



Welcome to afterschool.now. The following email alert is produced by the Afterschool Alliance. It is designed to give friends and allies the latest news and information on afterschool policy developments, events and activities. We welcome your feedback. Please send comments, suggestions or new information to advocate@afterschoolalliance.org.

(This special large font .pdf version courtesy of Rosemead Kiwanis, an After School Alliance Partner – website rosemeadkiwanis.org; email: kcrosemead@aol.com)

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FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

As *Afterschool.now* goes to press, Congress has completed its Fiscal Year 2008 budget and sent an omnibus spending package to the President, who is expected to sign it. While Congress made cuts and difficult spending decisions in order to reach agreement with the President, the new package includes an increase of \$100 million for 21st Century Community Learning Centers – part of an overall increase of \$767 million above the President's request for the U.S. Department of Education.

"In these tough economic times, this year's budget has called for difficult decisions on funding. We are thankful that Congress recognized the needs of our nation's children and families and has increased funding for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant.

NEW STUDY: QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS BRING ACADEMIC GAINS

The new Study of Promising Afterschool Programs is making waves in the education community and getting attention from opinion leaders nationwide. Afterschool.now editors interviewed the lead author, Deborah Lowe Vandell, who chairs the education department at the University of California, Irvine, about the findings.

Afterschool.now: Please describe your study's key findings in terms of the academic impact of afterschool programs.

Vandell: This study showed that, for disadvantaged elementary and middle school students, regular participation in high quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits. These gains help offset the negative impact of lack of supervision after school.

Did you find behavioral improvements among students in afterschool programs as well?

Definitely. We found that regular participation in high quality afterschool programs significantly improved behavior, and reduced behavior problems for the students we studied... Middle school students who regularly participated in high quality afterschool programs also reported less use of drugs and alcohol. These results are four to six times larger than those reported in a recent meta-analysis of school-based substance abuse prevention programs aimed at middle school students.

How extensive was the study and what was your methodology?

Our study followed almost 3,000 low-income, ethnically diverse elementary and middle school students from eight states in six major metropolitan centers and six smaller urban and rural locations over two years. About half the students attended high quality afterschool programs at their schools or in their communities. The programs we looked at did not specifically aim to improve students' academic skills.

What should afterschool advocates be telling lawmakers about the study's results?

I see two important points. One is that the programs obtaining academic gains were not simple extensions of the school day. They were not just doing homework, not programs where there was a lot of drilling. They were doing learning in a different way. The reason we get these gains, I think, is that they were offering children a chance to learn in a different way. That's consistent with other research, too. So a lesson for lawmakers may be that a way to achieve gains afterschool is to use these alternative ways of learning.

The second point is that the programs where we had these positive effects were mature programs. They had been in operation for a minimum of three years when we started, and the study went for three years, so these programs were sustained for a minimum of six years.

The Study of Promising Afterschool Programs is co-authored by Elizabeth R. Reisner of Policy Studies Associates, Inc. and Kim M. Pierce of the University of California, Irvine. It was produced by the University of California, Irvine; University of Wisconsin - Madison, and Policy Studies Associates, Inc., and funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It is available online at <http://www.policystudies.com/studies/youth/Promising%20Programs%20FINAL.pdf>.

TASC STUDY: MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTERSCHOOL STUDENTS SHOW HIGH SCHOOL GAINS

New York City students who attended middle school afterschool programs had better ninth-grade attendance and earned more credits than students who did not, according to an independent analysis of students in afterschool programs supported by The After-School Corporation (TASC). In ninth grade, students who regularly participated in TASC afterschool in grades six, seven and/or eight missed an average of almost seven fewer days than similar non-participants, researchers for Policy Studies Associates found. In tenth grade, they attended school for approximately six days more. They also earned more credits toward graduation in ninth grade.

The findings in "After-School Programs and High School Success: Analysis of Post-Program Educational Patterns of Former Middle-Grades TASC Participants" are consistent with other recent studies, including a major, long-term study of children enrolled in LA's BEST, a citywide afterschool program in Los Angeles. It too found long-term gains for afterschool students. *The full text of the TASC study is available at <http://www.tascorp.org/content/document/detail/1758>.*

MANY MA STUDENTS NOT IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Concluding months of research, the Massachusetts Special Commission on Afterschool and Out of School Time released a report in November that finds that quality programs play a key role in making sure that young people realize their full potential to become well-rounded adults and responsible citizens. However, an estimated 80 percent of the state's children and youth are not participating in these programs because of cost, transportation and other barriers - and there is a significant gap in afterschool programs for older youth in the state.

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Afterschool programs have proven to help students do better in school, live healthier, and gain and practice the critical skills that allow them to compete in the new economy, the new report says. They also contribute to positive relationships among young people, which are critical to child and youth development, including healthy brain development.

Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth finds that afterschool programs provide a unique opportunity where all the key domains of child and youth development are linked. *The report is available at www.massafterschoolcomm.org.*

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"As a matter of public policy, we are building more prisons; we have more cells than we have schoolrooms. What are we telling our young generations to come? We can't give you an afterschool program, we can't give you this, we can't give you that, but we can give you 25 to life."

--Singer, actor Harry Belafonte, *Washington Post*, November 3, 2007

IN THE NEWS...

Arizona – Chickens, ducks and pot-bellied pigs have been among the guests at Catalina Foothills area afterschool programs, reports the *Arizona Daily Star*. The visits are sponsored by the Therapeutic Ranch for Animals and Kids afterschool program which strives to educate children about therapy animals so they can eventually accompany the animals to hospitals, homeless shelters and other sites. In a recent class, children fed and milked two pygmy goats while learning about the uses of goat wool and tasting goat milk and cheese. "My favorite part is when we learn stuff about the animals and you actually pet the animal and see it live," said one third-grader. *For more information, visit www.traktucson.org.*

Massachusetts – A new public health and safety initiative, the Violence Intervention and Prevention program, includes afterschool as a key concept. The initiative encourages city employees to leave their offices and venture to neighborhoods, knocking on residents' doors to inform them of city services. One program priority is "expanding participation, especially among middle school students, in well-supervised, high quality, afterschool programs by offering free transportation from community centers to children and youths." According to the Boston Globe, Mayor Thomas Menino said the program is "another step on the road map to reducing violence and destruction in the neighborhoods of Boston." *For more information, visit <http://www.cityofboston.gov/vip/>.*

Michigan – Bountiful fall leaves were no match for the youngsters at the Partnership Park After-School Program in Jackson. Although jumping in leaf piles was part of the fun, the main activity for students was their volunteer work to help older residents by raking and cleaning a Jackson neighborhood. "We just thought it was a good fall activity to do," Abbey Peterson of Catholic Charities of Jackson told the *Jackson Citizen Patriot*. "They are having a great time and working hard to get yards clean."

Virginia – This Thanksgiving, residents of 15 1/2 Street community in Norfolk were able to enjoy extra cheer, thanks to students at Seatack Recreation Center's afterschool program. The students organized a canned food drive to help their neighbors. The nine- and ten-year-olds sorted collected items according to type, separating corn, green beans and boxes of stuffing into paper bags. Younger students added Thanksgiving cards to the bags. "They made their own plan," activity center leader Jessica Guiton told the *Virginia-Pilot*. "When they start giving to their community, they see how much it makes a difference to people around them."

Washington – Coeur d'Alene Police Chief Wayne Longo was recently dodging to keep safe from dozens of youth, but in a good way. The Chief and other officers joined a friendly game of dodge ball with the Kootenai County Boys & Girls Club afterschool program. "They're not here to search you; they're not here to bother you. They're here to be your friend and help you succeed," Executive Director Ryan Davis explained to the children. The police visit is one way the program is helping youth view officers in non-confrontational settings. "The Boys & Girls Club is a proven program that helps reduce juvenile crime," Longo told the *Spokesman-Review*.

METLIFE BRIEF: CONNECTING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES

Education reform efforts are placing a strong emphasis on strengthening schools to improve student academic achievement. But schools are not the only place where students learn and grow. A new MetLife-Afterschool Alliance issue brief, "Afterschool: The Bridge Connecting Schools and Communities," analyzes the role of afterschool in linking a student's academic day to relevant enrichment activities during afterschool hours. The brief finds that afterschool is key to reestablishing relationships between schools and communities that ultimately give children greater opportunities for success. *To view it, visit* www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_bridge.doc.

T-MOBILE VOLUNTEERS TRANSFORM AFTERSCHOOL SPACES

Afterschool spaces nationwide went from dull to dynamic thanks to the time, talent and passion of nearly 2,200 T-Mobile employees who took part in *T-Mobile Huddle Up*, a national community service program connecting kids primarily from high-need, urban communities to positive places, people and programs. Through a series of one-day events, employees logged 17,600 volunteer hours building bookcases and picnic tables, painting park benches and educational murals, and landscaping outdoor areas. Ultimately, T-Mobile volunteers revitalized afterschool facilities in 12 locations.

"They did more work in a single day than any other group has done in the last five years," said Brandy Fultz, Branch Executive Director of the Redmond, Oregon Boys & Girls Club, after T-Mobile employees painted a 36-foot world map and murals outside the facility, among other activities.

Before each project, T-Mobile employees met with kids from afterschool programs, asking for input on interior and exterior designs that would generate pride and stimulate a positive atmosphere. A signature component to each afterschool "extreme makeover" is the *T-Mobile Huddle Up Zone*, a dedicated space offering an atmosphere for studying, socializing, learning and fun targeted at middle school students. Power players from the National Basketball Association rallied support for afterschool programs alongside T-Mobile employees.

T-Mobile Huddle Up events will culminate with the second annual T-Mobile Invitational, a gala basketball tournament for eight top high school teams, with 150 employee volunteers working side by side with 150 student athletes and coaches.

To help kids reach their potential and improve communities nationwide, T-Mobile established long-term partnerships with City Year and the Afterschool Alliance, and launched *T-Mobile Huddle Up* just over a year ago. Earlier this year, T-Mobile and the Afterschool Alliance launched the first-ever T-Mobile Huddle Up Afterschool Survey, which showed the high level of importance parents place on afterschool programs.

FREE TIVO BOX FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Afterschool Alliance supporters can get a free 80-hour TiVo Series2™ Dual Tuner DVR Box (a \$249 value) when they sign up for a TiVo service plan through the Afterschool Alliance's website. This special, limited time offer continues through December 31.

While there, sign up to receive Smart News, a bi-weekly newsletter of the Smart Television Alliance – a new campaign to improve quality children's television that is supported by the Afterschool Alliance, National Education Association, National PTA and others. The newsletter provides "top picks" and recommendations on how to make television an educational experience for your family.

Go to www.afterschoolalliance.org and click on the TiVo/KidZone box on the right side of the page for more information.

RESOURCES

Afterschool in the Rural Context

The Afterschool Alliance recently updated the issue brief "Afterschool Programs: Helping Kids Succeed in Rural America." The updated issue brief provides more recent information on the current challenges and opportunities facing rural programs, in addition to examples of programs that are successfully addressing the challenges of transportation, poverty, teen suicide, alcoholism and more. *The updated brief is available at*

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/issue_briefs/issue_rural_4.pdf.

New State Profiles and Federal Resource Database

The Afterschool Investments Project has updated its state profiles to provide snapshots of the "state of afterschool" in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. These fact sheets are designed for providers and policy makers alike. The Afterschool Investments project has also compiled a resource database on federal afterschool information, including tips on starting and operating programs, funding and curriculum. *The state profiles are available at*

"<http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/statep.html>. The federal resource database is available at http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/fed_resources.pdf.

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

"28 in 08," Sign-On Drive to Reach 28,000 Partner Milestone

Afterschool for All is launching a drive to reach 28,000 partners by fall of 2008. The sign-on drive, "28 in 08," will raise awareness of the 28 million children whose parents work outside the home. Many need quality afterschool care to keep their children safe and healthy after the school day ends. Advocates are making noise for afterschool by hosting Afterschool for All sign-on campaigns. Visit www.afterschool2010.org and click on the partner tools to download sample letters, petitions and response forms.

Afterschool for All totals 17,000 partners to date. Contact Marie Coichy, Project Manager, with questions or comments at mcoichy@afterschoolalliance.org or at 646/943-8662.