

Recommendations of the Afterschool and Out-Of-School Time Coordinating Council

A Report on the Importance of Afterschool and Summer Learning

October 2018



Photo by For Kids Only Afterschool, providing quality afterschool and summer programming in Massachusetts.

Table of Contents

03

Letter from Co-Chairs

04

Executive Summary

06

Introduction and Vision

09

Findings and Recommendations

Increasing Investment to Support Access to Quality Programs

Investing in a Quality Workforce

Leverage Local Partnerships Among Cities, Schools,
and Afterschool

Strengthen and Align State Oversight and Policy
Development for Afterschool and Summer Learning

31

Conclusion

32

Appendix A

Letter from Co-Chairs

Dear Friends:

We are proud of the work of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council and the commitment and dedication of our members to improve the lives of young people. Investing in our children must be the highest priority of our Commonwealth. And investment in education must include all of a child's learning time, both in and out of school. The evidence gathered over the course of our meetings, with input from local and national experts, demonstrates that "afterschool works." Afterschool helps children learn, helps families balance work and home, and helps employers tap into a well-educated, well-rounded and competent workforce.

The research is clear. Children who attend quality afterschool programs do better in school, get better grades, have fewer behavioral issues, have higher graduation rates, and are better equipped for college and career. Yet for every child in an afterschool program, two are waiting to get in. What we must do as a Commonwealth is invest in afterschool and summer learning as part of a full education agenda to give our kids the greatest opportunity for success.

In this report, we make recommendations that will solidify our status as a national leader in education, in and out of school, for all of our children, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or income status. Let's meet the unmet need for afterschool and summer learning and provide the equal opportunity for all that we aspire to achieve.

Sincerely,

Senator Brendon Crighton

Chair, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government

Representative Jen Benson

Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Acknowledgments of the Contributors to the Coordinating Council

We want to provide a special acknowledgement to Mayor, and former Senator and Co-chair of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Coordinating Council, Thomas McGee whose leadership and insight was instrumental in the Council's success.

The Co-Chairs of the ASOST Coordinating Council would also like to thank the following departments and organizations for informing deliberations and discussions of the Council: the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership, the MA Department of Children and Families, the MA Department of Early Education and Care, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the MA Department of Higher Education, South Shore Stars and MADCA, LEAP for Education, the Board of Library Commissioners, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley, the MA Department of Public Health, Fitchburg Public Schools, and parent representative Robert O'Dwyer.

Executive Summary

There is universal agreement that our Commonwealth has a responsibility to educate and prepare our children for success. This is not the first report to call for greater investment in our next generation so that all of our children have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential; however, in this report, we have gathered and documented current groundbreaking research on afterschool and summer learning that demonstrates the importance of investing in the whole child, in school, and as importantly, when out of school.

Since 2013, The Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council has received input from Massachusetts departments that serve children, youth, and families; diverse community-based organizations; local, state, and national experts; government officials; and afterschool and summer learning educators. The goal of the Council from day one has been to design a system of supports for programs that allow for more children to be served in the afterschool space and to heighten the quality of programming that is available. Achieving this goal will level the playing field for so many of the Commonwealth's children who are currently left behind, not for lack of ability, but for lack of opportunity.



To address the existing issues that programs face in adequately serving afterschool and out of school time programs, the Coordinating Council recommends that the following steps be taken to achieve success for our next generation.



Increasing Investment to Support Access to Quality Programs

Targeted investments in afterschool and out-of-school time programs will yield positive effects that make a lifetime of difference for our children. These strategies are grounded in research that shows that children do better when they attend quality afterschool and summer programs. They do better in school, in relationships with peers and adults, in behavior management, in skill development, in their college and career plans, and in their lives. We recommend that the Commonwealth:

- Address the state's growing waitlist
- Use cannabis revenue to support afterschool and summer programming
- Address programming gaps in rural areas of the state
- Use federal dollars to increase access and quality in programming
- Analyze our transportation system for students and bring greater equity and coordination to it
- Increase the Quality Enhancements in Afterschool and Out-of-School time Grant.



Investing in a Quality Workforce

Just as in the early education field, afterschool and summer programs struggle to provide their staff adequate pay, yet the common denominator for quality programs is the quality of the staff. We recommend that the Commonwealth:

- Increase reimbursement rates for state funded afterschool education so that salaries may be increased
- Invest in scholarship and loan forgiveness programs for staff
- Provide increased statewide professional development for out of school-time staff
- Develop a career track for afterschool and out-of-school time educators
- Provide specific guidance on the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards.



Leverage Local Partnerships Among Cities, Schools and Afterschool

A community-based approach to out-of-school time programming is an effective way to conduct afterschool and summer programming. Our recommendations are aimed at how best to support communities in creating an environment that embraces the positive impact that afterschool and out-of-school time programs can have on children. Some of these strategies include:

- Incentivizing public private partnerships
- Create tax incentives that will inspire business investment in programs
- Develop best practices that model partnerships that succeed in increasing quality and access to afterschool
- Create mechanisms for data sharing among stakeholders that improve children's outcomes.



Strengthen and Align State Oversight and Policy Development for Afterschool and Summer Learning

Coordination among state agency initiatives is sometimes a challenge. Often just better communication and information can solve these issues which are critically important for practical, effective and successful policy development for afterschool opportunities. Accordingly, we recommend that the Commonwealth:

- Create a statewide data and IT system for afterschool and summer learning
- Develop an alignment committee between all child serving state departments
- Implement the recommendations of the alignment committee
- Create an evaluation tool study
- Align professional development standards across departments
- Create a position in the Executive Office of Education to coordinate informal learning in Massachusetts
- Create an afterschool caucus in the Legislature.

This report documents in depth the research demonstrating why the above supports are necessary to benefit all of us. Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, thoughts, and suggestions to make this report possible. It is the Council's hope that this report is informative and assists the state in implementing a better system of administering afterschool and summer learning programs to children and youth so that we all share in a brighter future.

Introduction and Vision

In 2013, at the inaugural meeting of the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council (“The Council”), Terry Peterson, the Board Chair of the Afterschool Alliance and leading researcher of the field, stated, “With this Council in Massachusetts, you have a real opportunity to implement change never before seen in this country.” With this report, the Council offers recommendations that, if enacted, will position Massachusetts to be a model for the country in providing equitable, accessible, and quality afterschool and summer learning.

The need for afterschool and out-of-school time (ASOST) programs in the country and Massachusetts is clear. Young people spend nearly 80 percent of their time out-of-school. Research demonstrates that what they are doing in those hours will make a meaningful difference in student, school, and workforce success. We know that ASOST programs improve academic achievement, boost social and emotional competencies, create protective factors, enhance college and career readiness, and spark passions that directly influence youth decision-making about their futures.

Massachusetts consistently leads the country in promoting the well-being and educational success of its children. It ranked second in the nation in overall child well-being in 2017 and scored first in the sub-ranking on education.¹ Still, despite its high rankings, achievement gaps persist. The 2015 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reported that 8th graders in Massachusetts who were from disadvantaged backgrounds scored 10 percent lower in math than their peers who came from affluent backgrounds.² This was the 7th largest gap in the country.

The gaps are apparent in younger children as well. In a 2015 NAEP reading exam, which is designed to measure if 4th grade students can effectively locate, integrate, and evaluate information within texts and literature, the Commonwealth, as a whole, failed to reach the proficient level. English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income households all scored below the state average.



The Department of Early Education and Care recognizes the importance of programming during the critical after school and out of school time periods. ASOST programs provide a vital service for working families, while at the same time contributing to the positive development of children and youth. EEC is committed to serving school age children, and working in partnership to support efforts to promote the quality of ASOST programming.”

Thomas Weber, Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care

¹ <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2017kidscountdatabook.pdf>

² https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/MA?cti=PgTab_GapComparisons&chort=2&sub=MAT&sj=MA&fs=Grade&st=MN&yea=2015R3&sg=National+School+Lunch+Eligibility%3A+Eligible+vs.+Not+Eligible&sgv=Difference&ts=Single+Year&tss=2015R3&sfj=NP

ASOST programs (also referred to as expanded learning or afterschool and summer learning programs in this report) are defined as structured initiatives focused on enrichment and/or learning that takes place before the first bell at school, after the final bell, or during the summer. These programs are uniquely situated to improve the lives and achievements of young people. ASOST programs have been proven to especially help disadvantaged children and working families. One national review of quality afterschool opportunities found that elementary and middle school youth with daily access to ASOST programs improved their math and reading achievement, positive work habits, and social skills and that they were especially helpful to children from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and recent immigrants.³

The improvements in non-academic categories are especially noteworthy. Research shows that student success depends on more than just scores on reading and math exams. A thriving and comprehensive educational system must focus on the needs of the entire child both in and out of school. Global Family Research Project (then Harvard Family Research Project) found that ASOST programs boosted children's social and emotional learning (SEL) behaviors as well as health and wellness outcomes.⁴ Afterschool helps make young people more capable in a multitude of ways.

Many Massachusetts Students Lack Afterschool, Would Enroll in Programs if Available

Population of Massachusetts kids in afterschool, number of kids unsupervised during afterschool hours, those that would enroll if an ASOST program was available, and all school children, 2014

Students in Afterschool



196,562

Children Unsupervised
for Afterschool Hours



213,966

Students Who Would Enroll
in Afterschool if Available



362,312

Source: Afterschool Alliance

3 Deborah Lowe Vandell, Elizabeth R. Reisner, and Kim M. Pierce. "Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs: Longitudinal Findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs." Policy Studies Associates, Inc. 2007. Pgs. 3-6

4 Priscilla Little, Christopher Wimer, and Heather B. Weiss. "After School Programs in the 21st Century: Their Potential and What it Takes to Achieve It." Harvard Family Research Project. 2007. pgs. 6-8

Afterschool education is a diverse system with many avenues to student success. Expanded learning programs encompass a variety of subjects. These programs, when assessed on their specific goals, tend to reach measurable differences.⁵ For instance, an afterschool program focused on literacy should see its impact measure in reading achievement and not necessarily math scores. Thus, the informal learning space is able to provide specialized environments that cater to the needs of the individual children they serve.

And yet, most students lack afterschool opportunities even though many would enroll if such opportunities were available. According to an Afterschool Alliance survey, in Massachusetts, 196,562 students (19 percent of all students) are enrolled in afterschool programs but 213,966 are unsupervised in afterschool hours. In total, 362,312 students (44 percent of all students) would sign up for an afterschool program if they had the option.⁶

What are these young people missing out on? An equal playing field and their best possible educational career.

If Massachusetts is to combat inequity in its education system, it must look to ASOST programming as part of the solution. The state owes its young people and future generations quality opportunities through afterschool and out-of-school time programming.



5 McCombs, Jennifer Sloan, Anamarie Whitaker, and Paul Youngmin Yoo, The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE267.html>.

6 <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state=MA>

Findings and Recommendations



Increasing Investment to Support Access to Quality Programs

Appropriate Resources to Eliminate the Waitlist

The state should create a plan to eliminate the waitlist. According to the most recent waitlists maintained by the Department of Early Education and Care (“EEC”), there are 7,900 low-income kids over 5, who are eligible for ASOST services but who are currently waiting for care.⁷ According to a 2011 study from the Russell Sage Foundation, families in the top 20 percent of income spend nearly seven times as much on out-of-school opportunities than the lowest 20 percent.⁸ A family’s income status should not affect the ability of their children to engage in out-of-school time enrichment opportunities that lead to a well-rounded education. The achievement gap, it appears, is caused by this opportunity gap. As many other reports have also called for this important step,⁹ the waitlist has remained as a constant reminder of children left behind based on income.

Apply Cannabis Tax Revenue to Afterschool and Summer Programs

New local and state taxes from recreational cannabis sales should form the basis of a new funding stream. Communities have listed research and prevention as priorities for the new revenue. Research indicates that afterschool programs act as prevention programs. A study found that students participating in ASOST programs had lower drug misuse rates than their nonparticipating peers.¹⁰ Unlike other programs that focus only on prevention, ASOST programs effectively prevent drug misuse while incorporating all of the added academic, SEL, and economic benefits. ASOST is both a protective factor and



This year my family has three children in after school programs while my wife and I are working. Our children’s safety is paramount and we have full confidence in the programs. We also have great relationships with staff and leadership at those programs. We are grateful for after school programming and would be at a loss without them.”

Robert O’Dwyer, Parent & Member of the Council

7 Caseload Review 2-1-2018. EEC

8 Greg J. Duncan, and Richard J. Murnane, eds. *Whither Opportunity?: Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children’s Life Chances*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2011. <https://www.russellsage.org/publications/whither-opportunity>

9 Recommendations of the Special Commission on Early Education and Care Operations and Finance, Dec. 31, 2013.

10 Vandell, D.L. Reisner, E.R., & Pierce K. M. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the study of promising afterschool programs*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED499113>

creates protective factors for young people. Other states, like Alaska and California, that have legalized recreational cannabis are in the process of linking, or already have, linked revenue from cannabis sales to ASOST programming. Massachusetts should do the same and specifically funnel the revenue to programs that focus on promoting social and emotional competencies and learning.

Increase the ASOST-Q Line Item Grant

The Commonwealth should increase the Afterschool and Out-of-School Quality Grant (Line Item 7061-9611), the only statewide funding dedicated solely to ASOST programming, to \$5.5 million this year, with a plan for future investment to increase quality and access. Every year, there is more demand than supply for the grant and programs are turned down. Raising the funding to \$5.5 million would ensure that these programs that benefit children are adequately supported. The state has too long depended almost exclusively on federal funding to support these proven programs that improve student outcomes.

The state should also increase resources for grant programs like the English Language Learners (“ELL”) in Gateway Cities program that benefit ELL students and communities. These programs have shown positive results in promoting strong academic and SEL growth in non-native English speakers. Furthermore, the state should create new line items, grant programs, and other funding resources that benefit afterschool programs. The state recently funded a summer learning grant program (line item 7061-9814) that was informed by “An Act to Increase Access to High Quality Summer Learning Opportunities” (H2868). Currently funded at \$500,000, the state should increase its spending in subsequent years to support summer learning programs.

Massachusetts should match federal dollars targeted towards afterschool and summer learning. By matching funds that go toward established grant programs, the state can efficiently increase access for millions of children and youth. This may give federal officials more incentive to continue funding for state programs.



I believe out of school time programs that engage and support youth are key to high risk students graduating high school and being ready for college and their future careers. Our students tell us that we “have their back” and that makes all the difference.”

*Sheri Adlin, Executive Director,
Stars: Excellence in Education,
Enrichment, & Family Support*

South Shore Stars Program: Youth In Motion (YIM)



Weymouth, MA

Great afterschool programs look like the one designed by South Shore Stars. Its design is premised on understanding the population it serves. Stars focuses on developing positive adult/student relationships, engaging students in innovative activities, and providing them with organizational and problem-solving skills and real opportunities for success. Stars staff build positive relationships with students, balancing nurturing and holding them accountable. This requires trust and developing an understanding that adults have consistent and high expectations and letting students know they are capable, intelligent individuals.

All of this is being done in Randolph which is home to several underperforming schools, a highly diverse population, and a growing number of immigrants with a low level of English proficiency and limited resources. In 2014, nearly 60 percent of the town's high school students qualified for reduced-cost or free lunch and Randolph's high-school graduation rate was 76.5 percent compared with the state's average of 86.1 percent. But in the fall 2008, Stars opened an out-of-school time program at Randolph High School, for 30 students who were at-risk of being retained in 9th grade, which is highly correlated with dropping out of high school. During the planning process, Stars asked failing 9th grade students what they thought they needed to be successful. They responded:

- Someone at school who **"had their backs."** Most did not know who their assigned guidance counselor was and felt that they could not identify one single adult as their "go-to" person.
- Someone to hold them accountable. Most had working parents who did not have the time to make sure they got their homework done.
- Relatable adults, **"not someone who has been teaching since the 60's."**

Stars' participants are assigned to a team of 10 students, led by a Counselor who outlines strategies for organization, project planning and completion, study skills, and habits. Stars collaborates closely with the school. As one of the Freshman Team Leaders recently told us, "Stars is the missing link in helping our high-risk kids be successful."

Counselors have time before the program begins to collect homework assignments from classroom teachers and prepare the day's activities. Classroom teachers are invited to and attend Student Showcases and provide support to Stars' Homework Teams. School personnel are actively involved in ongoing program evaluation.

The Digital Media enrichment clubs, where students write and produce their own original music in audio and video recording; create and film public service announcement videos; and design graphic presentations for community business clients, are Stars most effective and innovative programming.

Throughout the past seven years Stars has been extraordinarily successful in supporting high-risk, high-needs students through graduation. The program has evolved from being sought after by the teachers of high-risk students to being equally attractive to the students themselves with a graduation rate over 90 percent. In addition, Stars has consistently maintained very high attendance levels, enrollment and a wait-list. While students have the option of enrolling for two or four days, more than 90 percent attend all four days. Students' positive relationships with program staff are the core contributors to Stars' effectiveness in attracting and retaining students. For these kids, Stars has their backs!



Without Stars, I wouldn't be in school."

– Jarod, Randolph High School sophomore

Leverage Federal Dollars

The enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”) has given states flexibility in their education plans. The state agencies should implement flexible funding criteria to allow for ESSA funds to be used in afterschool and summer learning. Title I of the law encompasses school accountability and interventions to help support students. These accountability and intervention measures can include afterschool programs. Title II contains sections on professional development and gives opportunities for states to train school day and afterschool teachers in coordination. Title IV subsection A provides funding for Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants which can be used to support STEM in afterschool, community schools coordinators, and Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) initiatives. Subsection B of Title IV funds 21st Century Community Learning centers, the largest federal funding stream for afterschool and summer programs. As the Commonwealth implements its ESSA state plan, they should communicate to districts that the flexibility of the plan allows for them to use funding for ASOST programs.

Invest in Access to Rural Areas

Sufficient funding for programs and transportation is especially dire in rural areas. In Massachusetts during the 2016-17 school year, 26,219 students were enrolled in schools in rural districts.¹¹ In these districts, poverty is on the rise. Nationally, 19 percent of children from rural districts live in poverty compared to 15% among non-rural districts.¹² Expanded learning programs have the opportunity to support these students in unique ways since programs can offer personalized informal learning based on the needs and resources of the communities they serve. Unfortunately, rural communities face more barriers to access than urban and suburban areas. With smaller populations, rural communities encounter funding challenges deriving from a limited local tax base and fewer available private partners. The smaller populations make staffing challenges especially difficult. A 2017 mapping study funded by the National Conference of State Legislatures confirmed that these barriers resulted in a lack of access to expanded learning programs in rural communities. A child’s location should not determine their access to beneficial programs. Programs in rural areas face obstacles to earn funding as many do not fulfill requirements necessary to apply for grants. The Commonwealth should create new funding streams that increase access to rural and underserved areas of the state.

¹¹ www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2018/01rural-schools.docx

¹² <http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net/content/rural-communities>

Conduct Study on Utilizing Existing Community Resources for Transportation

To find out how to best combat questions of access due to transportation, the Commonwealth should commission a study on afterschool and summer learning transportation systems. The study, to be conducted by transportation professionals, will discover what current transportation options exist and how to maximize their capacity. Additionally, the researchers will catalogue the systems that the state could better utilize to increase access to programs. The study will review and make recommendations on expanding public/private partnerships, expanding district resources related to afterschool transportation issues, and increasing funds for transportation groups.

Increase State Transportation Reimbursement Rates

Transportation is a costly yet critical part of afterschool and summer learning systems. It is often one of the largest barriers for children and youth to gain access to afterschool and summer programs. The current reimbursement rate for transporting a child round trip to and from afterschool is \$9, putting most of the cost on the program itself. Yet for other vulnerable populations, such as elders and those with developmental disabilities, transportation reimbursement can be more than three times higher. Increasing the reimbursement to programs will incentivize more programs to provide transportation services to kids who would otherwise not have it and increase access for our neediest families.





Invest in Supporting a Quality Workforce

Increase Reimbursement Rates for State-Funded Afterschool Education

Retaining qualified staff is important for the success of any program. Most employment positions in ASOST programs are part-time with near minimum wage compensation. In a survey conducted as part of the EDC alignment study, a participant reported, “We have high school grads and college grads while they are looking for full-time work. As soon as they find full-time work, we lose them.”¹³ High-quality programs are inextricably linked to a high-quality workforce.

Well-trained facilitators (field terminology for afterschool professionals who fill the role of educators) provide children with better learning experiences by effectively planning appropriate curricula and recognizing children’s individual needs. The education levels of all teachers are linked to significant gains in children’s early writing, language, and math skills as well social and emotional outcomes.¹⁴ Data on the educational attainment of the ASOST workforce is difficult to find; however, it is available for the early education field, which faces similar challenges. A 2009 study found that only 16 percent of child care workers and 32 percent of preschool and kindergarten workers achieved a bachelor’s degree or higher.¹⁵

To increase the skill-level of the ASOST workforce, the Commonwealth must prioritize compensation and incentivize degree attainment. EEC provides financial assistance to low-income families by establishing daily rates to reimburse programs that care for children who require financial assistance. This Daily Reimbursement Rate supports early educator, including ASOST, salaries and benefits and supports the professional development of educators. Both the Governor’s office and the legislature have supported rate increases and must continue their support for further rate increases that consider cost of living and inflation expenses. To ensure that reimbursements benefit employees directly, the Council recommends an adjustment to the formula that designates a certain percentage of the reimbursement to go directly to salaries and benefits.

13 Broadstone, M., Leavell, A., Schilder, D., Rivera, B., Kim, S., Paulk, S., & Sibley, E., & Crandell, J. (2016). *Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Indicators Alignment Study Final Report*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

14 Whitebook, M. (2003). Bachelor’s Degrees are Best: Higher Qualifications for Pre-Kindergarten Teachers Lead to Better Learning Environments for Children. Washington D.C.: Trust for Early Education; Howes, C., et al. (2003). Pathways to effective teaching. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 18: 104-120; Early, D. M., et al. (2006). Are teachers’ education, major, and credentials related to classroom quality and children’s academic gains in pre-kindergarten? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21: 174- 195; Pianta, R., et al. (2005). Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions? *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(3): 144-159; Kelley, P. and Camilli, G. (2007). The impact of teacher education on outcomes in center-based education programs: A meta-analysis. NIEER Working Papers. New Brunswick, New Jersey: National Institute for Early Education Research, The State University of New Jersey; ClarkeStewart, K.A., et al. (2002). Do regulable features of child care homes affect children’s development? *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17, 52-86.; Marshall, N.L., et al. (2003). *Family Child Care Today: A Report of the Findings of the Massachusetts Cost/Quality Study: Family Child Care Homes*. Wellesley, Massachusetts: Wellesley Centers for Women and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abt Associates, Inc.

15 Source: Fogg, N., Harrington, P., & McCabe, K. (2006). *Labor Supply Issues in the Organization and Delivery of a High Quality Early Childhood Education Program*. Northeastern University, Center for Labor Market Studies. Prepared for Strategies For Children.

Invest in Scholarship and Loan Forgiveness Programs for Staff

Salary increases will assist in retaining staff but are not enough to offset the tuition and fees that post-secondary degrees require. Some states like Pennsylvania and North Carolina have enacted financial assistance programs for early educators who wish to attain a higher degree. In Massachusetts, the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship program awards financial assistance to early education workers, including those in EEC-certified ASOST programs provided they continue to work in the field; however, it is difficult for many ASOST workers to fulfill the requirement that applicants must work at least 25 hours per week at a program since many ASOST programs only run 20 hours per week. The Commonwealth should take this into consideration and revise their requirements. Similarly, because the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship only applies to staff working with youth under 13, the Commonwealth should extend a similar program for ASOST educators who work in ASOST programs for older youth. The state can continue to promote educational attainment in the field by introducing a student loan forgiveness program. If a citizen of the state works at a program for a number of consecutive years, they should receive assistance in paying off any outstanding loans.

Provide Statewide Professional Development

Taking steps to build a quality workforce through increased compensation and assisted educational attainment is vital, but only the beginning. Supporting the development of ASOST facilitators will contribute to the continued improvement of programs. The main supporter of ASOST professional development infrastructure in the Commonwealth is the Educator and Provider Support (“EPS”) Grant. The EPS Grant “funds a statewide network of professional development and technical assistance resources that help build early educator competencies, improve instructional practices, and increase program quality.”¹⁶ Other professional development supports for ASOST include the ASOST-Q Grant and funds from 21st CCLCs through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“ESE”).



After 25 years in the private sector I know what skills are needed from our children and youth for them to achieve success. Afterschool and summer programming not only give kids the opportunity to learn but also the ability to make real world connections, explore careers and colleges and strengthen skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and self-esteem. With this report, the importance of quality after school and summer programs will be better understood as a needed extension of the school day and the recommendations will allow for more programs and equitable access for all students. I applaud the work completed by Council members and the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership and endorse the recommendations of the report.”

Linda Saris – Executive Director, LEAP for Education, Inc.

¹⁶ <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/fy2019-educator-and-provider-support-grant-fund-code-322>

The EPS Grant is currently embarking on a period of transition. Currently, the EPS Grant is awarded to an agency in each EEC region. That agency leads the professional development services for its region including coaching and training opportunities. These agencies had their own network of coaching professionals. In 2019, the region leads will shift to community colleges which will provide coursework as part of EEC's Workforce Development strategy. The Council recommends that the community colleges continue to use existing coaches and trainers who work with ASOST programs. Additionally, as they determine a new coaching model, the colleges should ensure that the model includes information specifically about ASOST programming as it has inherent differences to other early childhood education providers. To make certain ASOST is still supported in professional development, the Commonwealth should guarantee at least 25 percent of EPS funding to go to ASOST.

Develop a Career Path for the ASOST Workforce

Within many ASOST programs, career advancement is limited. The state should develop a career path for individuals who want to continue their career in the field. Without further state investment, afterschool professionals will continue to exit the field leaving a void in institutional knowledge within programs. Research shows that continuous positive relationships between afterschool staff and students produces better academic outcomes.

EEC is currently overhauling its Quality Rating and Improvement System ("QRIS"). In addition, they are developing a "career lattice" that will interact with the new QRIS. A career lattice shows a progression of potential roles as well as the training and levels of mastery tied to each role. Some include recommended salary rates for each level. A career lattice provides a clear vision of not only where advancement can take place, but how it can be achieved. As EEC develops a career lattice for early childhood educators, they should create a version specifically for those in ASOST roles. A career path will keep ASOST educators in the field longer, giving them a chance to positively impact more young people's lives.

Provide Specific Guidance and Training on HEPA Standards

Research shows that, with a focus on healthy eating and physical activity (“HEPA”), afterschool programs can help children reach the recommended daily amount of physical activity and promote healthy eating habits.¹⁷ With the obesity rate and the rate of type 2 diabetes rising among young children, the Commonwealth must make all possible efforts to encourage healthier outcomes. As defined by the National AfterSchool Association, HEPA standards are a set of guidelines for programs to teach children to make healthy food choices and to enjoy physical activity. Developed in response to a call to action made by First Lady Michelle Obama, the standards are based on research conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, the University of Massachusetts Boston, The Healthy Out-of-School Time Coalition, and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. As EEC and ESE move forward in revising their quality initiatives, they should incorporate HEPA standards into their rating systems to bolster young people’s health and wellness.



¹⁷ Thaw, J.M., Villa, M., Reitman, D., DeLucia, C., Gonzalez, V. and Hanson, K.L. (2014). “Evidence-based fitness promotion in an afterschool setting: Implementation fidelity and its policy implications.” *New Directions for Youth Development*. Downey, L.H., Peterson, D.J., LeMenestrel, S., Leatherman, J. and Lang, J. (2014). “4-H Healthy Living programs with impact: A national environmental scan.” *New Directions for Youth Development*.



Leverage Local Partnerships Among Cities, Schools, and Afterschool

Create Tax Incentives to Encourage Workforce Partnerships in Cities and Communities

Businesses in the United States lose an estimated \$50-\$300 billion per year in healthcare costs and reduced job productivity from working parents who do not have adequate afterschool support for their children.¹⁸ Specifically, they lose \$3 billion annually due to childcare-related employee absenteeism.¹⁹ If parents had access to affordable ASOST programs, working parents would be able to maintain productivity for their company while providing their children with valuable learning opportunities. Business investments in afterschool would produce immediate results for companies.

Not only are afterschool programs a boon for businesses in the present, but for the future as well. A 2015 survey by the Mass Business Alliance for Education found that two-thirds of Massachusetts employers have trouble discovering people with the right skills to succeed as employees. ASOST programs prioritize and cultivate these skills despite using differing terms to describe them (see chart on next page).²⁰

Young people participating in ASOST programming find themselves more prepared for the workforce. “Employability skills” are skills that companies demand from applicants.²¹ Research has found that when young people receive early work experience, they spend less time later in life unemployed and earn higher hourly wages and earnings.²² Early work experience and exposure has special importance for science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) careers. This is noteworthy as the workforce of tomorrow will comprise largely of careers in the STEM fields. Youth who participate in ASOST programs that focus on STEM activities report increased interest in pursuing a



A robust system of after school programs not only complement a school district but are necessary to making a truly comprehensive culture of learning that provide engagement points of success for all students.”

*Andre Ravenelle —Superintendent,
Fitchburg Public Schools*

18 Root Cause – Social Impact Research (2017). “Social Issue Report: Youth Career Development.” <http://www.rootcause.org/docs/Resources/Research/Youth-Career-Development/Youth%20Career%20Development-%20Social%20Issue%20Report.pdf>

19 U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2018). “Leading the Way: A Guide for Business Engagement in Early Education. Center for Education and Workforce.” Retrieved from https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Childcare%20Workforce%20Toolkit_March%202018.pdf

20 Ready for Work? How Afterschool Programs Can Support Employability Through Social and Emotional Learning, American Institutes of Research.

21 “Employability Skills Framework: Why was the Framework Developed?” CTE.ed.gov, accessed October 2017, cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/background/why.

22 6 Baum, C. L. and Ruhm, C. J. (2014). The Changing Benefits of Early Work Experience. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w20413.pdf>; Employment Policies Institute. (2014). The Lasting Benefits of Early Work Experience. Retrieved from <https://www.epionline.org/studies/the-lasting-benefits-of-early-work-experience/>

Employability Skills Framework



Source: Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education,
<http://cte.ed.gov/employabilityskills/index.php/background/why>

career in a STEM field when older.²³ Other ASOST programs for high schoolers can give young people opportunities to shadow professionals, intern at companies, apprentice in technical careers, and gain a host of other work experiences. Programs like Career Connections from LEAP FOR Education in Salem, Massachusetts, as well as Sunrise of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, and EVOLUTIONS After School Program in New Haven, Connecticut, provide opportunities for internships, career-themed clubs, and exposure to potential careers.²⁴

Some ASOST programs are currently assisted by private companies who have identified the need and benefits. For example, the Girl Scouts of Massachusetts receive funding from Raytheon for STEM initiatives and LEAP for Education receives funding from Applied Materials. System-level change for business investment will not happen from a few individual businesses. The business community as a whole should invest in afterschool to secure an adaptable and employable workforce while saving money in the present. A tax incentive promoting business and ASOST collaboration would create the conditions necessary to make Massachusetts a leader for private investment in ASOST.

Incentivize Partnerships Between Schools and Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Educating our children is a shared responsibility. As schools and CBOs pursue partnerships and share in the education of a well-rounded young person, they should share costs and resources. Schools often have space and other resources that CBOs do not have and that go untouched for part of the day. If given access, CBOs could utilize these assets to benefit their students while keeping collective costs lower. Creating a funding incentive would not only deepen and reward existing partnerships but would encourage additional schools and CBOs to create new and meaningful collaborations. Soon, the formula for Chapter 70 education aid, the Commonwealth's primary program for distributing K-12 public education funding to districts, will be reworked. During the revision process, the state should amend the language of Chapter 70 to include incentives for schools to partner with CBOs. Further research must be conducted on potential Chapter 70 changes.

23 Krishnamurthi, et. al, Examining the Impact of Afterschool STEM Programs.

24 http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_workforce_readiness_70.pdf

For Kids Only Afterschool



Everett, MA

For Kids Only Afterschool (FKO) is a model for the Commonwealth's afterschool field. FKO provides year-round afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities for more than 1,500 children and youth ages 5 to 14 annually across six communities. FKO meets the needs of children and their families through academic, social, and cultural opportunities that promote learning and self-esteem necessary for lifelong success.

FKO offers daily opportunities that encourage children to celebrate through holistic, experiential, hands-on approaches to learning. The curriculum is driven by the conviction that enthusiasm and confidence cultivated in out-of-school time learning translates into positive youth development and school achievements.

In 2007, FKO was invited to partner with the Everett After School Team (EAST), including Everett Public Schools, the City of Everett, the Joint Committee for Children's Health Care, and parent advocates, to deliver afterschool programming for K-8 students across all six elementary schools.

FKO's Everett programs now serve more than 500 students annually, offering healthy snacks, homework help, enrichment classes, outdoor play, and time for individual choice, relationship building and socialization. FKO closes for only 16 days per year and its full-day programming includes high-quality enrichment activities such as guest performances, weekly field trips and special events.

The following factors have been key to the partnership's success:

- FKO's blended funding model in Everett utilizes local, state and private funding to promote quality and maximize the number of low-income and high-risk youth who can benefit from the programming.
- Everett Public School Principals are powerful advocates for quality programming and key stakeholders take part in monthly meetings to address shared space, curriculum alignment,

and ongoing assessment and quality improvement. Full-time Site Directors also communicate daily with teachers and other personnel at their schools to share data and align practices.

- Programs located in Everett schools foster daily collaboration among out-of-school time and school-day educators.
- Programs are designed to ensure that every student can learn, grow and thrive. Many participating children come from low-income households and face many challenges. The following practices help FKO create a culture of acceptance, kindness and compassion.
 - Inclusion: The **Count Me In!** model offers tiered levels of support to ensure all youth are welcome, including those who have disabilities, have mental health challenges, are socially isolated, and/or have been exposed to abuse, neglect or trauma. **Count Me In!** focuses on creating positive environments, staff coaching, aligning school and afterschool behavior guidance policies, and small-group and individualized instruction for the highest need students.
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL): Staff integrate the teaching and learning of social and emotional skills into daily conversations and practices with children to increase their capacity for self-awareness, self-management, self-confidence, and social relationships.
- FKO's Everett programs use research-based tools to engage students, out-of-school time educators and teachers in evaluation. This helps hold programs accountable to clear standards and promote quality improvement.

Together, FKO and Everett Public Schools have worked throughout the past decade to create a citywide system for the delivery of quality, safe out-of-school time programming and continue to partner on strategies to expand and strengthen such opportunities for all Everett youth.

Support Data Sharing Agreements between CBOs and School Districts

As the Collaborative Approaches working group (see Appendix A for descriptions of working groups) explored the relationships among schools, businesses, CBOs, and out-of-school time providers, its members found clear research related to the benefits of positive relationships between schools and providers, specifically concerning data sharing.

The research points to data sharing assisting in the development of targeted programs by sharing demographic data that allows for the identification of gaps in resources. Programs improve when they participate in data sharing as it gives them comprehensive information on how students are performing and what curriculum needs they have. Cities like Nashville, Tennessee, have used data sharing agreements to access data about their students' reading levels and then use that data to provide afterschool reading tutors to students in need. An intervention like this in conjunction with increasing alignment between out-of-school time and the school day leads to programs and schools complimenting and supporting each other on curriculum. Identifying student outcomes across partnerships increases the field's ability to assess the impact of programs.²⁵



25 RAND Corporation, 2010. National League of Cities, 2012. After-School Data: What Cities Need to Know, The Wallace Foundation, 2012. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/after-school-data-what-cities-need-to-know.aspx>

Partnerships for Learning: Promising Practices in Integrating School and Out-of-School Time Program Supports, Harvard Family Research Project, 2010. <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ost-ptnrsf-for-lrng-report.pdf>

Year-Round Learning, Harvard Family Research Project, 2011. <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/11/06/hfrp-report-focuses-year-round-learning>

It is in the best interest of the Commonwealth and its families to support school districts that have entered into data sharing agreements with local CBOs. Data can help school districts identify gaps in afterschool access and improve educational attainment. The state can do this by prioritizing these partnerships when awarding state grant funding.

Despite the benefits of these partnerships, the legal issues surrounding data sharing can discourage groups from participating. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts to whom and under what circumstances schools, local educational agencies, and post-secondary institutions can disclose a student's personally identifiable information from records without the consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student. In spite of this restriction, there are ways to share data that comply with the current law. Anonymizing data, sharing with consent, or using an exception in FERPA are the most common strategies.

Once communities ensure they are following the law, they could encounter logistical challenges in the collection and analyzation of the data. These are legitimate barriers to implementing partnerships. If the Commonwealth hopes to encourage further partnerships, they should provide guidance on best practices for data sharing agreements, including legal compliance, goals, outcomes, and research. In FY 2018, on the recommendation of the Council, Massachusetts funded a Data Sharing earmark in the ASOST-Q line item. In order to collect meaningful data from the program to fully measure the impact of a data sharing program in Massachusetts, the legislature and Governor should ensure that project maintains its funding for the maximum of three years. After which, the legislature should consider funding new data sharing initiatives of similar design that expand to other school districts.



...provided further, that not less than \$100,000 shall be expended for the operation of a pilot data-sharing program designed to provide school districts with funds to partner with local community-based organizations and share identifiable student data to the extent allowed by law; provided further, that the pilot program shall be for not more than 3 years; provided further, that the afterschool and out-of-school time coordinating council shall recommend funds to 2 school districts for the pilot program; provided further, that the afterschool and out-of-school time coordinating council shall conduct quantitative and qualitative analysis on the pilot data sharing program; provided further, that the Massachusetts afterschool and out-of-school time coordinating council shall file a report on the effects of the pilot program on students participating in the programs partnered with the school districts with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives and the chairs of the senate and house committees on ways and means not later than December 31, 2018;"

The Data Sharing Earmark from Line-item 7061-9611

Evaluate Successful Partnerships and Provide Guidance on Best Practices

The Commonwealth should promote and expand municipal partnership systems that increase linkages between schools, CBOs, libraries, law enforcement agencies, cultural institutions, and relevant private companies. While acknowledging that one size does not fit all for municipal partnership systems, it is important to promote incentives for systems that have demonstrated successful partnerships. Schools that implement partnerships successfully are more likely to attain district educational goals.

In 2013, at least 77 of the 275 largest U.S. cities were working to coordinate afterschool options.²⁶ As groups of stakeholders like city agencies, schools, CBOs, and other organizations collaborate, they do more to improve access and quality in a city than any individual group can do alone.²⁷ Discussions and meetings with Council members affirmed the roles that libraries, law enforcement agencies, parks and recreation departments, local arts councils, and other cultural institutions encompass as potential collaborators with school and community-based afterschool programs to extend afterschool and out-of-school time learning opportunities for children and youth.

In a study of 15 cities, including Boston, the Wallace Foundation identified three distinct models of afterschool system governance structure: a public agency model, a network model, and a nonprofit model.²⁸ No model was inherently better or more successful than any other. It was most important for the model to reflect the context and needs of the community.



It has been an honor to help the ASOST Coordinating Council over the last six years. Afterschool and summer learning are such critical aspects of our educational system and the demand for these programs is growing. These policy changes should be a priority to help children and youth across Massachusetts find the supports they need to achieve."

Sarah Link — United Way Vice President, Community Impact, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

26 Simkin, Linda, et al., Is Citywide Afterschool Coordination Going Nationwide? An Exploratory Study in Large Cities, FHI360, Sept 2013. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/citywide-afterschool-coordination-going-nationwide-an-exploratory-study-in-large-cities.aspx>

27 Browne, Daniel, Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems, The Wallace Foundation, July 2015. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/growing-together-learning-together.aspx>
Bodilly, Susan, et al., Hours of Opportunity: Lessons from Five Cities on Building Systems to Improve After-School, Summer School, and other Out-of-School Time Programs, RAND Education, October 2010. <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/hours-of-opportunity-volumes-i-ii-iii.aspx>

28 <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Governance-Structures-for-City-Afterschool-Systems-Three-Models.pdf>



Strengthen and Align State Oversight and Policy Development for Afterschool and Summer Learning

Create an Afterschool Caucus in The Legislature

The Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council has been the leader in the Commonwealth on establishing ASOST programming as a priority. With the release of this report, the official work of the Council will conclude. To ensure that Massachusetts sustains its efforts to provide quality expanded learning programs to children and families, the legislature should establish an Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Caucus. Reflecting the Congressional Afterschool Caucus as well as other state's similar caucuses, the Massachusetts counterpart would build support for afterschool programs and increase resources for quality afterschool care as well work towards implementing the recommendations in this report.

Create a State Position in the Executive Office of Education to Coordinate Informal Learning in Massachusetts

A "Director of Afterschool Education" would oversee the coordination of all state agency activities related to afterschool and out-of-school time and would lead the implementation of other recommendations related to alignment. This includes coordination of the multiple child care funding initiatives. The Governor would also charge the Director with overseeing the implementation of recommendations from alignment studies and the creation of a statewide data and IT system for ASOST.

California, the leading state in expanded learning funding, formed an Afterschool Division within their Department of Education and established the position of an Expanded Learning Director to lead the new team. They are charged with developing and implementing a strategic plan to maximize positive outcomes for expanded learning in California. The leadership of the Afterschool Division and Expanded Learning Director has resulted in wide-encompassing strategic initiatives related to system support, grant administration and policy, communication and information systems, and partnerships between schools and expanded learning.²⁹

²⁹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/cp/documents/exldstrategicplan.pdf>

Public ASOST Programs in Massachusetts Have Wide Range of Funding, Most Below Evidence-Based Programs

Annual per-student funding of various ASOST programs, inflation adjusted FY 2018 dollars.

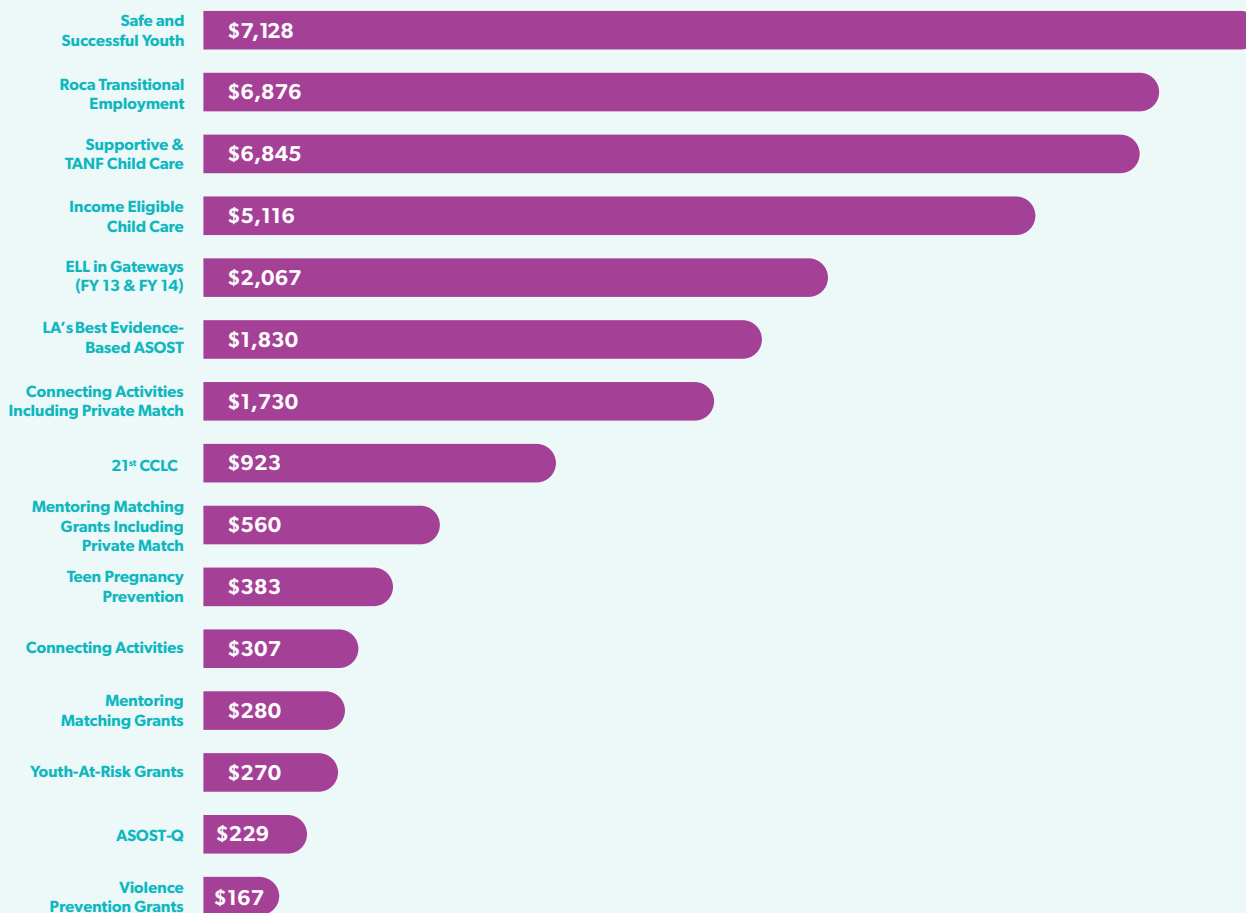


Figure 1: The Director of Afterschool Education would be responsible for coordinating the many line items seen in this chart

Create a Statewide Data and IT System for Afterschool and Summer Learning

In 2018, there is more data and information available than ever before; however, for afterschool and summer learning, this data is often scattered and buried underneath processes that make access to it exceedingly difficult. In the past, organizations have made efforts to create online systems to combat these inefficiencies. Many of these attempts have aided families and providers but are either incomplete, in need of updates, or unintegrated with other systems. Creating a statewide data and IT system specifically for afterschool and summer learning would provide policymakers, providers, and families with a host of benefits.

When parents and families are choosing afterschool and summer learning programs for their children, they must weigh a collection of factors. These include the number of nearby programs, what curriculum the program offers, whether the programs are licensed or license-exempt, what transportation options are available, and the level of the program's quality. Some districts have available information and EEC and ESE have their own databases to search for programs they license; however, EEC's searching tool does not distinguish between child care and afterschool. Additionally, resources like the NCSL-funded mapping project the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnerships completed in 2017 do exist;³⁰ however, the unconnected nature of these lists puts undue burden on families to do excessive and possibly incomplete investigation. For every parent who spends hours and days picking the perfect program for their child, another feels overwhelmed by the barriers. A centralized system would solve this.

When making decisions regarding ASOST, policymakers should have access to information about how many children programs serve, how much demand there is, how effective existing programming is, and other research. Once again, different organizations collect various data in multiple locations. It can take a significant amount of administrative effort to find current data on the number of students served and the level of funding that goes to programs. A simple, easy-to-understand database would make it easier for policymakers to access such information and to more effectively craft policies based on it.

For providers, participating in licensing and quality rating systems can be difficult due to the different requirements and trouble navigating the EEC's current online QRIS System, which is under review for improvements. Conversations with providers have revealed that they find the online aspect of participating in QRIS to be confusing and antiquated resulting in time lost attending to the day-to-day operations of their programs. In an interview conducted during the EDC study, one program administrator listed among their concerns "Data collection, reporting and analyzing take too much time away from giving our students what they need."³¹ An updated and streamlined version would give providers more time to dedicate to their students' needs. Additionally, program administrators believe their staffs should have access to more professional development. In the same survey as above, one requested "On line (sic) PD for staff to meet very specific QRIS Standards... Those are very hard to organize to get all the staff to them."³² Including available professional development trainings in a new system would work in conjunction with current communications to improve attendance for trainings.



Out-of-school time (OST) programs provide children and youth with safe and enriching opportunities to support their learning and development. High quality after-school programs complement and enhance a child's school day experiences, strengthen family involvement and engagement, and fortify school-community partnerships."

Report to the Legislature on AfterSchool and Out of School Time Quality Enhancements Grant: 2013, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

³⁰ <https://www.massafterschool.org/new-page-2>

³¹ Broadstone, M., Leavell, A., Schilder, D., Rivera, B., Kim, S., Paulk, S., & Sibley, E., & Crandell, J. (2016). *Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Indicators Alignment Study Final Report*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

³² Ibid.

In its Kids First Blueprint, the Massachusetts State Senate summarized “putting kids first requires putting all families first, and this requires a statewide-integrated program infrastructure to provide the necessary foundation to support early childhood development.”³³ ASOST should consider the same. Building on existing efforts, the Commonwealth should create a high-quality web-based IT system to provide ongoing information to policymakers, providers, and consumers regarding afterschool and summer learning data. This should include the numbers of children and youth served, quality rating system scores, available professional and workforce development training opportunities, and a consumer-friendly searchable database of licensed and license-exempt afterschool and summer programs by city and town throughout the Commonwealth.

Develop an ASOST Alignment Committee and Conduct Joint Meetings Among EEC, ESE, and EOE

Once appointed, the Director of Afterschool Education would create an alignment committee with members from the Executive Office, EEC, and ESE and implement a strategic plan to meet with and discuss areas of improvement with the committee. In addition to alignment on quality issues, the Director would collaborate with both groups to incorporate shared language on Requests for Proposals that are relevant to all programs. The authors of an alignment study regarding EEC and ESE recommended about such an alignment group “Members of the group should include not only those responsible for quality initiatives, but also those who provide ASOST programs not engaged in quality initiatives. For example, some child care providers offer ASOST services and are not currently participating in any ASOST quality initiatives but represent an important voice of ASOST providers whose perspective could inform future work to align initiatives and indicators.”³⁴

The state should support ongoing efforts by ESE and EEC to align youth development strategies. EEC and ESE are currently meeting to align evaluation tools that measure program quality and positive youth development. EEC and ESE are also exploring ways that conduct joint grant reviews and align standards.

33 Kids First: A Blueprint for Investing in our Future (Rep.). (n.d.). Retrieved <https://malegislature.gov/cc/reports/kidsfirstblueprint.pdf>

34 Ibid.

Implement Strategies Provided in Alignment Study

Alignment between EEC and ESE will require a sustained and coordinated effort to achieve results. Currently, EEC and ESE meet bimonthly to discuss areas of alignment with ASOST as one of many subjects discussed, and these talks should continue and focus on areas where consensus can be reached on standards.

Both EEC and ESE use official rating methods when measuring quality. As a result, programs are required to understand and participate in multiple systems of evaluation. An ideal system would see alignment in as many quality indicators as possible to create a clear and consistent vision of quality.

The “Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-Of-School Time Quality Indicators Alignment Study Final Report” identified 11 domains of quality across five sets of standards. Of those 11, the study found four domains had an aligned indicator while 7 did not. The agreement seen in these four categories (Interactions, Family Engagement, Curriculum, and Evaluation) relates the level to which both EEC and ESE value their importance; however, EEC and ESE need to conduct a review of research on whether success in these domains correlates with the overall quality of a program. The review should then expand to all 11 domains and determine which of the remaining are predictive of program quality. This will give EEC and ESE a comprehensive list of indicators the two agencies should expend the bulk of their institutional energy aligning. Even within domains that share a common indicator, there are multiple discrepancies. For example, indicators differ on which evaluation tools programs should use and how programs should select curricula. Additionally, the level of detail for indicators used



in each domain can vary greatly.³⁵ For instance, 21st CCLC quality indicators provide examples that programs must work towards compared to QRIS, which presents specific criteria in its indicators that a program must achieve.

The language within domains poses difficulties as well. It varies in such a way that the perception of differences in alignment is likely greater than what exists. ASOST providers indicated that not having shared definitions for all terms resulted in increased difficulty.

Conduct an Evaluation Tool Study

EEC and ESE should pursue more research on available evaluation tools and definitions of relevant terms. These avenues of research will benefit not only the two state agencies but providers and students. A better understanding of available evaluation tools will lead to the adoption of the most effective tools. Standard definitions of common terms will make it simpler for providers to participate in quality initiatives, attracting a wider range of participants and increasing the overall quality of ASOST programming across the board.

Other states have undergone similar processes to align their quality rating and licensing systems. These states reported that they had success developing a phased approach to creating a common vision, framework, and logic model as opposed to changing initiatives and associated indicators all at once. Beginning the process by focusing on the indicators that the agencies have in common reflects a replication of this model.

This study, meetings between EEC and ESE members, and Council discussions have provided EEC and ESE with a basis of information that can lead to a single set of quality indicators; however, in order to reach that goal, the Council recommends that the agencies should commission a study based on the above observations.

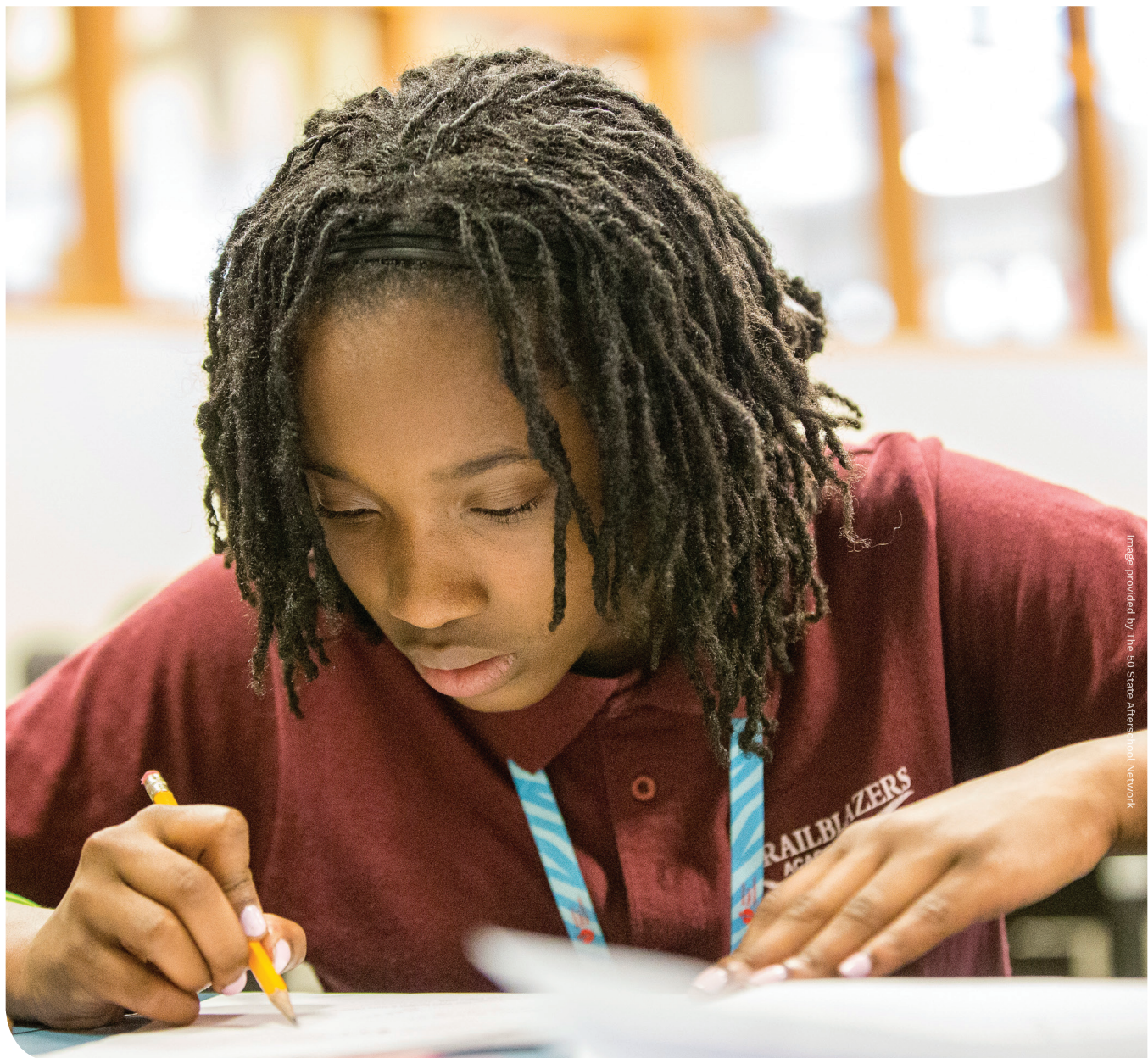
Aligning Professional Development Standards Across Departments

Similar to quality initiatives, challenges in training arise from alignment issues between EEC and ESE. To certify that individuals have completed necessary professional development hours, EEC and ESE require two different types of documentation. EEC asks for Continuing Education Units ("CEUs") compared to ESE's use of Professional Development Points ("PDPs"). Currently, ESE applies a formula to convert CEUs to PDPs so educators can transfer their professional development. EEC has no such formula and does not allow the transfer of earned credits. As ASOST facilitators often serve young people of various ages, they attend trainings applicable to both. As such, EEC should use ESE's formula for transferring credit so that ASOST educators receive credit for all completed training.

³⁵ EDC researchers counted QRIS indicators (67), Public School Child Care (104), COA (92) ASOST-Q (7) and 21st CCLC (26). See Appendix A and Database for more details.

Conclusion

Afterschool and summer programs work. They help students academically and socially, they support working families, and they will prepare our youth for college and career success. Research shows that if we want to eliminate the opportunity gap, afterschool and summer learning is key. The Commonwealth should be proud of our investment in education but we should also heed the clarion call for education equity. Afterschool is the smart investment to move us along this path for success for all children, regardless of their zip code or income status.



Appendix A

The History and Work of the Council

In 2007, the Special Commission on Afterschool and Out-of-School Time recommended the establishment of a Coordinating Council on Afterschool. Five years later in 2012, the Governor officially established the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Coordinating Council as a fifteen-person council and tasked it with researching resources and evidence-based strategies that best support children and youth in the Commonwealth during their out-of-school hours. In the five years since then, the Council has affirmed its place as the leader on understanding research on ASOST and establishing the direction of ASOST policy. With its five charges as guidance, the Council set about a half-decade of work on Afterschool in Massachusetts.

At its inception, the Council was charged with researching and making recommendations in five key areas:

1. The **ALIGNMENT** of efforts between the Department of Early Education and Care (“EEC”) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“ESE”).
2. **PROMOTING COLLABORATION** and strengthening coordination between school districts and community-based afterschool and out-of-school time programs.
3. **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** in the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce including enhancing opportunities for professional development and technical assistance.
4. **INCREASING ACCESS** for children and families to high quality afterschool and out-of-school time programming.
5. **SUSTAINABILITY** by encouraging both public and private investments in afterschool and out-of-school time programming.

These charges were made with the understanding that the Council would develop and implement policies that were based on collaborative partnerships and the enrichment of the youth in Massachusetts from accessing expanded learning opportunities (“ELO”). To reach these goals, the Council established three smaller working groups – Public Understanding, System Improvement, and Collaborative Approaches. Each group was designed to let members identify and research in-depth recommendations for their subject.

In its quarterly meetings, the Council saw presentations from a variety of experts that provided a basis for robust discussion and debate. At these meetings, the direction and actions of the Council were established. This section will summarize the work of the past five years that the Council engaged in on its five charges,



The ALIGNMENT of efforts between the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE).

Afterschool and out-of-school time programming serves young people ages 5-18 placing it under the regulation of state education agencies that serve the same age group. As a result, the Council is represented by all major departments involved in the funding and regulation of afterschool and summer programs. The two agencies with the largest impact on afterschool quality are the Department of Early Education and Care (“EEC”) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“ESE”). Both develop quality indicators and assess outcomes, but their policies can conflict. One agency may require an afterschool program use one tool to measure quality while the other may use a different one entirely. Oftentimes, the program must abide by both agency requirements and standards. Throughout the last few years, the Council has heard from agency staff, afterschool programs, and researchers on the impact this system has had on the overall state of afterschool.

On January 31, 2017, Meghan Broadstone from the Education Development Corporation (“EDC”) presented at a Council Meeting on the *Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Indicators Alignment Study*.³⁶ The study, released on August 26, 2016, was the result of EEC and ESE granting a contract to a team of researchers at the EDC. It was designed to provide analysis and recommendations about how to address the challenges faced by ASOST providers in regard to afterschool quality indicators. This included the MA QRIS Afterschool Out-of-School Time Standards Guidance (“QRIS”), MA ESE Quality Standards Public School Operated School Aged Child Care Programs, The Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality (“ASOST-Q”) Grant Program, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), and the Council on Accreditation. The authors of the study sought the advice of the Council and used the members of the Council as a resource as it conducted its research.

In her presentation, Dr. Broadstone noted that each of the quality initiatives use different measurement tools. Of the 11 domains used, only four had shared quality indicators. Unsurprisingly, ASOST providers noted that they had difficulty using different tools and that they had trouble moving up in quality due to the minor requirements that each different tool required. The Council would use this study as an asset and initial platform as it formulated recommendations related to its first charge.

36 Broadstone, M., Leavell, A., Schilder, D., Rivera, B., Kim, S., Paulk, S., & Sibley, E., & Crandell, J. (2016). *Massachusetts Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Indicators Alignment Study Final Report*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.



PROMOTING COLLABORATION and strengthening coordination between school districts and community-based afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

In the Spring of 2016, the Council recommended the creation of a three-year data sharing pilot project aimed at bringing schools and community-based organizations (“CBOs”) closer together. The Council announced the recommendation after it had identified barriers to information-sharing that afterschool programs and schools encounter. Based on examples from Seattle Public Schools in Washington and Grand Rapids Public Schools in Michigan, the Council found that the removal of these barriers resulted in benefits for schools, CBOs, and, most importantly, students. For instance, CBOs face difficulties accessing information from schools regarding student performance in classes, attendance, and behavior that could inform their program offerings. From the perspective of schools, it is a challenge to assess the broad scope of educational capacity within their districts. Many do not know what curriculum subjects programs offer and which of their students attend said programs. Such a data-sharing project was meant to address these challenges in one district in Massachusetts.

The Council recommended the allocation of \$300,000 for a three-year project that would enable a district and participating programs to outline a plan of action, assess the legal requirements for data sharing, and create a system for secure data transfer. The Data Sharing Project was added as an earmark to the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Grant Line Item in the Massachusetts FY17 budget; however, this represented a false start due to a mid-year elimination of the program. In FY18, the Council persisted in its efforts to create the pilot program and succeeded. The project avoided mid-year elimination and was funded benefitting future students.

Two years after the Council’s initial recommendation of a data sharing project, members of the Council gave input regarding the selection of a school district for the project. After an application process, the Council approved the selection of Salem. The Data Sharing Pilot will officially begin in the Summer of 2018.

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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT in the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce including enhancing opportunities for professional development and technical assistance.

For afterschool programs, program quality is linked to its workforce; however, when program leaders consulted with the Council, they emphasized that it was difficult to maintain a consistent workforce due to turnover caused by low wages and part-time work. The Council identified items in the state budget that would increase salaries and competencies. In Council meetings, members from EEC highlighted the Center-Based Child Care Rate Reserve Line Item (3000-1042) as an avenue to increase salary rates for center-based early education providers which include certain ASOST programs. The Council has worked to increase the funding for the line item each year. In FY 18, the budget funded it at \$15.3 million, an increase of \$8.3 million since FY15.

The Council identified an additional line item that would assist afterschool professionals. The ASOST-Q line item includes funding meant for the professional development of the afterschool workforce. Money from the grant program provides professionals with coaching, trainings, and professional development conferences that aim to increase the quality of instruction in programs.



Image provided by The 50 State Afterschool Network.



INCREASING ACCESS for children and families to high quality afterschool and out-of-school time programming.

In order to ensure that more families were aware of the available out-of-school time options, the Council's Public Understanding working group analyzed research and literary reviews on ways to educate the public. Over the course of the Council's existence, members of the Council assisted in implementing a communications strategy. Members like the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership ("MAP") wrote op-eds that appeared across a spectrum of local newspapers. These op-eds often mentioned available programs in the region that the op-ed appeared.

A 2017 Mapping Project conducted by MAP had two goals related to access. The project sought to become a resource for parents and families who wished to discover available expanded learning opportunities near them. The project also afforded an opportunity to the Council to examine the distribution of available programs. An analysis of the map revealed that the overwhelming majority of ASOST programs were located in high-density areas. Families in rural areas and smaller towns had fewer options to send their children if any at all.

ASOST-Q Funds



Source: Afterschool Alliance

With fewer options available in wider geographic areas, families need transportation options for their children to reach the programs. In its examination of how to improve access and system capacity for expanded learning opportunities, the System Improvement Working group heard testimony from experts and key stakeholders in the education field. These interested parties raised the issue of transportation repeatedly to the working group. Discussions at Council meetings reflected these concerns.



SUSTAINABILITY by encouraging both public and private investments in afterschool and out-of-school time programming.

In Massachusetts, there are a staggering number of budget line items that may be used for afterschool. Unfortunately, there are only a few line items specifically designated to ASOST. These include the 21st CCLC grant program and the ASOST-Q grant line item. The huge array of choices but subsequent dearth of resources has led to a growing problem in afterschool. There is no central resource center for afterschool grants and providers spend a large portion of their time looking for them. Over the last three years, the Council has worked to increase funding to known line-items and has heard testimony from budget experts and local providers about the impact the current disconnected funding landscape has on the afterschool system.

The Council has dedicated targeted efforts to increase the ASOST-Q Grant Line Item as it is the only statewide funding stream meant exclusively for expanded learning. Throughout the past four years, the funding for the line item has steadily risen. To better understand the specificities of the grant program, the Council saw a presentation on the real-world positive effects of the line-item from a specialist at ESE. She informed the Council that the grant program serves more than 10,000 students and 1,000 educators each year; however, funding only covered 65 percent of grant proposals received.

At a Council meeting in January of 2017, a Senior Policy Analyst from Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center presented on the opportunity for continued expansion of afterschool resources. As a result, the Council recommended hiring Mass Budget to conduct research on how the public and private sectors are investing in afterschool. From 2017-2018, Mass Budget interviewed members of the Council, conducted meetings with the working groups, and researched relevant funding. In the Spring of 2018, Mass Budget revealed a draft of the paper to the Council and received feedback and final recommendations. The paper "Investment in After School and Summer Learning in Massachusetts: Current Funding & Unmet Need" will be released in early 2019.

Report prepared by the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership under the direction of the Afterschool and Out-of-School-Time Coordination Council

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