



BUILDING *momentum*

A Solid
Commitment
to After School
Programs for
Pennsylvania
Youth



Philadelphia
**SAFE
AND SOUND**

Safe Kids. Sound Futures.

BUILDING MOMENTUM | MAY 19, 2005

SUMMIT PARTNERS

After School Activities Partnership
www.phillyasap.org

City of Philadelphia
www.phila.gov

Communities in Schools of Philadelphia
www.cisphl.org

Department of Public Welfare, Office of Child Development
www.dpw.state.pa.us/child

Free Library of Philadelphia
www.library.phila.gov

National League of Cities
www.nlc.org

Out of School Time Resource Center, University of Pennsylvania
www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc

Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network

Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth
www.pccy.org

Philadelphia Department of Human Services
www.phila.gov/dhs

Philadelphia Department of Public Health
www.phila.gov/health

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
www.rwjf.org

The William Penn Foundation
www.wpennfdn.org

United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania
www.uwsepa.org



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Meade (1901-1978)

Dear Friend:

These words remind us of the impact a collection of advocates and experts for children can have on the goal of achieving quality, affordable after school programs for youth in Pennsylvania.

Our summit, *Building Momentum: A Solid Commitment to After School Programs for Pennsylvania Youth*, was held this past spring in Philadelphia. It brought together after school program providers, child advocates, nationally recognized experts, and state and local policy makers with the aim to provide research, perspectives and strategy for a statewide effort to advocate for dedicated state funding for after school programs in Pennsylvania.

It is apparent that a small, dedicated group already recognizes the value of these programs. However, the summit also revealed that there is overwhelming support from voters across the State of Pennsylvania.

It is therefore our shared responsibility as advocates, community leaders, parents, and elected officials to put Pennsylvania on the right track to invest in activities that promote safe academic and development opportunities for youth in the after school hours. We are headed in the right direction, but there is much work to be done.

This briefing paper is intended as a guide as we continue to build on the momentum began by the summit. With a unified statewide effort we can work together through regional collaborations in carrying out an advocacy campaign that will ultimately secure dedicated funding for after school programs statewide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Lyons".

Charles Lyons
Acting President & CEO
Philadelphia Safe and Sound

Pennsylvania communities, children, parents and schools benefit from quality, affordable after school and youth development programs. These programs provide a safe haven, academic enrichment, preparation for the workforce, and crime and substance abuse prevention for kids between the weekday hours of 3 and 6 p.m.

Quality programs allow students to improve their school performance and give parents peace of mind to concentrate on their jobs knowing that their children are safe and supervised.

Research studies show the critical role quality, affordable after school programs play in the academic and social development of children and their transition into successful and productive adults.

Voters across Pennsylvania understand the value of these programs. They overwhelmingly support increasing state funding so that more families have access to quality, affordable after school programs.

Pennsylvania is devoting additional federal and state funding to after school and youth development, primarily through:

- ◆ Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) administered by the state Department of Education.
- ◆ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars allocated through the Department of Labor and Industry to support youth development activities, including youth employment training and preparation, during the out-of-school hours.
- ◆ Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars through the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to support child care subsidies for low-income children under the age of 13, which can pay for after-school program services.
- ◆ Federal and state child welfare funding through DPW to support youth development services in the out-of-school hours targeted to youth at high-risk of dependency and delinquency as a result of factors such as poverty, exposure to drugs and violence, and poor supervision.

“The world has changed, but school hours haven’t changed. After school programs are a three-for - they help with student achievement, they help with juvenile justice and they help with workforce development.”

Mark Valle, New Jersey After 3

Nevertheless, despite the needs of working families, the numerous government requirements for student academic achievement, repeated calls for safe places for children in the afternoon hours, and the documented value of quality programs, Pennsylvania still needs a comprehensive and coordinated statewide agenda and strategy for state investment in after school programs.

CREATING *CONSENSUS*

The Building Momentum Summit: Convening State and Regional Leaders to Pursue a Statewide After School and Youth Development Agenda

In May 2005, Philadelphia Safe and Sound joined other organizations and foundations in hosting a regional summit, *Building Momentum: A Solid Commitment to After School Programs for Pennsylvania Youth*. The summit brought together nationally recognized experts and advocates, state and local policy makers, after school providers, and philanthropic funders with the aim of providing research, perspectives, and strategy for a statewide effort to advocate for dedicated state funding for after school programs in Pennsylvania. This briefing paper is the result of the Building Momentum summit, serving as a guide to future efforts to expand and improve after school programs for more families across Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia Safe and Sound (PSS) is a leading independent nonprofit working to improve the health and well-being of children and youth in the Philadelphia region. Through research, advocacy, information technology and best practice program development, PSS fosters change and system reform with public and private organizations that serve children and their families. As part of its broader system reform role, PSS is a regional leader in advocacy for expansion and improvement of after school programs. Like other summit participants, PSS recognizes that such programs are sound and valuable investments in our young people.

Based on the presentations and advice of national experts in after school programming, philanthropy, and children's advocacy, summit participants concluded that three steps were vital to achieving the goal of expanding state investment in after school and youth development programs:

- ◆ Demonstrate public support for increasing state funding to expand and improve after school programs.
- ◆ Identify and engage the key stakeholders and establish a statewide grassroots network of advocates.
- ◆ Execute an annual advocacy campaign focused on a state appropriation for after school programs statewide.

The challenge for Pennsylvania's children's advocacy community is to convert these key conclusions into concerted action to achieve the goal of a sustainable and comprehensive state after school and youth development funding model.

“We are looking for many systems working together to provide an individual roadmap for kids.”

Feather Hushorn, William Penn Foundation

The Case for After School Programs: Why They Are Important to Pennsylvania Families

Lack of supervision of children and youth after the school day ends is a serious concern for Pennsylvania families. In Pennsylvania, 26% of youth are "latchkey children" who go unsupervised after school.¹ In contrast, only 9% of Pennsylvania youth participate in after school programs.² Pennsylvania ranks 31st in the nation in the percent of youth who are unsupervised after school and ranks 37th in the percentage of youth who participate in after school programs.³

The implications for Pennsylvania are significant:

- ◆ Studies by the FBI and others show that juvenile crime and juvenile victimization peak in the after school hours.⁴
- ◆ Teenagers are most likely to commit crimes, be victims of crime, get in an automobile accident, engage in sex, smoke, drink or use drugs during the after school hours.⁵
- ◆ Children without adult supervision during after school hours are more likely to have poor grades and higher rates of truancy, risk-taking behavior, and substance abuse.⁶

Participation in quality after school programs, on the other hand, can help children succeed in school, prepare for college and the workforce, and resist drug and alcohol use and other risky behaviors. Research shows that after school programs can:

- ◆ Help improve school performance, including higher grades, better school attendance, lower dropout rates and improved conduct.⁷
- ◆ Help prepare teens for college; one study found that teens in an after school program were twice as likely to go on to higher education.⁸
- ◆ Reduce the likelihood that children will be victims of crime or commit crimes.⁹
- ◆ Increase parent productivity in the workplace because they miss less time from work and are more confident of their child's well-being.

Investment in after school programs can save tax dollars. A study by the Center for the Prevention of Violence estimated as much as \$3 is saved for every \$1 spent on after school programs.¹⁰ A study of Philadelphia after school programs found that every dollar invested in after school and youth development programs returns direct savings of at least \$1.62, by reducing the need for more costly and intensive child welfare and child care services (without even taking into account reductions in juvenile justice costs from reductions in juvenile criminal activity).¹¹

"Together providers, parents, schools, business leaders, and community members can make the case that quality after school programs are a good calculated risk and an important part to closing the achievement gap."

Heather Weiss, Harvard Family Research Project

UNDERSTANDING *quality*

Key Components of Quality After School Programs

Nationally, child development experts point to quality after school programs as vital resources for kids, families and communities. Quality after school programs do not merely warehouse kids or provide an extension of what kids do during the school hours. They deliver constructive, interesting, age-appropriate activities for school-aged children and youth.

Quality after school programs include:

Academic and/or cultural enrichment or tutoring and homework assistance: A quality after school curriculum allows for 30 minutes or more of homework assistance, tutoring or other academic or cultural enrichment. Some programs participate with local theaters and museums to sponsor field trips to performances and exhibits. Several programs offer assistance with test preparation or tutoring for kids who need help with English as a second language.

A safe environment with adequate adult supervision: Working parents need choices of convenient, affordable, safe, supervised, quality after school programs to care for their children in the late afternoon hours. Studies show that kids who are left unsupervised between the hours of 3 and 6 p.m. are more likely to experiment with illegal drugs or alcohol and/or engage in sexual activity.

Physical exercise: As more emphasis is placed on addressing increases in childhood obesity and in conditions associated with obesity, such as diabetes, many after school programs are incorporating more opportunities for games of kickball, basketball and other physical fitness activities.

Youth leadership development and workforce training opportunities: Some after school programs for teens have a specialized focus on youth leadership or specific workforce skill development.

Community service projects: Community service projects are excellent activities to incorporate in after school programs. From a park clean up day or a mural arts project to youth tutoring, community service presents opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, leadership development and community improvement.

A strong youth voice in the program development: Quality after school programs encourage a strong youth voice in program development so that programs continue to be relevant to kids and include choices that engage and challenge kids. Programs should give kids the opportunity to take the initiative, make good choices and have fun.

Evaluation and performance measurement for continued improvement: After school programs must include self-evaluation and performance measurement in order to demonstrate the value of investment and the benefit to kids, families and communities.

Public Support for Increasing State Funding for After School Programs

Legislators and policy makers at the Summit stressed the need to see widespread public support for after school programs in order to gain the needed legislative support for increasing funding. An April 2005 statewide public opinion poll conducted by a leading research firm, Global Strategy Group, demonstrates a public will for increasing state funding for after school programs. The phone survey of 801 Pennsylvania voters found that legislators and government officials are on solid ground when they support increasing state funding for after-school programs across Pennsylvania. The poll showed overwhelming voter support for increased funding and confirms the public's feelings that after school programs are essential for kids, families and communities.

Key findings of the poll results are:

- ♦ Three out of four voters support increasing funding for after school programs (77% support; 18% oppose).
- ♦ This result is nearly identical to 2004, when 76% of voters supported increasing funding for after school programs and 20% opposed increasing funding.
- ♦ When asked if they would support this funding even if it meant a tax increase, two thirds of all voters still supported the increase in state funding for after school programs.
- ♦ Two-thirds (66%) of voters say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for public office who supports increasing state funding for after school programs.
- ♦ Nearly 6 in 10 (58% of) voters say there is a lack of affordable, quality after school programs available to families in the state of Pennsylvania.
- ♦ Two-fifths of voters (43%) think tutoring and homework assistance is the most important activity offered at after school programs. Job training and skill development is second at 16%.
- ♦ At the same time, voters also believe after school programs should be "more than another few hours of school" (78%) and not just an "extension of school" (19%).
- ♦ Voters believe after school programs help to address a number of issues facing children, including keeping them safe (84%) and preventing youth violence and crime (77%).
- ♦ Voters also believe after school programs help to address drug and alcohol abuse (70%), high dropout rates (65%), low school test scores (68%), childhood obesity and lack of physical exercise (64%) and teen sexual activity (57%).
- ♦ Voters who have ever sent their children to an after school program are more likely to say things have gotten better for Pennsylvania's children over the last five years (54%) than voters who have not (42%).
- ♦ Voters have mixed feelings about how the state government is addressing the issues facing Pennsylvania's children. Half of voters (51%) say the state government is addressing children's issues "somewhat well" and 31% say "not too well" or "not well at all".
- ♦ More voters think things for Pennsylvania's children are on the wrong track (42%) than headed in the right direction (36%). This is especially true in the city of Philadelphia (53% wrong track; 23% right direction), but not in the suburbs of Philadelphia (34% wrong track; 40% right direction).

The poll results indicate that a statewide advocacy campaign should include the message that increasing state funding for after school programs will provide more safe, supervised programs for kids until their parents get home. For more details on the poll, go to www.philasafesound.org.

"It's
not enough to
just do our jobs well.
We need to show what
we are doing, demon-
strate the public will,
and create inside
advocates."

Janelle Cousino, Afterschool Alliance

ESTABLISHING *the network*

A Statewide Network of Stakeholders for Grassroots Advocacy

During the Summit, national advocates and organizers from other states who have achieved dedicated funding for after school programs strongly recommended building a grassroots and grass tops advocacy network of statewide advocates and including stakeholders at the community level. Pennsylvania communities are less likely to achieve state funding for after school programs if they are working alone. A statewide network bringing together advocacy groups and local community programs would provide the consistent and broad-based grassroots and grass tops network necessary to achieve meaningful state funding for programs statewide.

There has been considerable progress in building such an alliance already in Pennsylvania. During the 2002 gubernatorial election, a coalition of some of the state's leading advocacy groups for children came together to form the Focus Five for Kids campaign. This partnership, which included Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, Philadelphia Safe and Sound, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, and the University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development, called on the gubernatorial candidates to make school readiness, health coverage for children, parental support, after school programs, and basic education top state priorities. Part of this agenda included a goal that school-age children and teens have access to quality after school and youth development programs that provide a safe environment with structured adult supervision; learning opportunities designed to improve educational achievement; training to teach kids to stand up against drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence and other risky behaviors; and youth employment and training opportunities to prepare them for the workforce. Focus Five succeeded in ensuring that after school and youth development and other issues affecting children were among the priorities of all the gubernatorial candidates, including the successful candidate and now Governor Ed Rendell.

“Through the Statewide Network, we are able to bring all of the players together so we can pursue concrete ways to expand high quality after school programs for Pennsylvania’s children and youth.”

Harrisia Dichter, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

More recently, a statewide coalition has been formed through the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network, which secured a grant from the C.S. Mott Foundation enhanced by state matching funds to solidify the Network. The Network’s purpose is to promote sustainable, high quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families. The Statewide Network has identified three goals:

- ◆ Create a sustainable structure of statewide, regional and local partnerships, particularly school-community partnerships, focused on supporting policy development at all levels.
- ◆ Support the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing after school programs.
- ◆ Support statewide systems to ensure programs are of high quality.

The fiscal agent for the Statewide Network is the Center for Schools and Communities. Network partners include Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania School Age Child Care Alliance, and Philadelphia Safe and Sound. In addition, activity is underway on the regional level. For example, the Philadelphia Afterschool/Youth Development

Network, formed through the leadership of Philadelphia Safe and Sound, is made up of key after school and youth development stakeholders. The goal of the Philadelphia network is to work together to ensure that high quality, affordable after school and youth development programs are available to all youth who need them. To meet this goal, the regional network has established the following five objectives:

- ◆ Improve program quality.
- ◆ Increase access to after school programs.
- ◆ Support school/community collaboration.
- ◆ Create a continuum of support.
- ◆ Measure outcomes/impact.

Based on the advice of Summit participants, Pennsylvania's network should ensure that the following community stakeholders are engaged in grassroots and grass tops advocacy efforts: after school program providers; parents; kids; community leaders; law enforcement and juvenile justice; faith-based organizations; business leaders; and, educators.

While these groups have varying needs, they share a common purpose for quality, affordable after school programs in their communities. Providers can tell the stories of how kids are positively impacted by quality after school and youth development programs and show the need for expanding programs. Parents need safe, supervised, affordable places for their children until they get home. Kids need challenging, enriching and fun activities that complement what they are learning in school.

Community leaders, law enforcement and other voters want safe, supervised after school programs to prevent an array of costly problems such as juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and truancy. Additionally, they want positive youth outcomes such as leadership, community engagement, civic confidence and instruction for resolving conflict peacefully. High-quality after school programs provide these important preventive and developmental opportunities. The business community wants an investment in the state's economy. After school programs are a worthwhile investment in the state's economy because they allow working parents to be more productive at work now and better prepare youth for work in the future.

Many schools want and need help with academic outcomes, especially those prescribed in the federal No Child Left Behind law (NCLB). Further, preparing students for the academic requirements of NCLB in many schools leaves little time to help kids develop skills needed in the workplace, such as problem solving, interpreting data and communicating in a team. After school programs that align with schools are in a better position to assist schools with academic outcomes and fill in other gaps created by an emphasis on academic requirements to ensure students receive a well-rounded educational experience. Moreover, schools see the benefit of quality after school programs because the kids who attend are more likely to continue through high school.

All stakeholders must be involved at the community level in a coordinated statewide grassroots effort in order to most effectively convince state policy makers to invest in increased, and ultimately, dedicated funding for after school programs. Through regular direct communications, these stakeholders would find strength in their shared interests and become involved in a more coordinated way at the community level in order to most effectively convince state policy makers to invest in dedicated funding for after school programs.

The Annual Advocacy Campaign

Lastly, advocates, legislators, and other summit presenters and participants emphasized the need for an annual advocacy campaign that builds on stakeholders' long-standing relationships with legislators and policymakers and includes the following components:

- ◆ A specific, reasonable request of legislators and the governor supported by reliable data showing the potential return on investment;
- ◆ A communications plan and schedule for releasing information to targeted key decision makers and the public;
- ◆ Designated legislators and administration officials to serve as champions.

To effectively advocate for after school funding and quality programming, consideration of the state budgetary process needs to be incorporated into the overall campaign. Many steps are involved in the formation of the final state budget and each step presents an opportunity for influencing the process. The first step is agencies developing their proposals and list of priorities in late Summer early Fall to submit to the Governor. At this step, advocates should provide agency officials with budget priorities and push for their inclusion in the submission to the Governor.

The next step is the Governor finalizing his budget proposal in December and January. At this step, advocates should follow-up with the Governor's staff regarding their priorities for after school funding. The final steps begin with the presentation of the Governor's budget to the General Assembly in February. Once the budget is proposed, the House and Senate hold hearings and begin moving the budget through the legislative process. Each step presents an opportunity for influencing the process and gaining funding and authorization for a dedicated funding source for after school programs.

In addition, the campaign should form strong relationships with legislative champions and administration leaders to guide the budgetary process. Network leaders should identify appropriate legislators to nurture as champions and collaborate throughout the budget process. It is important to understand the competing forces in Harrisburg and where the after school funding campaign fits, to ensure requests for action are timely and appropriate.

At the same time, the network leadership must manage the grassroots and grass tops advocacy campaign effectively by:

- ◆ Providing the message and technical assistance for stakeholders to build long-term relationships with policy makers;
- ◆ Coordinating data and research showing the results of state investment and telling the story of what after school programs mean for kids, families and communities;

"It's the difference between visitation and adoption. You need to adopt your legislator, and you will become a valued resource on your issue."

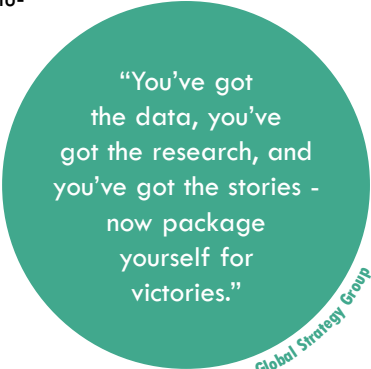
Rep. Kathy M. Mandarino (D - Montgomery & Philadelphia counties)

- ♦ Activating the grassroots network in timely call to action requests targeted to legislators or the governor;
- ♦ Thanking champion legislators, administration leaders and other supporters; and,
- ♦ Demonstrating the success of the campaign to stakeholders.

Stakeholders should build long-term relationships with legislators, recognizing that individual legislators will be more helpful some years than others because of competing priorities and other factors. Stakeholders need to understand the appropriate ask for each legislator. For example, is the legislator on the appropriation committee? Is the legislator on a committee that has jurisdiction over after school policy? Is the legislator a caucus leader with the ability to direct legislative activity?

The network will serve as a "clearinghouse" overseeing the allocation of timely resources and advocacy tools to the grassroots stakeholders. Specifically, Network leadership will coordinate regular communications with the grassroots stakeholders, providing talking points, a list of targeted legislators, the timeframe for action and suggested activities such as inviting legislators to after school programs, or writing letters.

Legislators need to hear the same message in Harrisburg that they hear in their districts. Legislators need to hear one goal among all stakeholders, so they can feel the need and understand the desired outcome.



"You've got the data, you've got the research, and you've got the stories - now package yourself for victories."

Jeff Plaut, Global Strategy Group

IN *conclusion*

The Building Momentum summit participants offered the key elements for a successful advocacy action plan:

- ◆ Demonstrating public support for increasing state funding to expand and improve after school programs;
- ◆ Engaging the stakeholders and establishing a statewide grassroots and grass tops network of advocates; and,
- ◆ Executing an annual advocacy campaign focused on a state appropriation for after school programs statewide.

PSS is committed to working with its partners in the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network and the Philadelphia Afterschool/Youth Development Network to implement the summit recommendations and ultimately achieve a comprehensive, dedicated state funding plan to expand and improve the quality of after school and youth development programs statewide.

To move this effort, leading network partners are coming together to:

- ◆ Gain consensus on key priorities for state action. For example, in 2002, the Focus Five campaign called for (1) pooling and expansion of existing funding streams, including 21st CCLC dollars and TANF youth development funding, to increase after school and youth development activities across the state; (2) development of a statewide technical resource center network to help local programs deliver effective, research-based activities and to monitor program performance and quality; and (3) incentives for counties to redirect savings in child welfare funding to effective after school and youth development programs from high-end crisis intervention and placement. The broader network should work to adopt similar priorities reflecting today's needs and realities.
- ◆ Develop and refine the best messages for gaining wide stakeholder and grassroots support for the key priorities. The message should incorporate specific impact on stakeholders.
- ◆ Develop an advocacy and communications strategy utilizing the stakeholders and grassroots supports based on the principles and ideas presented at the summit. The strategy should identify legislative champions and target audiences with a specific timeframe for getting the message to those audiences.

Our challenge will be to keep up the momentum toward a coordinated statewide effort. With a unified statewide plan of action, we can work together through regional collaborations in carrying out the advocacy campaign. The key components of this effort are now available to us. We can demonstrate the public support, we have begun to identify the stakeholders, we have established regional collaborations and we have a statewide network.

Pennsylvania's children and families are depending on us. That is the challenge we face. We stand ready to mobilize and begin the hard work of legislative advocacy toward a common goal - dedicated funding for after school programs statewide.

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