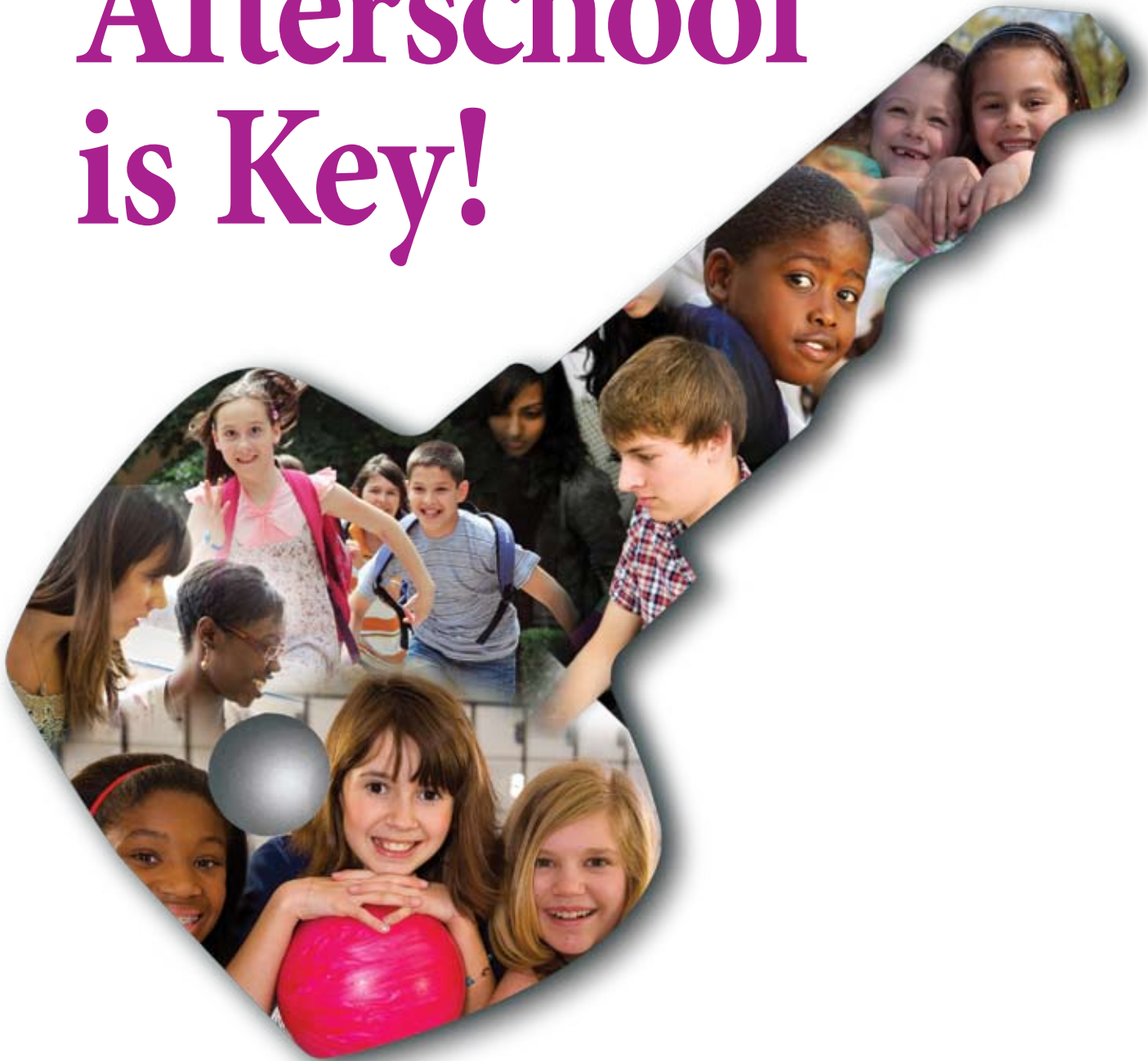


Afterschool is Key!



Arkansas Out of School Network
creating safe, healthy and enriching experiences for arkansas youth

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Executive Summary:

Since 2006 Arkansas has made great progress in its effort to expand quality afterschool and summer programs. Work completed by the Arkansas-Out-of-School Network, the Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for Afterschool and Summer Programs, and national foundations working with Arkansas on this issue have set the stage for taking the next major step. Arkansas has identified the critical components of quality afterschool programs, determined the cost of providing quality afterschool, developed and tested ways to evaluate the impact of programs on those who attend, and most importantly, determined what it takes to create quality programs geared to the unique assets and needs of local communities. In 2009, Governor Beebe allocated \$500,000 in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to provide training and support to build the capacity of current Arkansas afterschool and summer program providers to meet the quality standards outlined in the task force recommendations. All of these efforts have laid the groundwork for establishing a statewide afterschool effort to bring these programs to communities across the state.

Two recent statewide surveys show strong support for afterschool. The first, conducted in the Spring of 2009, asked parents about their children's participation, the supply of and demand for afterschool programs, and any major barriers to program enrollment in Arkansas. Findings include:

- Seventy-five percent of Arkansas K-12 youth spend some portion of the hours after school in the care of a parent or guardian, and 26 percent (125, 025 youth) are responsible for taking care of themselves after school, spending an average of nine hours per week unsupervised after school.
- 12 percent (59,837) of Arkansas' K-12 youth participate in afterschool programs.
- Parents cited affordability (67 percent), child enjoyment (58 percent) and convenient location (57 percent) as their top three reasons for selecting an afterschool program.

A March 2010 telephone survey of Arkansas registered voters found widespread support for expanding afterschool and summer programs in Arkansas.

- Eighty-eight percent of Arkansans agree that quality afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community.

- Eighty-four percent of Arkansans agree that afterschool and summer programs should be made available by public schools or other state-supported organizations.
- Eighty-three percent of voting Arkansans said they support public funding for quality afterschool and summer programs.

Another factor moving this issue forward is continuing research confirming the positive impacts of quality afterschool and summer programs.

- Compared to their matched non-participants, students attending afterschool programs improve their attendance, are less likely to drop out of school, and have higher aspirations of finishing school and going to college.
- Two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth results from unequal access to summer learning opportunities.
- Youth not attending quality afterschool and summer programs are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity.
- Parents who are concerned about their children's afterschool care miss an average of eight days of work per year.

The Monticello Middle School offers a case study for how afterschool and summer programs can impact the education and the engagement of students and their families. Using a variety of state and community resources this southeast Arkansas middle school has provided enrichment activities and educational support that lead to significant improvements in student test scores during the past eight years. Standardized test scores have improved from 30 percent (math) and 31 percent (literacy) proficient on the Benchmark in 2001-02 to 86 percent (math) and 79 percent (literacy) proficient in 2008-09.

Arkansas must recognize that the social, emotional, physical, vocational, cognitive and civic engagement needed to meet the challenges ahead cannot all be addressed during school hours. Young people need systems of support that provide constructive relationships, basic supports, financial options, guidance, and second chances which allow them to transition out of and in to systems as they move through an education pipeline into adult life.

Continued from page 1

The momentum for afterschool expansion in Arkansas continues to build with the creation of minimum licensing requirements, the application of quality standards and measurement of the outcomes of two model afterschool programs created with general improvement funds in 2009 session, and the AOSN's two local initiatives that use a variety of engagement tools to build local community collaboration and parent involvement to create afterschool and summer programs.

The largest source of funds for afterschool and summer programs is from federal sources, with 21st Century Community Learning Centers makes the most use of these funds. Other federal and state funds have been identified as potential sources, but support specifically for afterschool and summer programs is limited.

There are two necessary steps needed in Arkansas to continue the momentum built over the past five years. The first is to create an administrative entity, within the existing state structure, to administer a state-sponsored afterschool and summer program initiative. This agency would codify quality standards, develop evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, and set up procedures for the application and distribution of funds. Second, the state must identify and allocate funds to expand programs. The reallocation of existing resources must be considered first before a commitment of new funds is made while tax revenues are declining.

Afterschool is Key!

Introduction:

The 2006 report *After School Programs in Arkansas: A Solution Whose Time has Come* outlined the positive impacts that afterschool and summer programs have by keeping children safe, supporting working families and inspiring Arkansas children to learn. New research continues to validate these findings in both local communities in Arkansas and across the country.

During the past four years Arkansas has progressed by identifying the critical components of quality afterschool programs, determining the cost of providing quality afterschool, developing and testing ways to evaluate the impact of programs on those who attend, and most importantly, determining what it takes to create quality programs geared to the unique assets and needs of local communities. The groundwork has been laid. It is now time to take the next step.

This report summarizes the latest research on afterschool and summer programs, outlines the 2008 findings and recommendations from the Arkansas Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After School and Summer Programs, and highlights the lessons learned from applying quality standards and evaluation techniques on existing programs in Arkansas. It will make the case for Arkansas to establish a formal structure and mechanism to expand quality afterschool and summer programs into every community across the state. Afterschool is the key to inspiring children to learn, keeping children safe, and supporting working families!

Public Demand and Support for Afterschool and Summer Programs in Arkansas

As attempts to expand access to afterschool in Arkansas move forward, it is important that policy makers understand the current demand and public support for this effort. Two statewide surveys were completed in Arkansas that show strong support for afterschool. The first, conducted in the spring of 2009, asked parents about their children's regular participation in various afterschool care arrangements, with a special focus on afterschool program participation and satisfaction. The survey, *America After 3PM*, identified the supply of and demand



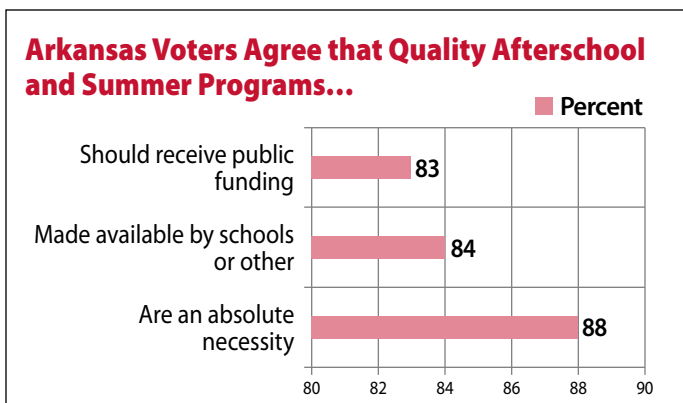
for afterschool programs, as well as the major barriers to program enrollment in Arkansas.¹

- Seventy-five percent of Arkansas K-12 youth spend some portion of the hours after school in the care of a parent or guardian, and 26 percent (125,025 youth) are responsible for taking care of themselves after school, spending an average of nine hours per week unsupervised after school.
- It also found that 12 percent (59,837) of Arkansas' K-12 youth participate in afterschool programs. On average, afterschool participants spend seven hours per week in afterschool programs, with participation averaging three days per week. Other care arrangements include traditional child care centers (eight percent), sibling care (14 percent) and non-parental adult care, such as a grandparent or neighbor (37 percent).
- Seventy-nine percent of parents with children in afterschool programs were satisfied with the programs their children attended. They cited affordability (67 percent), child enjoyment (58 percent) and convenient location (57 percent) as their top three reasons for selecting an afterschool program.
- Forty-four percent (187,722 children) of all Arkansas children not in afterschool would be likely to participate if an afterschool program were available

in the community, regardless of their current care arrangement.

- Parents of non-participants believe that their children would benefit most from afterschool programs by having fun, taking advantage of opportunities for community service and learning, improving their social skills and workforce skills, and being safe and out of trouble.

A March 2010 telephone survey of Arkansas registered voters revealed widespread support for expanding afterschool and summer programs in Arkansas.²



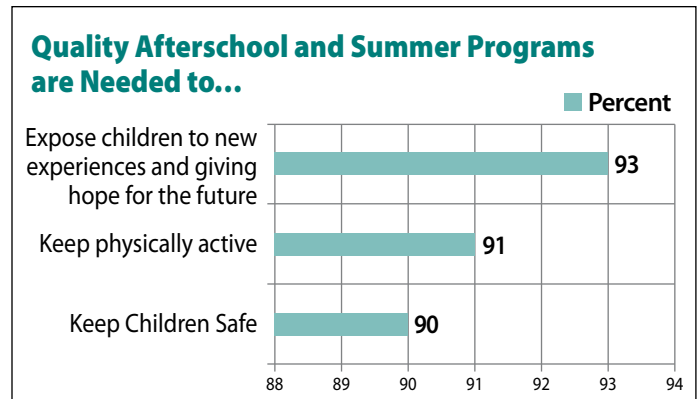
Source: Opinion Research Associates, March 2010

Eighty-eight percent of Arkansans agree that quality afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community. This included respondents in every demographic and geographical category. Eighty-four percent of Arkansans agree that afterschool and summer programs should be made available by public schools or other state-supported organizations. Again, agreement is strong in every demographic and geographical category



with a range of 77-93 percent overall agreement. Eighty-three percent of voting Arkansans said they support public funding for quality afterschool and summer programs.

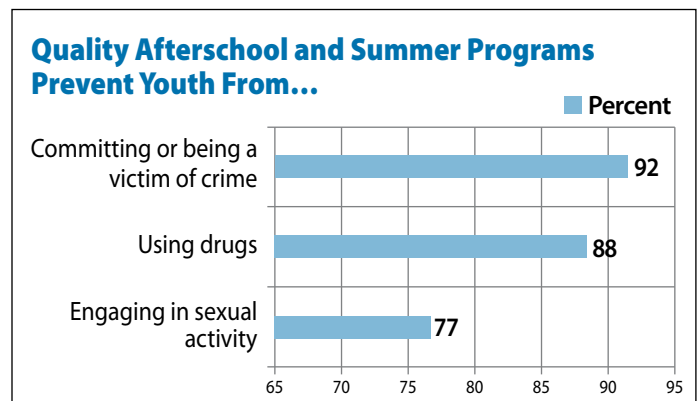
This recent survey also indicates that the voting public understands the need and potential benefits of quality afterschool programs.



Source: Opinion Research Associates, March 2010

Ninety percent or more of respondents agreed that afterschool and summer programs are needed to keep children and youth safe (90 percent), physically active (91 percent), and to expose children and youth to new experiences that broaden their outlook and give them hope of the future (93 percent).

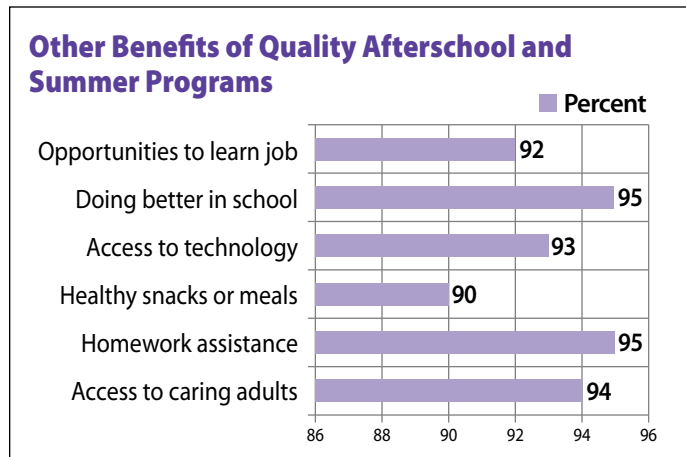
Voters understand and agree on the benefits of afterschool and summer programs by preventing children and youth from committing or becoming victims of crimes (92 percent), using drugs (88 percent), and engaging in sexual activity (77 percent).



Source: Opinion Research Associates, March 2010

Other benefits widely acknowledged by survey respondents included: access to caring adults and mentors (94 percent), homework assistance (95 percent), improving

health by providing healthy snacks and/or meals (90 percent), offering access to technology or computers (93 percent), doing better in school (95 percent), and older youth opportunities to learn job skills (92 percent).



Source: Opinion Research Associates, March 2010

These two statewide surveys confirm the current demand for afterschool and summer programs, the unmet need of Arkansas families seeking safe places and enriching activities for their children, and widespread appreciation for the benefits these programs can offer local communities.

A Sampling of the Latest Research:

Researchers from across the country are increasing their understanding of afterschool and summer programs and how they impact the lives of children. Each year new findings help policy makers and program staff ensure the most beneficial outcomes for children participating in quality afterschool and summer programs.

Inspires Children and Youth to Learn: During the last four years Arkansas has taken bold steps, invested significant resources, and firmly established the link between public education and our state's economic future. Perhaps the most well established benefits of quality afterschool and summer programs are those linked to academic achievement.

- Elementary school students attending afterschool programs improved their regular day attendance and reported higher aspirations toward their finishing school and going to college. In addition, participants were 20 percent less likely to drop out of school compared to matched non-participants.³



- Ninth grade students who previously participated in afterschool programs in middle school had higher daily attendance and credit accumulation than matched nonparticipants.⁴
- Regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits for low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students.⁵
- Two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth results from unequal access to summer learning opportunities according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University.⁶

Children are learning from the moment time they awake up until they fall asleep at night. And access to a variety of stimulating activities like art and music, the outdoors, physical activities, mentally challenging games and learning opportunities, and interactions with a variety of people and places contribute to that learning. These experiences allow inspired learning to take place, enhanced social skills, and overcoming new challenges in ways that help students capture all the possibilities that await them if they put in the effort. This happens both inside and outside the classroom.

Keeping Children Safe: Children and youth who are adequately supervised and absorbed in productive activities are less likely to engage in harmful and risky behaviors.

- Participation in afterschool programs reduces the initial drug use by youth by nearly 50 percent and also reduces the likelihood of skipping school by half.⁷
- African American youth's risk of being either the perpetrator or victim of a homicide spiked during afterschool hours.⁸
- Elementary students reported reductions in aggressive behaviors towards other students and skipping school, and middle school students reported reduced use of drugs and alcohol, compared to their routinely unsupervised peers.⁹
- Youth attending 23-40 or more days of afterschool showed a reduction in delinquency and contact with police.¹⁰



- Teens who do not participate in afterschool are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who participate. They are also three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and they are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity.¹¹

Youth who spend time in a safe environment, with positive role models that teach them decision making skills and expose them to new learning opportunities, and develop a positive view of themselves and their hope for the future. They cultivate positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in their exchanges with peers, family, school, and community when both parties contribute to the relationship.

Support for Working Families: Balancing our family time and work schedule is always a challenge. For many low-wage workers, any missed day means lost income. According to the 2000 Census, two-thirds of Arkansas children have all of their caregivers in the workforce.

- Parents who are concerned about their children's afterschool care miss an average of eight days of work per year. Decreased worker productivity related to parental concerns about afterschool and summer care costs businesses up to \$300 billion per year.¹²
- Three quarters of parents surveyed in a citywide afterschool program indicated that since enrolling their children in the program, they worried significantly less about their children's safety and had more energy in the evening.¹³
- Parents said that the afterschool program helped them balance work and family life: 94 percent said the program was convenient, 60 percent said they missed less work than before because of the program, 59 percent said it supported them in keeping their job, and 54 percent said it allowed them to work more hours.¹⁴

Although some large corporations are able to contribute to the cost of providing quality afterschool care for their employee's families, most businesses find it difficult, if not prohibitive. Healthy families are part of healthy businesses, and investments at all levels, federal to local, and from all sectors, public to private, are crucial to ensuring that Arkansas's children do not fall through the cracks while their parents are at work and they are out of school.

Afterschool: A key part of the education pipeline.

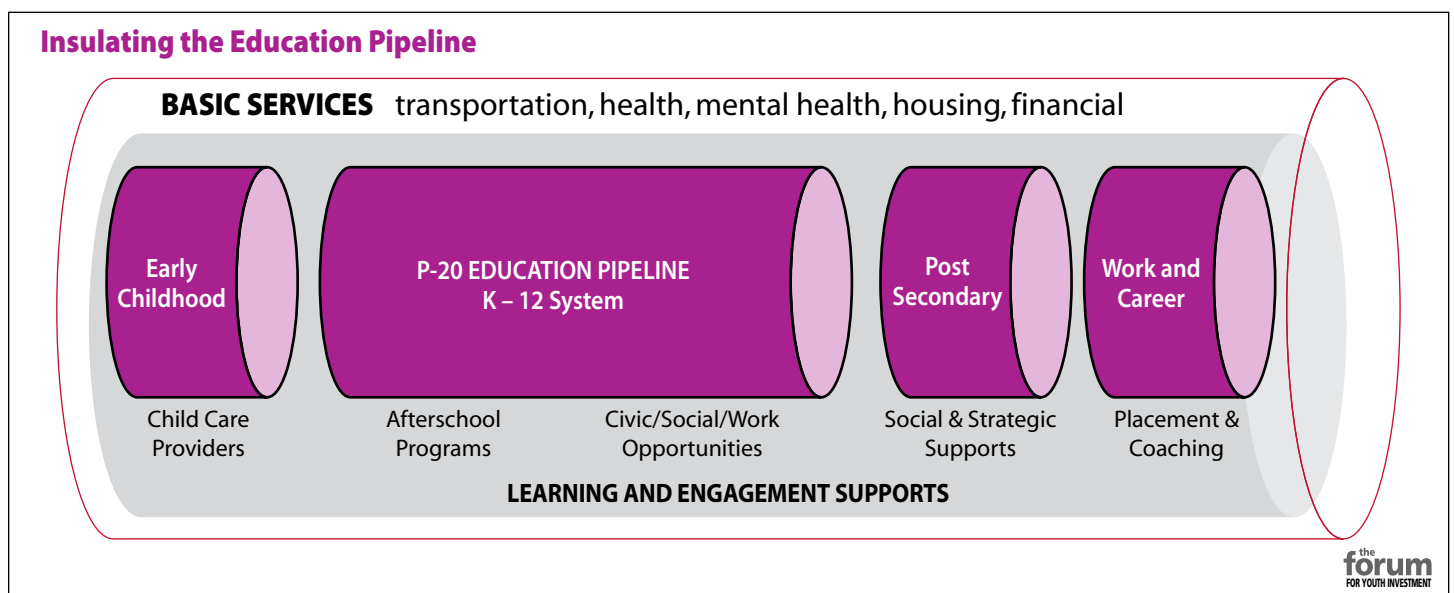
Afterschool and summer programs are a critical part of the continuum of support that includes early childhood education, K-12 education, secondary education, and the transition to the workforce and a career path. Creating this education pipeline represents the next step in education for Arkansas.

We know that it takes more than basic services to move children through the cradle-to-career pipeline. The social, emotional, physical, vocational, cognitive and civic engagement needed to meet the challenges ahead cannot all be addressed during school hours. Each community in Arkansas must proceed with the belief that by keeping children in the education pipeline where, with learning and engagement, all children will thrive.

The following is a graphic illustration of the “Ready by 21, Credentialed by 26” Education Pipeline developed by the Forum for Youth Investment. It includes the basic services as well as the learning and engagement supports needed to prepare workers in today’s global marketplace. This youth-centered approach involves partnerships with multiple government sectors and community-based organizations. It recognizes that young people need systems of support that provide constructive relationships, basic supports, financial options, guidance, and second chances which allow them to transition out of and in to systems as they move through an education pipeline into adult life.



Afterschool and summer programs play a unique role in the education pipeline by giving traditional educators ways of rethinking how children learn through innovative school programs and community efforts. Student can apply what they learn in the classroom to community projects and service learning, mentoring or school and work internships, the arts, and other engaging learning opportunities often unavailable during school hours. These programs allow children to learn teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, and explore more deeply those things that capture their imagination and inspire them to learn. These are the skills needed in the current and future workforce.



An Arkansas Case Study in Afterschool

The Monticello School District is located in the southeastern corner of Arkansas where extreme poverty, low educational attainment rates, and lack of employment opportunities impact families and create multiple barriers to student achievement. Generational poverty is prevalent and almost twenty-three percent of residents live in poverty with 53 percent of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. In the past the Arkansas Department of Education has placed the Monticello Middle School (MMS) on “School Improvement” status. It was subsequently removed from that list and then later put back on alert status. However, the school has met adequate yearly progress for the past two consecutive years and is no longer on alert status.

The school district is a 21st Century Charter Member, receiving technical assistance from Yale University for the past five years to help implement the core quality concepts and guiding principles into their afterschool program. It is also a 21st Century Community Learning Center grantee that has provided

quality after school programs for the past nine years. Student achievement at the Monticello Middle School (MMS) is improving although it continues to struggle to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for African-American and economically disadvantaged subpopulations.

The afterschool program at Monticello Middle School (MMS) operates from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. It begins on the first Tuesday in September and runs through the end of April. Through a collaborative partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Drew County, students in need of afterschool on Fridays, during school vacations, and summers are referred to the Boys & Girls Club of Drew County. Funding from the 21st CCLC program at Monticello Middle School also supports Holmes Chapel Presbyterian Church’s existing after school program by providing a certified teacher and a classroom aide to help support the program. The Middle School operates a summer remediation program but costs are covered through school district funding.

The afterschool program begins with a nutritious snack provided by the school lunch program to provide “brain power” for students in the

program. A rotational schedule is utilized with emphasis on academics early in the program and enrichment and recreational activities later in the day. From surveying parents, teachers, and students over the past 9 years, researchers learned that homework assistance is of vital importance to stakeholders. The program utilizes certified teachers, classroom aides, and peer tutors to assist students with homework each day. Academic remediation, disguised as enrichment, with emphasis on literacy and math, is provided each day.

The afterschool program offers a varied enrichment and recreation schedule, allowing students to choose their schedule based on individual interests. Examples of enrichment/recreation activities include science lab, arts and crafts; music classes (guitar, piano); physical education; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention programs; archery club; book club; nutrition education and cooking classes; character education; service learning projects; technology camps; foreign language; and virtual field trips. Several of these activities are provided by collaborative partners at no cost to the program. These partners include the Cooperative Extension Service that provides the

The afterschool momentum in Arkansas continues!

During the past four years Arkansans have benefitted from the leadership of Governor Mike Beebe, our legislators, education leaders, the Arkansas-Out-of-School Network (AOSN) and hundreds of individuals who have taken important steps to promote and enhance afterschool programs in the state. The creation of the Governor’s Task Force on Best Practices brought together a diverse group of leaders from across the state to create recommendations based on the research and experiences from other states, and successful programs implemented in local

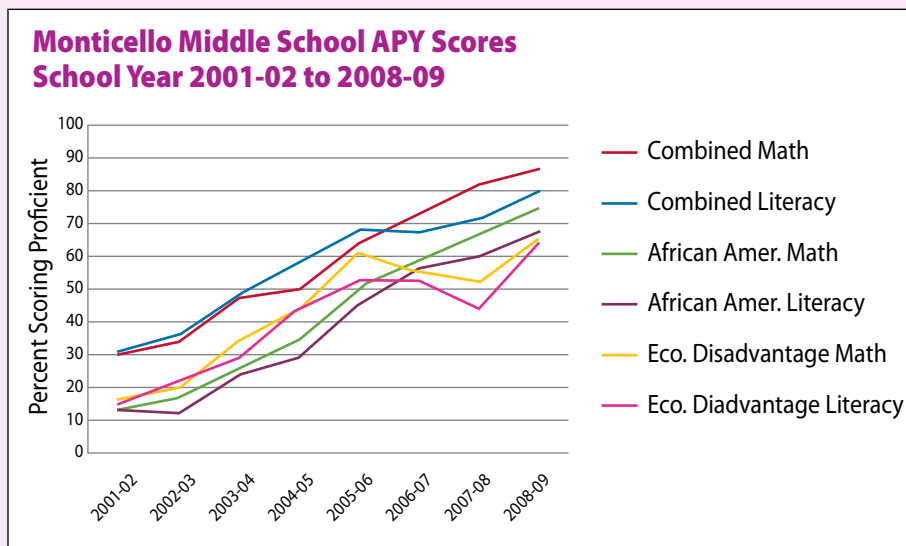
communities in Arkansas. In August 2008 the task force released its findings and recommendations for enriching Arkansas children’s lives through high-quality out-of-school activities.

Based in large part on the *Arkansas Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs* developed by the AOSN in 2007, the task force established a framework for quality programs that is flexible enough to apply to a wide variety of local programs, but specific enough to guide any program toward quality programming and positive outcomes. These elements include: (1) safe and appropriate program environments and facilities; (2) ongoing staff

Health Rocks program, the Arkansas Game and Fish commission which provides the “Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs” program as well as archery, boater safety, and hunter safety, and the Blue and You Foundation of Arkansas that provided a grant to fund the Fit 4 Fun project that was incorporated into the afterschool program. The program routinely receives calls from other organizations wanting to provide services to the students in the afterschool program.

And the program community outreach doesn't stop there. The Adult Education Program in Monticello serves as a collaborator for parents needing a G.E.D. or interested in gaining employability skills through the W.A.G.E. program. Social services, health and mental health providers, and other local service providers accept referrals for assistance to students and families with specific needs.

Daily afterschool attendance runs between 80-130 students per day, with some students required to attend through their Academic Improvement Plans and others who attend on their own volition. The impact has been phenomenal on student achievement at Monticello Middle School. Not only do teachers report students are more likely to



have their homework completed and make better grades, but they have less discipline problems in the regular classroom setting.

Overall school attendance rates have improved and standardized test scores have improved from 30 percent (math) and 31 percent (literacy) proficient on the Benchmark in 2001-02 to 86 percent (math) and 79 percent (literacy) proficient in 2008-09. A comparison of afterschool (30+ days) versus non-afterschool students was conducted in 2006-07 utilizing Benchmark assessments. Students in grades 4-8 were analyzed and data showed students who regularly attended the afterschool program made greater

gains as compared to non-afterschool students in both literacy and math.

Although the African American and economically disadvantaged students still lag behind, the improvements in their test scores have been no less dramatic. The test score for African American students improved from 13 percent (math) and 15 percent (literacy) in 2001-02 to 67% (math) and 64 percent (literacy) proficient in 2008-09. The results were similar for the economically disadvantaged student subgroup with test scores improving from 13 percent (math) and 16 percent (literacy) in 2001-02 to 74 percent (math) and 65 percent (literacy) proficient in 2008-09.

training and development; (3) program monitoring and evaluation; (4) positive youth development; (5) parent involvement; (6) community collaboration; (7) attendance and participation; and (8) sustainability plans.¹⁵ These elements are the foundation for ensuring program quality and earning the support of Arkansans for putting more resources into these programs for their children. The task force recommendations have become the action plan and strategy for moving Arkansas's afterschool efforts forward.

In 2009 Governor Beebe allocated \$500,000 in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to provide training and support to build the capacity of current Arkansas afterschool and summer program

providers to meet the quality standards outlined in the task force recommendations. As with most service-based efforts, the quality and competence of the direct care staff is the most critical element to ensure program success. These ARRA funds enabled the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Arkansas Out-of-School Network (AOSN) to provide a wide range of professional development trainings to program staff. These funds were used to train direct care staff and test research-based program evaluation techniques to ensure they measured the quality of program services in a way that was acceptable and useful to afterschool providers. These efforts laid the groundwork for fully implementing



the recommended quality standards if funding is made available to expand these programs across the state.

Several additional steps have been taken in Arkansas to fulfill the recommendations of the Governor’s Task Force.

- The DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, The Arkansas Department of Education, and representatives of various community-based afterschool programs have been working together to draft minimum licensing requirements for “school-age-care” programs. A series of seven stakeholder meetings, conference calls, and other forums are underway to get feedback from programs that will be affected by these standards. The Early Childhood Commission will then vote on the standards in the near future.
- Using general improvement funds allocated during the 2009 legislative session, two model afterschool programs were created to test the application of the Governor’s Task Force recommendations on an urban and a rural program. This will provide “real life” evidence of the challenges faced by programs attempting to apply these quality standards and measure the outcomes. The lessons learned can be incorporated into legislation or policies created in a statewide expansion effort.
- With continued support from the C. S. Mott Foundation, the Arkansas Out-of-School-Network has selected two Arkansas communities to undergo a community engagement process to bring a broad coalition of key stakeholders together to expand afterschool programs in their community. These two local initiatives will test the feasibility of building community collaboration and parent involvement through a variety of engagement tools. This parent

and community collaboration is an essential element of the task force recommendations and critical to successful afterschool and summer program development.

National partners have contributed to Arkansas’s efforts to identify and implement the specific elements of quality afterschool programming. An important measure of potential program success and its positive long-term impact on youth is the optimum amount of attendance and participation by youth. The recommended overall participation of youth to be successful in afterschool is still being evaluated.¹⁶ It appears that middle-school age youth need to be involved in such activities for three days a week over an extended period of time to get the full benefit of these programs. The required “dosage” may be a little higher for younger children and lower for high-school age youth.

The other important aspect of quality is trying to estimate the cost of quality programs. This issue is still being evaluated and will depend on the range of programming being offered, the length of operating time, and the special or unique needs of each community (e.g. transportation). There are existing mechanisms for determining the cost of programs based on a variety of factors.¹⁷ The Wallace Foundation’s Afterschool “cost calculator” was used as a guide to determine the cost per child for two hypothetical programs in Arkansas.¹⁸ A minimum cost of \$1,450 per cost per child was determined for:

- a quality program serving 20 elementary and middle school children,
- operated by and at a school in Fort Smith, Arkansas,
- providing both academic and non-academic activities, for 12 hours a week, for 37 weeks a year,
- with a staff-to-child ratio of 1 staff to 11-15 children,

For an afterschool program operated by a community organization in Hot Springs, Arkansas with the exact same characteristics as the Fort Smith example, the minimum cost was \$2,061 per child, according to the cost calculator. The cost of operating such a program year round, or with a smaller staff-to-child ratio, would be even higher.

Where’s the money?

21st Century Community Learning Centers: The federal government is, by far, the largest contributor of funds that can be used for afterschool and summer programs

in Arkansas. The Arkansas Department of Education received a federal appropriation of \$12.6 million during the 2010-11 school year to allocate grants averaging \$100-150,000 each for 21 Century Learning Centers (21CCLC) across the state. This is the only federal program dedicated to afterschool and summer programs.¹⁹ More than 12,000 Arkansas students participated in these programs this current year. However, under the Obama Administration's new "Blueprint for Reform" education policy, the current methods for allocating and distributing these funds will change during the 2011-12 school year.

Title I Funds: These funds help disadvantaged students reach high academic standards—a portion of which can be used to support afterschool programs.²⁰ Some schools have used Title I funds to support youth focused academic enrichment programs.²⁰ Title I to Local Education Agencies and Title I for Supplemental Services in Arkansas provide academic and support services before and/or after regular school hours. The total state allotment of these funds for the 2008/2009 school year was over \$135 million. In the same year, only \$4.18 million (three percent) of these funds supported before and afterschool and summer programs in Arkansas.²¹ Many of the decisions about how these funds are utilized are determined by the local education agency. In 2009 Arkansas received an additional allotment of \$111 million in Title I funds distributed to 252 educational agencies in Arkansas as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).²² The percent of those funds being used for afterschool and summer programs is yet to be calculated, but are expected to be very small.

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF): This federal block grant allows licensed child care providers to accept payment through a voucher or subsidy system for eligible children to receive care. Funds also support quality initiatives to support and expand quality programs for children. Between February 2007 and January 2008 \$15,369,957 (28%) of CCDF vouchers were expended on school-age children. An additional \$353,574 of CCDF funds were allocated for quality initiatives and professional development for school age programs.

National School Lunch Act (NSLA): This category of state K-12 education funding, also known as "poverty funding", this is the largest allocation of state general revenue with a potential to use for afterschool and summer programs. Of the \$160 million in NSLA funds in academic year

2008/2009, \$6.5 million (four percent) was directed to before or afterschool and summer programs for school age children during out of school hours.²³

General Improvement Funds: During the recent 2009 Arkansas legislative session, seven legislators sponsored separate bills allocating a total of more than \$312,000 in general improvement funds for afterschool and summer activities across the state. These funds were significantly reduced due to the economic recession.

Other funding: The Governor's task force compiled a more comprehensive listing of potential federal sources sent to Arkansas that are related to workforce development, nutrition, juvenile justice, tobacco and drug use prevention, rural communities, and other targeted groups that have a potential to be used for afterschool and summer programs. Local governments have also invested resources in afterschool and summer programs as crime prevention or youth employment efforts.

How much do current programs use these funds?

A survey conducted by the AOSN in 2008 found that 80% of the 65 afterschool providers completing the survey received more than two sources of funds for program operating expenses. Seventy-five percent received some federal funding from 21CCLC, CCDBG, AmeriCorps, Nutrition programs, or the Department of Agriculture. Only 20% of the programs received funds from other federal education related sources such as Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools, LEAs, or Rural Achievement. One-third of the programs received state funds from the school funding formula or poverty funds, law enforcement or juvenile justice, mental health, or substance abuse prevention. Local tax revenues or local parks and recreation funds were utilized by 21% of surveyed programs. Many of these programs charge membership or program fees to participants, while others rely on private contributions.

This is an indication of how current programs have managed to take advantage of multiple sources of funding to sustain their programs in Arkansas. Managing such an array of funding sources, accounting for expenses based on multiple requirements and different funding cycles and doing so without assurance of multi-year funding is a major organizational challenge.

The need to finance afterschool and summer programs is competing with a multitude of already established services and educational program initiatives that have been recipients of these same federal funds for many years. Many of the potential funding sources target just one aspect of what afterschool programs would like to offer participants (remediation, job training, education tutoring, crime prevention, health, nutrition, etc.). For afterschool and summer programs to meet the quality standards and to offer sustained access to these services, they would need a dedicated multi-year base of support for operation. Many programs are already piecing together multiple sources of funding that only offer support from year to year.

Opening the Door: The Next Step:

The state has already set quality standards for afterschool and summer programs, and extensive training and professional development opportunities are currently being offered across the state. The final steps to establish minimum licensing requirements for afterschool and summer programs are underway. The groundwork has been laid in Arkansas. The potential for taking the momentum created during the past four years is palatable and real. Yet two major steps remain.

Create a Structure: The creation of an administrative entity, within the existing state structure, to administer a state-sponsored afterschool and summer program initiative: This agency would codify quality standards, develop evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, and set up procedures for the application and distribution of funds. The quality frameworks adopted by the Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After-school and Summer Programs could serve as a guide for the creation of these rules and regulations. This can be accomplished without a designated source of funding or allocation for implementing the statewide afterschool initiative. It would provide the venue for working out all of the components (including the cost) of a state-funded quality afterschool and summer program so that when funds become available all of the rules and regulations are in place. Such enabling legislation would be the logical next step for afterschool and summer programs in Arkansas.

Funds to Expand Programs: The reallocation of existing resources must be considered first before a commitment of new funds is made and while tax revenues are declining. Other states have conducted a "financial mapping" study



to identify and quantify funds that could be used to create or support quality afterschool programs. Many local communities have collaborated to share resources, space, and expertise, and funding to create afterschool and summer programs.

Eventually a significant state allocation of general revenues will be needed to fund a statewide expansion of quality afterschool and summer programs. Current economic restraints might inhibit the state from allocating such resources, but other states have launched their afterschool initiative using model programs that were then taken to scale as the economy improved. Others require local communities to provide a local match or invest more existing federal and state resources in afterschool before being eligible to receive or be matched with state funding. The development of school-community partnerships extends to a partnership with state agencies, from this all Arkansas families and children will benefit.

(Endnotes)

- ¹ In Arkansas, 505 households were surveyed for this study. Among those households, 50 percent qualified for free or reduced price lunch, 2 percent were Hispanic and 17 percent were African American. According to U.S. Department of Education data from 2005-2006, the total school enrollment in Arkansas is 486,478, which is the foundation for all statewide projections in Arkansas. After 3PM was sponsored by the JC Penney Afterschool Fund. Between March and May 2009, parents/guardians responded to survey questions about their after school child care arrangements during the 2008-2009 school year. RTI, a market research firm, conducted the survey and analyzed the data for the Afterschool Alliance. Additional information from America After 3PM is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.
- ² A Survey of Arkansas Voter Opinion, Opinion Research Associates, Inc., March 2010 Margin of error + 5.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchTopicSuccessSchool.cfm>
- ³ UCLA National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing. June 2000, December 2005 and September 2007.
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchTopicSuccessSchool.cfm>
- ⁴ Policy Studies Associates, Inc. October 2007
- ⁵ University of California at Irvine, 2007
- ⁶ American Sociological Review, Vol. 72, April 2007
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchTopicHealth.cfm>
- ⁷ Investing in Our Young People, University of Chicago, 2006
- ⁸ Fox and Swatt, Northwestern University, December 2008
- ⁹ Policy Studies Associates, Inc., 2007
- ¹⁰ University of Maryland, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, June 2004
- ¹¹ YMCA of the USA, March 2001.
<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchTopicFamilies.cfm>
- ¹² Brandeis University, Community, Families and Work program, 2004 and Catalyst & Brandies University, December 2006.
- ¹³ UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, June 200 and December 2005. Huang, Denise et al. A Decade of Results: The Impact of the LA's BEST After School Enrichment Program, UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, June 2000.
- ¹⁴ Policy Studies Associates, Inc. 2004
- ¹⁵ Final Report of the Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for After-School and Summer Programs, August 2008. Page 2
- ¹⁶ Understanding and Measuring Attendance in Out-of-School Time. Evaluation Research Brief from Harvard Family Research Project, August 2004
- ¹⁷ <http://www.financeproject.org/publications/CostofQualityOSTPrograms.pdf>
- ¹⁸ <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/cost-of-quality/Pages/default.aspx>
- ¹⁹ http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/states/states_facts.cfm?state_abbr=AR#facts.
- ²⁰ <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/PolicyEconRecovTitle1.cfm>
- ²¹ AACF analysis of data from the Arkansas Department of Education.
<http://www.apscn.org/reports/caja/cycle/cycle.htm>
- ²² <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/titlei/fy09recovery/index.html>
- ²³ AACF analysis of data from the Arkansas Department of Education.
<http://www.apscn.org/reports/caja/cycle/cycle.htm>

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