Elementary Mathematical Drummers as a way to tutor his students in math, turning drum rhythms into fractions. King started the program a year ago and told the *Tallahassee Democrat* that the group helps the students with more than just math: “The [drumming] group as a whole has changed their willingness to work hard on their academics. And for some, I’ve seen them just blossom with more self-esteem.” Last month, some of the students showcased their drumming at the state Department of Education’s Black History Month program.

GEORGIA—Afterschool students with the Muscogee Youth Development Campus performed an adaptation of Shakespeare’s tragedy “Macbeth” last week as part of the Empowered Youth of Columbus program, which provides visual and performing arts training for at-risk youth throughout the city. Director Ann Tibault told the *Ledger-Enquirer*, “The real lesson of ‘Macbeth’ is making those choices. What the Development Campus tries to teach is that every decision you make every day leads to something.”

IDAHO—Blackfoot Community Center’s afterschool and early childhood education programs celebrated its fifth anniversary last month with face painting, rock-wall climbing and cake. The classes are so successful that construction of an 89,000-square-foot

recreation facility is underway. The new building will be a multi-sport facility that houses the center's current programs in addition to other sports leagues and family activities.

MASSACHUSETTS—After 170 students were shut out in the fall, the Peabody Boys & Girls Club afterschool program reopened its site at Higgins Middle School earlier this month after program administrators pieced together grants and donations. A local automobile dealership pledged \$50 for every car it sells to Peabody residents over the next four months. The Higgins Middle School principal told the *Salem News* that parents and students were excited about the Club's reopening.

VIRGINIA—The School of Education at Virginia Tech and the College of Education at the University of Kentucky were awarded \$1.3 million from the National Science Foundation to start an inquiry-based afterschool program for middle school students in Appalachia. Studio STEM: Engaging Middle School Students in Networked Science and Engineering Projects will use engineering design activities that integrate digital modeling, social media and game development tools to engage youth in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Middle schools in Pembroke, Pearisburg and Shawsville will pilot the three-year program.



Expanded learning continued from page one...
afterschool programs.

In addition to functioning as an online information hub, the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project is supporting schools and their community learning partners in developing affordable and sustainable approaches to expanded learning. As part of this effort, statewide afterschool networks

across America will host stakeholder summits to capture and share best practices and research about high-quality programs that expand learning opportunities in their states. Diverse stakeholders will be asked to discuss the extra opportunities and learning initiatives that would help students acquire the skills they need to prepare for college and careers and to be successful in life. Kicking off in Florida, Kansas, Indiana and Iowa, these summits will inform a national conversation on how to best leverage the time beyond the school day to accelerate student achievement in all 50 states.

New Research Underscores Benefits of Afterschool

For the Project's launch, researchers Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg shared the results of their meta-analysis of 68 studies of afterschool programs, which underscore the link between high quality programs and student achievement. They found that high quality afterschool programs are associated with:

- increased academic performance;
- increased attendance; and
- significant improvements in behavior.

In the analysis, "[Afterschool Programs That Follow Evidence-Based Practices to Promote Social and Emotional Development Are Effective](#)," the authors also show that early studies that were critical of afterschool programs were misguided in their attempt to collectively group all afterschool programs together, since not all programs are made in the same mold and programs offer a vast array of services to students. Instead, Durlak and Weissberg argue that studies should look at "what research-based design elements should be included to make [afterschool programs] more successful."

Their research identified four evidence-based practices that were predictive of academic and social success for students:

1. sequenced step-by-step staff training approach (S);

2. active forms of learning (A);
3. focused specific time and attention on skill development (F); and
4. explicit, defined skills that are being promoted (E).

Afterschool programs that followed all four practices were known as SAFE programs and were associated with significant improvements in a range of social, behavioral and academic outcomes among students. Durlak and Weissberg argue that afterschool programs that follow the SAFE approach are proven, worthwhile interventions for youth, and therefore the focus should be on developing strategies to expand upon these programs, rather than arguing about their merits.

Find out more about Durlak and Weissberg's research [here](#).



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“In Tallahassee, they are calling it early learning reform. But it’s really a latchkey kid creation act. With little notice, the Legislature appears ready to end subsidized afterschool care for up to 15,000 children between 5 and 12 years old who come from homes of poor working parents. Lawmakers say they are just reorganizing the state’s School Readiness Program to reduce the 75,000-person waiting list for subsidized care for infants to 5-year-olds. But pitting the needs of the youngest against those of school-aged children is a false choice.... Lawmakers want to overhaul the entire system, strip some local control and reduce aid for school-aged children (HB 7119 and 5103/SB 1924). Their argument: Science shows preschool intervention is far more effective in determining a child’s academic success. That’s fine, but what are thousands of working parents going to do when they lose their after-school care subsidy for their children? Quit working, or leave their kids home alone? ...This legislation has quietly

advanced and could well become law.

Florida should not be eliminating after-school care for thousands of working families to pay for care for infants. It should have the will and the resources to provide both.”

—“Bills Mean Retreat on Child Care,” *Tampa Bay Times*, March 1, 2012

Voices from the Afterschool Storybook...

By day, Victoria Sutton is an intellectual property associate at the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation in Madison. But after school, she empowers students through her work with the Adult Role Models in Science network.

Q: What’s the most fulfilling part about volunteering with the afterschool program?

A: “I love the opportunity to teach kids that science isn’t boring—learning science teaches you how the world around you works. In fact, the world is more understandable and more exciting when you have that knowledge and whenever you don’t understand something, science empowers you to ask questions and consider how you might begin to answer those questions!”

—Victoria Sutton

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



RESOURCES

National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks

A [new website](#) highlights the work and accomplishments of individual afterschool state networks and their collective impact.

Features of the new website include:

- [Network Profiles](#) with accomplishments, publications and events from each network.
- [Hot Topics and Resources](#) linking to more than 800 afterschool and expanded learning resources in key

areas like [global learning](#), [STEM](#) and [quality standards](#).

- Important [news](#) and upcoming [events](#) related to this work.
- [Network Community](#), which demonstrates collaboration among networks and provides easy access to a password-protected area where networks can connect with each other.

United Way Worldwide Out-of-School-Time Toolkit

Over the past three years, United Way Worldwide, with support from jcpenny, has provided grants and technical assistance to local United Ways to help them build and strengthen out-of-school-time opportunities in their communities.

United Way Worldwide has created an [online toolkit](#) to build on these efforts and leverage the work of previous United Way grantees—particularly their lessons learned, tools, and resources focused on collaboration, communication and coalition building—to improve youth access to high-quality programs. It is designed to help United Ways, as well as other programs working as part of broader out-of-school-time coalitions, adopt a systemic approach to improving out-of-school-time quality, access, sustainability, data collection and evaluation, and alignment and coordination, rather than piecemeal approaches focused on individual programs or funding streams.

Click [here](#) to access the toolkit. *For more information about United Way Worldwide's out-of-school-time work including this toolkit, please contact [Cortney Harris](#).*

Creating Quality

The Wallace Foundation and Big Thought have launched the new website [Creating Quality](#) to provide information, tools and other resources to evaluate and improve the quality of arts education and creative learning in schools, afterschool programs and summer learning opportunities. It offers a venue for teachers, community educators, artists,

principals, researchers, nonprofit and civic leaders, policy makers, and others to collaborate on strategies. Creating Quality includes:

- research, templates and articles,
- case studies featuring the work of schools, districts and nonprofits, and
- videos with commentary on the evaluation process from local and national leaders in arts education.



FILL UP ON NEWS AT AFTERSCHOOL SNACK!

How successful is afterschool in engaging youth in STEM activities? How can afterschool programs access funding to provide meals? What is the latest news on the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*? Find out all this and more in recent *Afterschool Snack* posts, including:

- [The PASEsetter Awards Celebrates Afterschool](#)
- [Recognition for Afterschool as a Learning Environment](#)
- [MetLife Releases Survey of the American Teacher](#)
- [Afterschool in Action: STEM Programs Engage Girls With Projects and Female Role Models](#)

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](#).*



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...**✍ April 1-4, 2012**

The National AfterSchool Association will host its 2012 convention in Dallas. Attendees include practitioners and leaders from before-school, afterschool and summer school programs; youth-serving organizations; 21st Century Community Learning Centers; parks and recreation departments; administrators from public, private, faith, school and community-based organizations; and local, state and national policy makers and reform leaders. *More information is available [online](#).*

✍ April 16-18, 2012

SYNERGY, a conference hosted by the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs, will be held in conjunction with a statewide Mayoral Summit at the Hilton University Place in Charlotte. The two events will bring more than 100 state and local elected officials together with afterschool program leaders to learn how to support and sustain before-school and afterschool programs, summer learning activities and other expanded learning opportunities to address a broad range of city priorities, including education, workforce preparedness, public safety and children's health. *Click [here](#) for more information.*

✍ April 25-28, 2012

The 2012 BOOST Conference is one of the nation's largest, most recognized and comprehensive conferences for afterschool and other out-of-school-time professionals. This year's event, themed "Redesigning Leadership in Out-of-School Time," will be held at the Palm Spring Convention Center in California. The conference blends networking and team-building opportunities with workshops addressing the latest trends and research in out-of-school-time programming. *More information is [here](#).*

✍ May 8-9, 2012

The Afterschool Alliance will host the 11th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* in Washington, D.C. The 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. Registration is now open! *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, jcpenny Afterschool Fund, Open Society Institute/The After-School Corporation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Creative Artists Agency Foundation.

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