



## Blog about Your Trip to Washington, D.C.

Many school districts around the country have blogs where parents, faculty and other community members can 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 trip to Washington, D.C., for the *Afterschool for All Challenge*.

Blog posts are usually short, so keep yours fairly brief. You also want to communicate the excitement and importance of the *Challenge* and what it was like to meet with your Members of Congress and their aides, and to participate in this national advocacy effort.

### Sample Blog Post: Advocating for Afterschool

This week, I joined hundreds of afterschool directors, staff members, students and other advocates from across the country to spend two days in Washington, D.C., for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual [Afterschool for All Challenge](#), sponsored by the [Afterschool Alliance](#). We learned about how to educate policy makers, networked, and met with Members of Congress and their aides to encourage them to increase support for afterschool programs like the one here at [name of school].

Highlights of the *Challenge* included a day-long visit to Capitol Hill during which afterschool leaders met with hundreds of Members of Congress and their aides. The day began with the annual “Breakfast of Champions,” honoring afterschool leaders and supporters, including Members of Congress. Dr. Paul Sereno and Gabrielle Lyon, founders of Project Exploration, were honored for their work providing mentoring and hands-on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education opportunities for underrepresented minorities from underserved communities in Chicago. **[Insert information on anyone from your state who was honored or participated in the program. Or make note of any locally recognizable speakers.]** [City or state] conference participants met with [names of senators, followed by names of Representatives,] as well as aides to [senators followed by representatives].

Later that day, I had the opportunity to meet with **[list any senators or representatives from your state who met with your group, or “aides to” senators or representatives]** about how important afterschool programs are to our community and all they do for children and working families. **[Add interesting information about what senators, representatives or their aides said to you, being careful not to overstate what they said.]**

We carried critical messages about the proven track record of afterschool programs. President Obama’s recent budget proposal for fiscal year 2013 would hold funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) initiative, the principal federal funding stream for afterschool, steady. That’s good news, given budget pressures. But the budget would also allow 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants to be used for other programs. It’s important not to divert 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to other programs, no matter how worthy, so that we can make sure sufficient funding goes to afterschool, before-school and summer programs that focus on hands-on, engaged learning that complements and enhances but does not replicate the traditional school day.

From 2007 through 2010, we saw modest progress on federal funding for afterschool, but that progress stopped when afterschool took a cut in the 2011 budget. Nevertheless, we’re hopeful that as law makers learn more about the work we do in afterschool, we can sustain the federal commitment to our work.

[Research](#) from the Afterschool Alliance, sponsored by jcpenny, illustrates just how far we are from making afterschool available to all who need it. Among the most telling findings was that the parents of more than 18 million children not already in afterschool programs say they would sign their kids up if a program were available to them locally. That’s exactly the problem, of course: not enough programs to meet demand.



## Afterschool Alliance

The overall theme of this year's *Afterschool for All Challenge* was "Transforming Research into Action." Indeed, years of research have demonstrated that afterschool programs work, supporting a wide range of positive outcomes for kids, families and communities. We believe that by educating law makers about how afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire students to learn and help working families, we will have a chance to secure the funding afterschool programs need so that they may continue to provide vital services to the community, here, across the state and around the nation. That was a message our law makers needed to hear, and we were proud to deliver it!

For more information on how you can help, visit the [Afterschool Alliance](https://www.afterschoolalliance.org) website.