

BLOG ABOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL CHALLENGE

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

Blog posts are usually short and conversational, so keep yours fairly brief. You also want to communicate the excitement and importance of the *Afterschool for All Challenge* and educate readers about the need for more resources to support afterschool programs.

SAMPLE BLOG POST: ADVOCATING FOR AFTERSCHOOL

Afterschool programs are vital to our nation's children, families and communities. But they're facing tough funding challenges. In the last few years, as budgets have tightened and charitable support has become harder to come by, many programs have trimmed back their offerings, reduced the number of students they can serve, or—in some cases—closed their doors.

This past week, I joined thousands of afterschool advocates from across the country in the annual [Afterschool for All Challenge](#), teaming up to send a message to Congress that we need to make afterschool a priority.

Sponsored by the [Afterschool Alliance](#), the *Afterschool for All Challenge* featured two main components. In Washington, several hundred advocates spent a day on Capitol Hill meeting with their U.S. Senators, representatives in Congress and their aides. Meanwhile, afterschool advocates in communities from Maine to California turned up the grassroots volume by joining in a social media campaign, sending hundreds of messages about protecting afterschool funding via Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr. I was proud to be part of that online army, working on behalf of children and families in our community who need and value afterschool programs.

The effort is particularly timely. At the federal level, afterschool funding faces a possible budget cut this year, only a few months after Congress and the President agreed to renew the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative. This February, the President proposed cutting funding for 21st CCLC by \$167 million. We're hopeful Congress won't go along, and will instead increase funding from its current \$1.167 billion level to \$1.3 billion. That would allow another 140,000 or so children to flourish in afterschool programs.

[Research](#) from the Afterschool Alliance illustrates just how far we are from making afterschool available to all children and families who need it. Among the most telling findings from the 2014 *America After 3PM* survey, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, was that the parents of 19.4 million children not already in afterschool programs say they would sign their kids up if a program were available to them locally. That's almost twice the number that are in programs (10.2 million), which means we've got a huge unmet demand for afterschool. To put it more clearly, our problem is that we don't have enough programs to meet the need – and a budget cut would make things worse.

That's why it's so important for lawmakers to resist efforts to balance the budget on the backs of schoolchildren.

By educating lawmakers about how afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families, we hope to secure the funding afterschool programs need to continue providing vital services to the community—here, across the state and around the nation. That was a message our lawmakers needed to hear, and we were proud to deliver it! Let's hope they heard us!