



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Harrisburg State Capitol “Lights Up” for National “Lights On Afterschool” Celebrations** **Nearly 200 Pennsylvania Events Aim to Make Afterschool Programs Available to All**

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) announced today that nearly 200 programs across the state will sponsor Lights On Afterschool events on Thursday, October 26, 2017. Leaders in Pennsylvania will call for expanding afterschool opportunities so that every child who needs a program has access to one.

In addition, the Pennsylvania Capitol will be lit in yellow as a celebration gesture for the event and in coordination with the iconic Empire State Building, which will be lighting up the New York City skyline in support of Lights On Afterschool.

Governor Tom Wolf has proclaimed October 26th as Lights On Afterschool Day in recognition of the important role of afterschool programs in Pennsylvania. In his proclamation, Governor Wolf encouraged the expansion of innovative afterschool programs and activities in Pennsylvania’s communities that ensure the lights stay on and the doors stay open for all children after school.

Governor Wolf stressed that “quality afterschool programs provide safe, challenging and engaging learning experiences that help children develop social, emotional, physical and academic skills” programs also “help build stronger communities by involving students, parents, business leaders and adult volunteers in the lives of young people, thereby promoting positive relationships among youth, families and adults.”

“Lights On Afterschool celebrates the extraordinary work being done by students who attend afterschool programs,” said Laura Saccente, PSAYDN director. It is a powerful reminder that afterschool programs offer a range of supports to schools, children and families. We know learning does not stop at 3 p.m. but, unfortunately, Pennsylvania does not have enough afterschool programs, and too many kids are home alone in the afternoons or vulnerable on the streets.”

“We thank Governor Wolf for proclaiming his support for afterschool programs across Pennsylvania,” Saccente added. These programs play an important role in the lives of students and parents by helping to close the achievement gap for low-income students, develop vital 21st century skills like confidence and character in students, and improve the attendance of students during the regular school day.”

Participants in the Lights On Afterschool events include state legislators, mayors, school superintends, as well as local business leaders, educators, parents and other officials. Attendees will see students conduct scientific experiments, athletic performances, participate in games, the arts, music and a showcase of other talent.

The events will highlight three of the significant contributions that afterschool programs make to Pennsylvania communities: keeping kids safe and healthy, inspiring them to learn, and relieving working parents of worries about their children's activities during the afternoon hours. The day also signifies a call to work with policymakers to ensure more programs and funding for afterschool is available.

Launched in October 2000, Lights On Afterschool is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs. The effort has become a hallmark of the afterschool movement and annually sees more than 1 million Americans participate at more than 8,000 events nationwide. A complete list of Pennsylvania celebrations is available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loaFindEvent.cfm)

For more information about Pennsylvania’s afterschool network, go to [www.PSAYDN.org](http://www.PSAYDN.org).