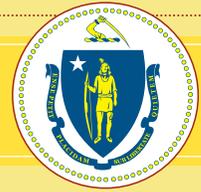


**THE MASSACHUSETTS SPECIAL COMMISSION ON
AFTER SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL TIME**

*Senator Thomas McGee
Representative Marie St. Fleur
Co-Chairs*



Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth

*The Report of the Massachusetts Special Commission
on After School and Out of School Time
November 2007*

Executive Summary

The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time was created by the Massachusetts Legislature to help define what is needed to support the healthy development of children and youth in and out of school.

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Conte Community School Connected for Success Program
Pittsfield, MA*

*Above:
Gregg Neighborhood House, Lynn, MA
Program Site Visit – September 20, 2007*

*Above left, from right to left:
Senator Thomas McGee, Special Commission Co-Chair
Representative Marie St. Fleur, Special Commission Co-Chair
Representative Alice Wolf and Representative Patricia Haddad
Special Commission Dartmouth Public Hearing, July 19, 2007*

*Photos from front cover:
Left center: Boys and Girls Club of Worcester
Worcester, MA*

*Upper right:
Town of Barnstable Recreation Department Afterschool Program
Horace Mann Charter School, Marston Mills, MA
Program Site Visit – September 11, 2007*

*Lower right:
Roxbury Preparatory Charter School Enrichment Program
Roxbury, MA*

Letter from the Co-Chairs

Dear Friends,

When we began this project as Co-Chairs of the Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time, we looked forward to learning more about what afterschool and out-of-school time programs mean in the lives of young people and their families across the state.

Over the course of the last six months, what we have heard and seen has truly amazed and humbled us. We have traveled hundreds of miles, convened ten public hearings, visited ten different afterschool programs, guided three work groups, and chaired five meetings of the full 36 member Commission. Nearly 500 people came from all walks of life to talk to us about why they care so deeply about this issue.

We encountered several themes that resonated across the state: children and youth describing their participation in afterschool and out-of-school time programs as life changing; dedicated and talented staff struggling to stay in the field on low salaries and uncertain career paths; innovative programs confronting unstable and inadequate funding; and transportation, in particular, presenting significant challenges for families and providers in getting young people to programs.

Finally, the most important and consistent theme that emerged from our work was the power of building relationships. The ability of staff to build positive, caring and consistent relationships with the young people in their charge makes all the difference in their lives. As one program director in Worcester said: “Our job is not to do programs or activities but help kids become responsible adults.”

We agree and believe this task before us is monumentally important. We must ensure that all of the Commonwealth’s young people have appealing opportunities to engage in positive relationships with adults and their peers, and to learn and develop their potential during the non-school hours. What we offer here is a blueprint to guide us in crafting wise and strategic investments to that end.

We know that a prosperous and hopeful future for the state depends largely on how we prepare the next generation for adulthood. When we invest in and support the healthy development of our young people, we are safeguarding our society by helping our children and youth become productive, responsible, and invested community members. We invite you to join us in this all-important endeavor.

Sincerely,



Senator Thomas M. McGee, Chair
Labor and Workforce Development Committee
Co-Chair



Representative Marie P. St. Fleur, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
Co-Chair

The Opportunity and The Vision

"Afterschool is about learning, helping and understanding."

— Gabriella, 8th Grader, St. Patrick's School
Boston Public Hearing
September 25, 2007

Why Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Programs Matter

There is a special meaning behind the word Commonwealth, a word we use to describe Massachusetts. Commonwealth dates from the 15th century and means "common well-being." It was first used in a political context to describe a community governed for the common good, rather than for the benefit of a small privileged group. John Adams described the idea of the common good in drafting the Massachusetts Constitution:

"The whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people, that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good."

Our identity as a Commonwealth resonates powerfully when we turn our attention to the next generation. We have a common responsibility to foster the health and well-being of our children and youth – our next generation of leaders and citizens. If we can ensure that Massachusetts' children and youth have access to the experiences, opportunities and supports that research and practice has proven is needed for them to be productive and engaged members of our society, our Commonwealth will survive and flourish. If we ignore or refuse this obligation, we risk our own future prosperity and security.

New Research Emphasizes What Young People Need to Succeed

The Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time (Special Commission) considered the challenge of preparing our young people to take on their future roles as leaders, citizens, and engaged members of our community. We looked to groundbreaking and recent research that provides us with significant information about exactly what young people need to succeed. Once we understand what this research tells us, we can see that afterschool and out-of-school time programs play a critical role in helping young people transition successfully to adulthood.



Roxbury Preparatory Charter School Enrichment Program
Roxbury, Massachusetts

Research about brain development in early childhood has spurred new investments and policies to assist young children in accessing the relationships and environments that support healthy brain development. As we have come to understand, that same science applies across to children as they get older. In fact, the architecture of the brain continues to develop in major ways until young people reach the age of 24. The explosion of research in the neurosciences makes it very clear what young people – and the architecture of their maturing brains – need in order to learn and develop. We know that all of the key domains of development – cognitive, emotional, and social – are inextricably linked throughout our lives. Learning is a complex process that takes place at every hour of the day and in all of the places where young people spend their time. Scientific research has also shown that learning happens in the context of relationships – and that relationships are critical to mitigating the effects of stressful events upon a young person's development. These findings must elevate the importance of relationships in our public conversation about how to best support children and youth as they develop.

Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Promotes Positive Youth Development

Over the course of the past six months, we have learned that the afterschool and out-of-school time field is unique in its attention to all of the different ways young people develop. Consistent with available research, many programs in the

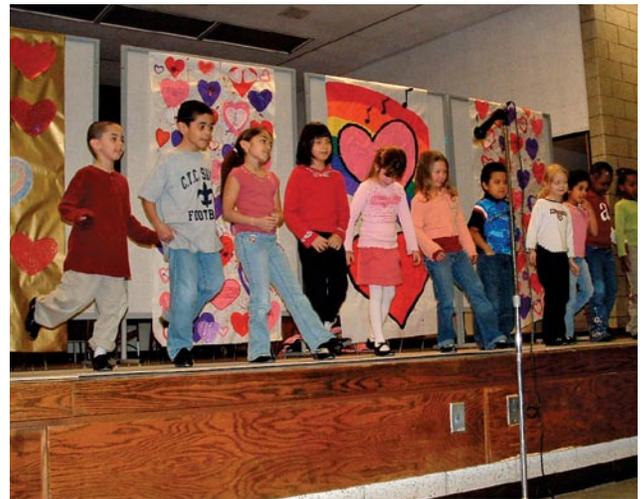
The Opportunity and The Vision

state are creating the kinds of positive settings that enable children and youth to practice the skills they will need for adulthood: creative problem solving, discipline, collaboration, persistence, conflict resolution, and organizational skills. As we prepare our children and youth to be future citizens and leaders, the possession of these skills are critically important to their well-being and the prosperity of our society.

Understanding more about how children and youth develop strengthens the case for ensuring that all young people have access to high quality developmentally appropriate afterschool and out-of-school time experiences. But even before we knew anything about how young people's minds are impacted by these ventures, many of us have seen the children and youth in our own lives flourish through participating in afterschool and out-of-school time programs. We are familiar with studies over the past 10-15 years that have provided evidence of the specific positive outcomes young people can achieve when participating in high quality afterschool and out-of-school programs. Examples indicate that afterschool and out-of-school time programs:

- **POSITIVELY IMPACT IN-SCHOOL ACADEMIC LEARNING.** Positive academic outcomes associated with participation include better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations; higher school attendance and less tardiness; less disciplinary action (e.g., suspension); better performance in school, as measured by achievement test scores and grades; greater on-time promotion; improved homework completion; and engagement in learning.
- **IMPROVE YOUTH SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES.** Social and leadership skills, self-esteem and self-concept, initiative and a host of other outcomes are increased. Across a number of studies, outcomes associated with participation in high quality programs include decreased behavioral problems; improved social and communication skills and/or relationships with others (peers, parents, and/or teachers); increased community involvement and broadened world view; increased self-confidence and self-esteem; and improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school. Afterschool and out-of-school time programs often provide a place for children who may be struggling academically to find and nurture their own talents and become competent and confident in the eyes of their peers and adults.
- **CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT NUTRITION AND EXERCISE.** Specific outcomes associated with participation in high quality programs include better food choices, increased physical activity, and increased knowledge of nutrition and health practices.

- **HELP CLOSE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP BY PROVIDING RICH EXPERIENTIAL AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING, ESPECIALLY IN THE SUMMER MONTHS.** Summer is key to creating educational equity as well as building healthy minds and bodies. There is growing evidence that well-designed, intentional summer programs can minimize loss of basic skills. Programs can provide the enriching experiences that lead to long-term increases in school attainment and achievement by building resiliency, initiative, and engagement in learning.
- **PROVIDE A BRIDGE BETWEEN YOUTH AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH INCREASED CIVIC AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.** Specific outcomes associated with participation in high quality programs which promote community engagement include: increased problem solving and conflict resolution skills; increased civic engagement; and increased awareness of community and world issues through attending to media coverage of important events.¹
- **PROVIDE YOUTH WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND PRACTICE THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO SUCCEED IN THE NEW ECONOMY.** The Partnership for 21st Century Skills notes that in order to thrive in the world today, young people need higher-end skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively beyond their peer groups, analyze complex information from multiple sources, write or present well-reasoned arguments, and develop solutions to interdisciplinary problems. High quality youth development programs integrate this type of skill building into their ongoing activities.



*Conte Community School Connected for Success Program
Pittsfield, MA*

The Opportunity and The Vision

The positive effects last a lifetime and benefit communities too; adults who as young people participated in afterschool and out-of-school time activities are more likely to: be employed, be active members of their communities, trust their parents, be in stable relationships, and be happy.²

We are fortunate that in Massachusetts, there is a long history of public and private support for a variety of afterschool and out-of-school time programs, including those provided by community and faith-based organizations, municipal parks and recreation departments, libraries, arts and cultural institutions, intramural sports leagues, and schools. Out of the nearly 1.3 million children and youth ages 5-19 in Massachusetts, thousands are involved in a rich variety of activities helping them develop their minds, build their social, emotional and cognitive skills, and boost their resiliency to cope with the impact of the daily stresses in their lives.

Yet far too many – an estimated 80% – of our children and youth are not accessing these opportunities for learning and development. From the ten public hearings held over the past six months, hundreds of parents, youth, providers, public officials and community leaders spoke about their needs, hopes and priorities for young people in Massachusetts. Children and youth from every region of the state lack transportation or the financial resources to attend afterschool and out-of-school time programs. Families need more and better choices for their children and youth when they are not in school. More options need to be made available to middle and high school students, and the afterschool and

out-of-school time workforce must be strengthened through improved professional development and compensation strategies. Parents are doing the best they can, given their limited resources and available program choices, but much more is needed. Without better and more diverse financing, and a state-wide commitment to strengthen, leverage and coordinate existing efforts, these challenges will remain as barriers for too many of our children and youth.

The challenge before us is to determine how, in an environment with limited resources and competing priorities, we can strengthen the existing system of afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities to support the healthy development of Massachusetts' future generation of leaders and citizens.

Vision

The Special Commission's vision for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a state where children and youth are challenged and engaged, where families have quality afterschool and out-of-school time choices for their children, and where communities work together, in public/private partnerships, to offer enriching developmental opportunities for young people, regardless of their socio-economic or education status.

In order to ensure that each child and adolescent reaches his or her full potential, the Commonwealth must leverage all the available human and financial capital from the federal, state, municipal and private and non-profit sectors to build a future for our children and youth.

Our vision calls for strengthening, coordinating and leveraging an afterschool and out-of-school time system that:

- Ensures families can choose from a diverse range of public and private programs to expand their children's learning opportunities and support their cognitive, social, emotional, moral, cultural, civic, and physical development.
- Coordinates and leverages early childhood, afterschool and out-of-school time, youth development, school and community and faith-based programs to provide a continuum of high quality learning experiences for children and youth ages 0-19 (up to 22 years for children and youth with special needs).
- Expands access for underserved populations, including low-income, older youth, special needs children and youth, English Language Learners (ELL), GLBT (Gay, Lesbian Bisexual and Transgendered) youth, children and youth in foster or residential care, and homeless children and youth.



*Girls Incorporated of Lynn's Teen Health Ambassadors
Lynn, MA
Program Site Visit – September 20, 2007*

The Opportunity and The Vision



*MetroWest YMCA High Flight Community Outreach Program
Hopkinton, MA*

- Enhances existing statewide, regional and local infrastructures to support programs through: coordinated and aligned funding streams; professional development and workforce initiatives; quality standards; data collection and evaluation; and building public awareness and support for afterschool and out-of-school time programs.
- Sustains existing quality programs through continuously improving their quality through building their capacity.
- Invests in the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce.
- Preserves local flexibility and control while achieving high statewide standards for afterschool and out-of-school time programs, staff quality, and child and youth outcomes.
- Leverages public and private funding that reflects the true cost of providing quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs and the need for operational support at the program level.
- Accesses increased, sustainable funding from private and public sources to meet demand and improve the quality of afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

We must make wise and strategic public and private investments of our time and resources. When we do, then together, we can ensure that children and youth in Massachusetts have access to quality opportunities today that will shape them into adults who will strengthen our communities, our Commonwealth and our nation tomorrow.

"This is really important to a lot of people where I come from.....in the time that I have been there ...all the adults want to do something more for the youth..."

*— Shelly, Age 16, Peer Leader
Pittsfield Public Hearing, May 1, 2007*



*South Shore Day Care Services
E. Weymouth, MA*

The Special Commission's Work

"I love the program; it changed me so much."

— Corrina, Student, Maurice A. Donahue Elementary School
Springfield Public Hearing
April 10, 2007

The Massachusetts Legislature created the Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time (Special Commission) to better understand the impact of afterschool and out-of-school time programs in the daily lives of the nearly 1.3 million children and youth who live here. Launched in March 2007, this 36 member commission – representing legislators, community and faith-based afterschool and out-of-school time providers, public and private schools, teachers, school officials, state agencies, child care organizations, advocacy, and parent-teacher organizations – was asked “to study and recommend how to 'define and 'better coordinate, expand, finance and improve accessible, affordable, and quality out-of-school time programming for school age children in all settings in Massachusetts.”³ The Special Commission was funded by the Massachusetts Legislature with a matching grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and in-kind administrative support from The Boston Foundation.

The Special Commission retained the services of The Kunnusta Group, which worked with an array of expert consultants to organize the public hearings, conduct afterschool and out-of-school time program site visits, facilitate the Special Commission's three working groups and prepare the final report.

Public Hearings

The Special Commission's first public hearing, in Springfield, was convened in April 2007. The Special Commission held additional hearings in Pittsfield, Worcester, Framingham, Quincy, Dartmouth, Barnstable, Lawrence, Lynn and Boston. Nearly 500 people from all walks of life attended the hearings: children, youth, parents, afterschool and out-of-school time providers, police officers, librarians, parks and recreation directors, municipal officials, teachers, college presidents, school superintendents, business leaders, artists and other community leaders. They provided powerful and riveting testimony about the importance and transformative

power of afterschool and out-of-school time programs in their own lives and the lives of the children and youth in their communities. They offered creative ideas for how a sustainable system of afterschool and out-of-school time programs is critical to helping children and youth develop into caring, productive, engaged, successful adults. Their testimony profoundly influenced the findings and recommendations of the Special Commission.

Program Site Visits

Special Commission members visited 10 programs across the state that served children and youth of different ages using diverse approaches. These site visits, along with the public hearing testimony, combined to give Special Commission members an authentic portrayal of the after-school and out-of-school time field in the Commonwealth. The programs visited by the Special Commission have been highlighted in the full report to demonstrate the breadth and depth of afterschool and out-of-school time programming throughout the state.

Work Groups

The Special Commission created three work groups: Information and Access, Quality, Workforce and Professional Development, and Sustainability. Each of the work groups studied the issues extensively to help inform and guide the Special Commission's recommendations.



*Conte Community School Connected for Success Program
Pittsfield, MA*

The Special Commission's Work

"I love going to the Dunbar Community Center. I can get help with my homework, participate in workshops, go places and take part in college tours. We went to MIT. I have different opportunities to make something of myself."

— Lauren, High School Student
Springfield Public Hearing
April 10, 2007

Research

The Special Commission collected data from a wide range of state agencies, and selected state-wide afterschool and out-of-school time providers such as the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA's. It also gathered data from the Parents Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE) to better understand the types of afterschool and out-of-school time activities being offered in the state's Catholic schools. This research contributed to a deeper understanding about the complexion of the Commonwealth's afterschool and out-of-school time field.

In addition to its own research, the Special Commission also worked with leading experts on afterschool and out-of-school time such as The Finance Project and prominent researchers in the field who authored issue briefs for the Special Commission on seven different topics such as:

- Defining the universe of afterschool and out-of-school time
- Why quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs matter
- How sports, arts and cultural programs positively impact children and youth in their non-school hours
- Identifying and addressing access barriers
- Using the summer to continue learning
- Engaging older youth

The Special Commission analyzed and integrated all the information generated from these four fact-finding methods to issue its findings and to develop recommendations.



Boys and Girls Club of Worcester
Worcester, MA

Findings and Recommendations

“We talk a lot about issues that don’t mean a hill of beans, but afterschool is one issue that we know through our research and through talking to educators, that makes a huge difference in a young person’s life.”

— Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston
Boston Public Hearing
September 25, 2007

FINDINGS

What is Afterschool and Out-of-School Time? An Overview

The Special Commission defined “afterschool” and “out-of-school time” as any activity that stimulates learning, provides a safe place and operates in licensed or unlicensed settings, formal or informal environments, including schools, community and faith-based organizations, drop-in programs, youth centers, intramural sports leagues, libraries, and parks and recreation facilities, among others. These activities occur before and after school, during the weekends, summer and school vacations for children and youth ages five through nineteen. The Special Commission also recognizes that children and youth with special needs deserve support until they reach their early 20’s due to the unique nature of how they learn and grow.

What We Learned about Afterschool and Out-of-School Time in Massachusetts

In the last several months, the Special Commission gathered information about afterschool and out-of-school time programs in Massachusetts through public hearings, program site visits, work groups, external data gathering and research.

As Special Commission members traversed the state, nearly 500 people attended 10 public hearings to talk about their needs, hopes and aspirations for the young people in their communities. Overwhelmingly, people hope that the Commission’s work will result in a strengthened statewide afterschool network that more effectively and efficiently enables young people to access the positive developmental opportunities they need to transition successfully to adulthood.

The public testimony also echoed what Special Commission members learned as they visited 10 afterschool and out-of-school time programs across the state. Serving different ages with diverse approaches, the programs seen by the Special Commission have a singular purpose: ensuring the children and youth in their charge receive what they need to realize their full potential. Keeping these critical themes in mind, Special Commission members divided into three work groups to study and make recommendations about distinct but interconnected topics:

1) INFORMATION AND ACCESS WORK GROUP – The Information and Access Work Group studied what is needed to help families obtain the right information at the right time to choose the right program for their children. They also worked on identifying and understanding the wide range of barriers – from transportation to other administrative, socio-demographic and even philosophical factors – that prevent children and youth from participating in afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

2) QUALITY, WORKFORCE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORK GROUP – The Quality, Workforce and Professional Development Work Group identified the critical relationship between staff quality, program quality and positive youth outcomes. They provided a sequence of research-based activities that will address how to strengthen the state’s afterschool and out-of-school time workforce, improve program quality, and achieve desired child/youth outcomes.

3) SUSTAINABILITY WORK GROUP – The Sustainability Work Group reviewed the complex realm of federal, state, local and private financing and how those four streams could be increased, better aligned, and leveraged to support high quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs for the Commonwealth’s children and youth.

This section reflects the integration of everything we learned and provides a summary of our key findings and priority recommendations. We hope it does justice to what we heard and saw and will inspire action from everyone who cares about creating a brighter future for our children and youth. The Special Commission’s more detailed findings and additional recommendations can be found in the Special Commission’s full report.

Findings and Recommendations

A Closer Look at the State's Role and Investments in Afterschool and Out-of-School Time

There are nearly 1.3 million school-aged children ages 5-19 in Massachusetts. Survey research indicates that about 20% of school-age children (5-14 yrs) in Massachusetts participate in afterschool and out-of-school time activities: more than 200,000 youth across the state.⁴ The total is probably higher when activities for older children, and specialty and occasional programs are included. In FY06, the Commonwealth had a total of \$157.32 million in funding available to support school-aged child care and afterschool and out-of-school time programs. This included \$93.5 million in core funding that can **only** be used for afterschool and out-of-school time programs and another \$63 million in funding that can be used for afterschool and out-of-school time activities, but also for other purposes. Virtually all of the core funding and much of the other funding comes from the federal government. The state's FY06 investment in afterschool and out-of-school time resulted in programming for approximately 58,000 children and youth, or about a quarter of the estimated total population.⁵

The total available funding from the state grew 24% in FY07 to \$195 million. A portion of the growth was in core funding, but most of it was in other areas such as:

- \$7.4 million for the Department of Early Care and Education's program to provide support for income-eligible children ages 5-13 to attend after-school, out-of-school time and summer programs;
- \$950,000 for the Afterschool and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Grant Program at the Department of Education (DOE);
- \$6.1 million increase for the DOE's School Re-Design: Expanded Learning Time Initiative (ELT) Grant Program;
- \$10.98 million for the Executive Office of Public Safety's Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative (Shannon Grants); and
- \$2.1 million increase for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Youth At-Risk Matching Grant Program.

When data was last collected on the state's afterschool and out-of-school time investments, (both core and other funding), the available funding totaled \$149.12 million.⁶ The \$157.32 million available in FY06 represented a 6% increase from the FY01 total while the \$195.32 million



*United Teen Equality Center (UTEC), Lowell, MA
Program Site Visit – September 18, 2007*

available in FY07 represented an increase of 31%. Most of the new additional revenue reflected increases in federal funding flowing to the state.

While we have some reliable data on state funded programs, there is currently no ongoing way to measure demand for publicly and privately funded after-school and out-of-school time programs statewide. Many public and private schools also operate afterschool or out-of-school time programs, though no comprehensive information about these programs is currently available.

According to the Special Commission's analysis, up to 18 different state agencies provide funding for afterschool and out-of-school time programs in some form. However, because many of the state programs that are sometimes used to support afterschool and out-of-school time activities can also be used for other purposes, it is difficult to determine exactly how much is going to these afterschool activities or to describe in detail how the funds that go to them are used.

The core support for afterschool and out-of-school time services in the Commonwealth comes from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) and the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE). Together they provided \$93.5 million in funding for afterschool in FY06. Their combined funding represented 59% of the total state funding available in FY06 and they operate the only state programs that focus entirely on afterschool and out-of-school time activities. In FY06, DEEC provided \$76.6 million and served 17,226 low-income or at-risk children between the ages of 5-13.⁷ In general DEEC's support is means tested and available only to subsidize children from families who make less than 50% of the state median income.

Findings and Recommendations

DEEC's vouchers and contracts are for programs that are at least four days a week. Nearly 7,000 school-aged children ages 5-13 are now waiting for DEEC support for after-school services.⁸ To clear the existing waiting list DEEC would have to increase the subsidized slots it supports by nearly 30%. The existing waitlist is limited to eligible families with children under the age of 13, and probably understates the demand for these subsidies as many families may elect not to join the lists when they learn that the wait may be long.

The DOE administers a variety of programs that impact children and youth in their non-school hours, but the primary two efforts they oversee are the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant program and the state's Afterschool and Out-of-school Time (ASOST) grant program. In FY06, the DOE provided \$16.8 million to 39 school districts spanning 191 different program sites. These programs served a total of 24,426 children and youth; of which 757 were youth ages 14-19. Of those, 20,504 were served during the academic year and 5,978 were served in the summer months.

The DOE's ASOST Grant Program was established in FY07. With \$950,000, they were able to serve 3,740 children and youth; 779 of whom are children and youth with disabilities and 562 were English Language Learners.

Funding from both of these sources provide critical support to school-based afterschool and out-of-school time programs, but ordinarily this funding has to be pooled with funding from other sources to make programs possible.

Other state agencies provide important afterschool and out-of-school time funding but their grantmaking is focused

primarily on the mission of their departments rather than specifically on afterschool and out-of-school time activities. Examples include the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development among others.

A selected listing of public agencies and their afterschool and out-of-school time grant programs can be found in the Special Commission's full report.

Maximizing Federal Revenue for Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Programs in Massachusetts

The Special Commission found that Massachusetts could do more to maximize existing federal funding streams to support afterschool and out-of-school time programs in the Commonwealth. Research in particular revealed the following needs:

- More data to determine how the **100 federal funding streams** that support after school and out-of-school time can be better leveraged in Massachusetts.⁹
- More data to determine whether Massachusetts is **maximizing federal block grants**¹⁰
- An analysis of barriers that prevent community based programs from accessing reimbursement through the **afterschool meals and snacks program** (currently serving only 8% of eligible MA youth) and the **Summer Food Service Program**.¹¹
- Strategies to increase the number of students who participate in the **School Breakfast Program** as Massachusetts ranked 23rd when compared to other states.¹²
- Further study to determine if Massachusetts is maximizing **Medicaid** funds for health or mental health services that are offered during afterschool and out-of-school time.¹³
- Focused attention to fully leverage **federal discretionary grant programs**.¹⁴

Other Critical Partners: Municipal Government, Private and the Non-Profit Sectors

Municipal Governments

The Special Commission found a variety of municipal partners that promote afterschool and out-of-school time programming. Public libraries, local arts councils and



*From left to right: Senator Thomas McGee and Senator Susan Tucker
Special Commission Lawrence Public Hearing, September 18, 2007*

Findings and Recommendations



*Gregg Neighborhood House, Lynn MA
Program Site Visit – September 20, 2007*

municipal parks and recreation departments provide, support and fund a variety of afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities for the children and youth who live in their communities. Representatives of these three municipal systems attended multiple public hearings to talk about their offerings and their desire to collaborate with other partners to enhance their services to children and youth in their non-school hours.

Resources at the local level include the following:

Public Libraries¹⁵

- **370 Public Libraries** and 111 branch libraries exist in 348 cities and towns. There are 343 children's librarians and 66 young adult librarians statewide.
- 63,538 programs for children and young adults were held with a **total attendance of 1,430,536**
- 42 libraries have **homework centers**
- 347 held **summer reading programs**

Local Arts Councils¹⁶

- **329 Local Arts Councils** exist in the state (some of these are regional); all capable of supporting afterschool and out-of-school time programming

Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments¹⁷

- **351 municipal recreation and park departments** exist; one in every city and town in the Commonwealth
- Depending on the size of their city or town, the parks and recreation department can serve dozens or thousands of children and youth annually.¹⁸

The Importance of Private Investment

The private sector is a critical partner in strengthening the Commonwealth's afterschool and out-of-school time system. Through community foundations, United Ways, and corporate and philanthropic foundations, afterschool and out-of-school time programs receive significant support. The Special Commission found this to be particularly true for programs that serve older youth.

A more comprehensive analysis of private investment in this area would likely yield tens of millions of dollars as Massachusetts has 4,463 foundations with assets of \$11.6 billion.¹⁹ The 17 community foundations around the state and the 15 United Ways, also support afterschool and out-of-school time programs though many other foundations and corporations also make significant contributions. Individual donors also represent a key source of support for many programs. For example, they accounted for \$3.3 billion of charitable giving in Massachusetts in 2002.²⁰

The Special Commission recommends additional exploration on how the public and private sector can work more closely together to spur additional investments in the afterschool and out-of-school time field.

Non-Profit Entities and Private Schools

Massachusetts is home to 37,159 non-profit organizations.²¹ A significant number of these non-profit organizations provide quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs to the Commonwealth's children and youth. Private schools also provide afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities for their students. Unfortunately there is no comprehensive information about the number or character of non-profit programs, though there is good data on parts of the field, such as programs that are licensed or are funded by particular state programs. While many non-profit afterschool and out-of-school time programs receive some support from the state or local government, most depend quite significantly on parent fees and private contributions. Since uniform data is not available, the information we did collect provides a snapshot of the valuable role non-profit organizations and private schools play in the lives of children and youth. We found:

- **41 Boys and Girls Clubs** statewide served **184,404** children and youth.²²
- **100 chartered YMCAs** collectively served **266,441** children and youth; **98,609** are youth ages 12-17²³
- YMCAs have **3,392** DEEC subsidized slots and have **124** sites in public schools²⁴

Findings and Recommendations

- **90% of the state's surveyed Catholic schools** provide some type of afterschool and out-of-school time program serving an estimated **11,434** students²⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Historic Opportunity: Creating a Unified Network to Support Children and Youth in Afterschool and Out-of-School Time

There are many commendable and exciting efforts that exist at local, regional and state levels to support children and youth when they are not in school. We heard dozens of inspiring examples at the public hearings so it is clear there is a real passion to help children and youth realize their full potential. We also learned that families as well as providers of afterschool and out-of-school time programs invest an inordinate amount of their time trying to find out what programs exist and where they are located; dealing with confusing and multiple overlapping public and private funding, reporting and licensing requirements; negotiating relationships with schools and other community partners to provide services; and dealing with the arduous and expensive task of transporting children and youth to and from programs.

Most importantly, the fact that the afterschool and out-of-school time field is under-resourced means programs cannot subsidize the participation of all of the low-income children and youth who want to attend; nor can they train or compensate staff at a level that would improve quality across the board. In some places in the state, afterschool and out-of-school time programs simply do not exist at all.

Despite this hive of activity, there are no unifying principles or uniform methods that the Commonwealth collectively uses to support the afterschool and out-of-school time field. Since the field is under-resourced, the challenge we have before us how to more creatively and effectively identify, align, and coordinate all the different pieces so both parents and providers can focus on what they do best – making sure children and youth get what they need to flourish.

The Commonwealth has a historic opportunity. We can leverage all our political, social and financial capital to help create a future of our children and youth by improving, enhancing and creating new experiences for them to learn and grow. To accomplish this, the Special Commission proposes creating a more unified and coordinated response at the state, regional and local level to support children and youth in their non-school hours that focuses on five key elements.

Enhancing Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Statewide

Influenced by the research of Billie Young, the Special Commission identified five key elements that are crucial to building a comprehensive, and effective statewide afterschool and out-of-school time network.

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS. The general public in Massachusetts does not understand the value and impact of quality afterschool and out-of-school time experiences for children and youth. To facilitate this understanding, a public education campaign is needed to increase public awareness. This will lead to stronger support from a variety of constituencies including politicians, schools, voters, and funders. It is important that public awareness efforts emphasize that high quality afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities provide critical developmental experiences that young people need to successfully transition to adulthood.

PROVIDING INFORMATION AND INCREASING ACCESS. Data drives decision-making and policy. Families need an easier and better way to choose afterschool programs for their children. The afterschool and out-of-school time field needs more information about supply, demand, barriers to access, and the impact of afterschool and out-of-school time programs on children and youth. The field also needs a strategy and an Information and Technology (IT) system for generating, analyzing and sharing this critical data. Better data should lead to innovative strategies to address inequities in access among age groups, races, cultures, socioeconomic status, gender, special needs, and linguistic minorities.

PROMOTING QUALITY PROGRAMS AND A QUALITY WORKFORCE. Quality remains at the core of providing afterschool and out-of-school time programs. Without quality, children and youth will not experience the positive developmental opportunities that are so important to their successful growth. Because so much depends on the quality of the relationships that staff create with children and youth, staff are the most important driver of program quality. To build quality, the field needs new strategies for professional development, increasing compensation, reducing turnover, and supporting emerging leaders. The field also needs a uniform set of program standards to measure quality that are linked to sustainable funding and positive youth outcomes.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS. Partnerships are critical to the afterschool and out-of-school time field. Leaders from municipal and state government, schools, the funding community, youth, parents, cultural institutions, neighborhoods, community and faith-based organizations,

Findings and Recommendations

*"While being here my life has been different...
I'm confident and I've made lifelong friends..."*

*— Sharlene Fernandez, Teen Health Ambassador, Girls Inc,
Lynn Public Hearing
September 20, 2007*

the private sector, law enforcement, parks, libraries, and other entities can add important input and value to how children and youth develop in afterschool and out-of-school time programs and contribute resources to the effort.

SUSTAINING THE EFFORT. Without increased investment and better coordination and leveraging of existing funding, it will not be possible to ensure that the Commonwealth's children and youth have access to positive developmental experiences during their non-school hours.

The Special Commission has organized its primary findings and priority recommendations in each of these five categories with more detailed findings and recommendations spanning a five-year period in the Special Commission's full report.

1. Increasing Public Awareness

WHAT IS IT?

Afterschool and out-of-school time programs mean different things to different people. To help the public better understand the diversity and value of this field, an education campaign is needed to more deeply explain how participation in quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs helps prepare young people for their futures. Sharing research-based information in the public domain will increase public awareness and support for afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Children and youth need guidance to become productive and caring adults. Afterschool and out-of-school time programs provide opportunities for them to learn and grow while practicing skills that will prepare them for the 21st Century. Increased public understanding of the critical role that afterschool and out-of-school time programs can play as children and youth mature is essential to ensure they are well-prepared to become responsible adults and citizens.

KEY FINDINGS

The Special Commission learned that there is not a unified voice or understanding about the value and importance of quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs in the lives of Massachusetts' children and youth. Increased public



*Commissioner Ann Reale on right
Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
Gregg Neighborhood House, Lynn, MA
Program Site Visit – September 20, 2007*

awareness and a shared vision about what children, youth and families require in non-school hours is needed. In an era of competing priorities, the public also needs to understand that building upon the investments made in early care and education is a wise choice as children and youth continue to grow and develop. Learning more about the physical, emotional, and cognitive development of children and youth is essential to creating and implementing a public education campaign. Efforts should include:

- Understanding, educating, promoting and publicizing that children and youth need high quality opportunities to spur their successful trajectory to adulthood. This link – and the role that afterschool and out-of-school time programs can play in this process – is not yet widely known or appreciated.
- Ensuring that there is widespread understanding by the residents of the Commonwealth that nearly 80% of the state's children and youth need better access to critical opportunities for healthy development in their non-school hours.
- Participating in the conversation about school reform as there is a growing consensus around that "schools can't do it alone," and what children and young people do in their non-school time is as critically important to their growth and development.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

- Create a public education campaign, supported by the public and private sector, to better leverage, coordinate and increase the necessary financial and human capital to improve learning and developmental opportunities for all children and youth in the Commonwealth.

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"By improving our lives, we are improving our communities."

— Wislian, Junior High School Peer Educator
Lynn Public Hearing
September 20, 2007

2. Providing Information and Increasing Access

WHAT IS IT?

Information refers to both the data the field, funders and policymakers need to address gaps and make necessary program improvements and the information families and young people need to choose the right programs. Access refers to ensuring that children and young people are accessing high quality programs equitably, without disparities resulting from economic, racial/ethnic/linguistic, geographic, special needs, GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgendered) or other identities.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

No matter the subject at hand, good information is required to make good decisions. A policymaker may ask questions about how existing afterschool and out-of-school time programs are funded, staffed and used by children, youth and families, to help guide future policy and funding decisions. A provider wants to know what funding may be available, what licensing requirements apply, and what trainings are offered for staff members. A parent or young person might want to know which programs are close by, the experience teachers have, the activities on the schedule, and how much the program costs. Without ready access to this information, the policymaker, provider, parent and young person are all prevented from making good decisions.



*The Northstar Learning Center program at the Sgt. William Carney Academy
New Bedford, MA
Program Site Visit – July 19, 2007*

Many different factors prevent young people and their families from taking advantage of afterschool and out-of-school time programming, or discourage consistent participation. To expand access and increase participation, we need to better understand the complex interplay among non-school hours, location, transportation, program hours and focus, and the needs and interests of potential participants (including cultural and linguistic barriers and special needs). Building a better picture of the field for policymakers would produce a baseline of data that would also enrich the information about programs that could be made available to parents, children and youth to assist them in finding the activities that best meet their needs.

KEY FINDINGS

Access

- Nearly 1.3 million school-aged children ages 5 -19 live in Massachusetts.²⁶ Survey research indicates that about 20% of school-age children (5-14 yrs) in Massachusetts participate in afterschool and out-of-school time activities: more than 200,000 children and youth across the state²⁷
- Cost is a significant obstacle that limits access to programs and reduces participation. This becomes even more difficult with the expense of full-day summer programs.
- Location and transportation to programs are major obstacles to access statewide.
- Approximately 7,000 school-aged children ages 5 through 13 are waiting for subsidized and income-tested afterschool and out-of-school time programs through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC).²⁸
- Children age out of subsidized care at the end of their 13th year, a particularly vulnerable time for a young person's growth and development. (Note: If a child is in a program and they turn 13, DEEC allows them to stay until the program year ends)
- Many parents do not know how to access information about available licensed programs and information about many license-exempt programs through the Child Care Resource and Referral System.
- Many children of working poor parents are not eligible for subsidized slots, and families cannot afford to pay program fees.
- Children and youth with special needs, those who are homeless or in foster care, GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered) youth, and youth of linguistic, ethnic and racial minority groups, find that the design and staffing of

Findings and Recommendations

many existing afterschool and out-of-school time programs cannot readily accommodate their unique needs.

- Children and youth in rural areas face particularly great challenges because of the scarcity of programs and the difficulty of transportation.

Information

- No comprehensive statewide afterschool and out-of-school time data collection system exists, or is there a coordinating body that uses the data to create a plan for needed services. There is no ongoing way to measure supply of or demand for programs statewide, nor is there a way to analyze gaps in service by age, by time of day, or by neighborhood.
- Up to 18 state agencies provide some type of afterschool and out-of-school time services to children and youth ages 5 -19, with no ongoing statewide strategy for collecting and reporting their data.
- Gaps in information are particularly great for programs serving 14-18 year-olds because those programs are generally neither regulated nor funded by the state.
- Relatively little centralized information is available on all kinds of license-exempt programs, including school-run programs, sports programs and leagues, arts and cultural activities, academic support and enrichment programs, drop-in programs (like those operated by YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs), and occasional programs (like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts).

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase access to afterschool and out-of-school time programs for underserved populations, particularly low-income children and youth, older youth, and special populations including children and youth with special needs, those who are homeless or in foster care, GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered) youth, and youth who are members of linguistic, ethnic and racial minority groups by leveraging, maximizing, and increasing federal, state, local and private revenue streams.
- Promote the increased use of all existing and appropriate public facilities, including school buildings, for afterschool and out-of-school time programs.
- Inventory, study and analyze existing transportation systems across the state to determine how they can be better utilized to transport children and youth to and from afterschool and out-of-school time programs in urban, suburban and rural areas.



Lynn Public Hearing - September 20, 2007
North Shore Community College

"I've been doing this job for 30 years. I've worked in many different types of programs. The single most important thing is qualified staff. We have to make sure we provide alternatives for training and pay them what they are worth. If you don't have quality staff, you don't have a quality program."

— Tony Poti, Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of Webster and Dudley
Worcester Public Hearing
May 8, 2007

- Build off of existing efforts to create a high-quality web-based Information and Technology (IT) system to provide ongoing information to policymakers, providers, and consumers including providing numbers of children and youth served, offering a quality rating system, advertising professional and workforce development training opportunities, providing information about available grant opportunities and offering a consumer friendly searchable database of licensed and license-exempt programs by city and town throughout the Commonwealth.

3. Promoting Quality Programs and a Quality Workforce

WHAT IS IT?

Research has defined what a “quality” afterschool and out-of-school time program looks like across a wide range of settings – academic support, sports and recreation, enrichment, mentorships, and art intensives. Overall, a high quality program exhibits good practice in each of these areas:²⁹

- Efficient organizational management and policies
- Physical and psychological safety
- Supportive relationships

Findings and Recommendations

- Appropriate structure: group sizes and student: teacher ratios
- Staff qualifications
- Staff engagement with youth
- Youth engagement in program
- Activities are learning-oriented with skill-building opportunities
- Connections with school
- Family engagement
- Community partnerships
- Assessment, evaluation and accountability
- Quality of indoor and outdoor space

The key to high quality programs is staff quality. The Massachusetts Afterschool Research Study (MARS) found that staff with the right skills and competencies conducted higher quality programs that led to better outcomes for youth.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Children and youth who participate in quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs increase their academic and cognitive skills, increase their social and emotional development, have better physical skills, and heightened exposure and appreciation for arts, culture and civic involvement. They also have fun in the afternoons and summers by learning, playing and regenerating their minds and bodies. Like in any other profession, afterschool and out-of-school time programs need to be staffed by well qualified and adequately compensated staff, with time and supports to work on quality enhancement if children and youth are to receive optimum benefit.

According to the Harvard Family Research Project, when a set of leading experts in the afterschool and out-of-school time field was asked to identify the single most important ingredient for creating and sustaining quality improvement systems in out-of-school time, five of the eight respondents named staff recruitment, training, and development.³⁰

KEY FINDINGS

If Massachusetts young people are to achieve the benefits we expect from afterschool and out-of-school time programs, it is essential to address the multiple issues confronting the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce. Although there is a lack of data about workforce numbers, educational experiences and compensation levels; program leaders report that it is difficult to maintain program quality with

a workforce that is underpaid and not eligible for benefits and when many leave their jobs after only one year. We also know that program and agency level director jobs are extremely challenging without proper training requiring a range of skills from program development to personnel management to fundraising.

The Special Commission found that the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce needs attention at every level. Specific supports for continuous improvement efforts in programs are important. Among the Special Commission's findings are:

- Wages are too low, hours are too few and at odd times of day to retain quality staff.
- Staff turnover is very high; with some programs experiencing up to 50% turnover annually.
- Current professional development offerings are too expensive for many staff and not available to meet their scheduling needs.
- Certificate or degree programs are lacking for the field.
- Many staff are not well versed in child and youth development or behavior management and lack skills to work effectively with children and youth with special needs.
- The workforce is not as diverse ethnically and linguistically as the children and youth in programs they serve.
- Increased and enhanced funding and supports are needed to enhance program quality and provide higher quality activities with embedded learning, positive relationships with staff and parent engagement.
- Strong community partnerships are needed to achieve successful outcomes for children and youth.
- An increased array of experiences such as recreation, physical activity, health and wellness, arts and culture, time for problem-solving and critical thinking, college and career preparation and leadership development are needed to allow children and youth to realize their full potential.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a professional development fund which will provide stipends to the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce to participate in approved professional development activities and strengthen their core competencies.
- Provide supports to afterschool and out-of-school time leaders such as director support groups, leadership coaching, professional development opportunities focused on supervision and coaching, administration and fiscal management, and curriculum development.

Findings and Recommendations



*Town of Barnstable Recreation Department Afterschool Program
Horace Mann Charter School, Marston Mills, MA
Program Site Visit – September 11, 2007*

- Develop and support a set of regional technical assistance centers by coordinating efforts among existing public and private regional and local partners. The centers would provide a range of professional development and continuous quality improvement supports to the field.
- Explore systemic solutions to increasing the compensation and benefits of the afterschool and out-of-school time workforce at all levels. Work in concert with the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) Workforce Task Force to align solutions for programs and staff serving ages 5-14 with the early childhood workforce. Promote alignment and linkages with staff and programs serving older youth, recognizing the unique nature of the workforce that serves their needs.
- For all programs serving children and youth ages 5-19, formalize and implement a system where staff work toward common core competencies and program measures and achieve quality standards. Ensure that programs are designed to intentionally achieve realistic child and youth outcomes.

4. Fostering Partnerships and Collaborations

WHAT IS IT?

Research reveals that children and youth need diverse and stimulating experiences to flourish. Since no one organization alone can meet the developmental needs of young people, collaboration is necessary to ensure the optimal future of children and youth in the Commonwealth. This process of coming together and figuring out the ideas, political and social capital and resources needed to support young people is imperative if we are to create and sustain a network of quality afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities for children, youth and families.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Fostering public and private partnerships and collaborations on a state, regional and local level is key to maximizing resources on behalf of the Commonwealth's children and youth. Effective partnerships and collaborations can lead to comprehensive approaches that meet the developmental needs of children and youth, share the responsibility among a variety of key stakeholders, and increase the chances of sustainable afterschool and out-of-school time programming.

KEY FINDINGS

- Increased public and private collaborations among school systems, families, and afterschool and out-of-school time programs are needed to ensure that everyone is working together in a consistent and coordinated way to assist children and youth in reaching their potential.
- Communities who had successful public/private partnerships were able to achieve more comprehensive and sustained investments. The role of the corporate sector to support afterschool and out-of-school time programs, although significant, should be expanded.
- Allies such as libraries, law enforcement agencies, parks and recreation departments, local arts councils and other cultural institutions are eager to collaborate with school and community-based afterschool programs to extend afterschool and out-of-school time learning opportunities to children and youth.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create public/private partnerships at the state, regional and local levels where representatives from a variety of disciplines – such as public health, public safety, libraries, arts and cultural institutions, business, parks and recreation departments, workforce development, human services and schools – come together to strategically plan and leverage their funding and other resources for children and youth.
- Explore amending Chapter 70 language to include incentives for schools to collaborate with community-based afterschool programs as an element of the Chapter 70 formula.

"We need to find incentives for local partners to collaborate."

*— Kathleen Schatzberg, President, Cape Cod Community College
Barnstable Public Hearing
September 11, 2007*

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- Strengthen existing legislative language to require schools and community-based organizations to collaborate when planning new or implementing existing afterschool and out-of-school time school-based programs.
- Explore the pivotal role afterschool and out-of-school time programs have in a young person's education, with the Governor's Office and other key state agencies to ensure it is included in the development of education reform and policy initiatives.
- Promote and encourage mechanisms to increase linkages between schools, afterschool and out-of-school time programs to ensure children and youth receive essential mental health and other community services.

5. Sustaining the Effort

WHAT IS IT?

Sustaining quality afterschool and out-of-school time programs clearly requires funding, but funding alone is not enough. Achieving sustainability requires sustaining relationships and making important policy changes through a careful planning process that involves multiple stakeholders.

One key part of sustainability is “capacity building” for programs. By capacity building we are referring to investments in infrastructure that enable providers to run higher quality, more efficient and effective programming. Examples of capacity building investments include: facility improvements, equipment and supply upgrades, professional development, management training and support, organizational development and strategic planning, basic operational funding, and resources for evaluation.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Increased and sustainable funding is key for programs to maintain the long-term relationships between staff and participants that are proven to make a significant difference in the lives of children and youth. Cyclical and short-term funding destabilizes programs and contributes to high turnover. Quality staff move on to other fields with higher pay, benefits and career paths. Additional funds are then spent on new staff training, start-up costs, and not on quality improvement and increasing access which our research revealed is critically important to the future of our children and youth.

“While on the grounds of the afterschool program with my daughter Madison, I saw her and a child run toward each other and hug...my daughter had met this girl at another afterschool program...what a pivotal moment in a my life as a parent to see my child make a positive connection with another person that I had no part of...”

— Robyn Sterling Hodges, Parent
Framingham Public Hearing
May 29, 2007

KEY FINDINGS

Lack of Funding

- Makes it difficult to consistently serve children and youth, both during the school year and over the summer months.
- Removes children from the system in their 13th year, at a time when they urgently need support.
- Does not adequately address needs of older youth and other special populations (e.g. special needs, youth in foster care, GLBT youth).
- Makes it difficult for rural areas and other communities to get support because they are not eligible for or do not easily meet existing funding guidelines or criteria due to their size and other demographics.
- Prevents programs from providing transportation.

Financing

- Coordinated funding strategies that includes federal, state, private and local resources are needed at all levels of government.
- Multiple funding streams to provide options and different models for children, youth, and families need to be further explored.
- Community-based organizations need better access to existing public and private funding streams.
- Lack of multi-year funding cycles prevent community based organizations from developing high quality and stable afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

Capacity Building

- At least three regional and local systems exist that could be enhanced to help deliver a range of capacity building services to afterschool and out-of-school time program providers. They are:
 1. The 14 Child Care Resource and Referral agencies located in all six regions of the state;

Findings and Recommendations

2. The Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership's six regional networks;
 3. The Department of Public Health's Centers for Healthy Communities.
- Current systems are compatible in philosophy but no formal or informal agreements exist between them on how they could implement a range of capacity building services to support the state's afterschool and out-of-school time field.
 - Current state capacity – building services are delivered generally independently of each other, driven by either grant program demands, grantee requests and federal, state, or municipal funding guidelines.
 - Demand for capacity building services currently outstrips availability.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Explore new revenue streams at federal, state, municipal and private levels to increase access and quality of afterschool and out-of-school time programs.
- Create public/private partnerships to leverage and increase sustainable funding to meet demand for quality afterschool, out-of-school time and summer programs for children ages 5-19 (up to 22 years for special needs children and youth), with particular emphasis on supporting children eligible for subsidized slots, programs for older youth, summer programming, and access for special populations.
- Maximize federal dollars coming to Massachusetts to support afterschool and out-of-school time programs.
- Explore ways to institute multi-year funding cycles and competitive priorities for existing programs across state agencies, enabling providers to strengthen and sustain their programs.
- Create centralized on-line listing of federal, state, local and private funding opportunities.

"It is important to have culturally meaningful programming. Culturally including race, socio-economic status. It is critical that the leadership of youth agencies understands this. It is challenging to have this conversation. We are continuing to have it."

— Keisha Latulippe, Willis Center
Worcester Public Hearing
May 8, 2007



Conte Community School Connected for Success Program
Pittsfield, MA

- Have state agencies pool resources and provide technical assistance to reduce and remove the administrative barriers community-based organizations face when applying for funds.

Unifying all the Pieces: Call for a Statewide Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council

After analyzing our findings from the public hearing process, work group deliberations and external research, the Commission believes the Commonwealth must act decisively to improve and increase the access of children and youth to positive developmental opportunities in their non-school hours. We must create flexible and responsive networks and policies that increase and better align, leverage and coordinate existing resources at the state, regional and local levels.

To spur the level of cooperation and collaboration that is necessary to achieve dramatic improvements, the Special Commission recommends the creation of a statewide Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council.

Comprised of diverse stakeholders who are leaders in their organizations and their fields, the proposed Afterschool and Out-of-school Time Public/Private Coordinating Council would include state and municipal representatives from public safety, arts, libraries, parks and recreation departments, workforce development, higher education as

Findings and Recommendations

well as leaders from public and private schools, community and faith-based afterschool and out-of-school time programs, youth representatives, private funders and business – all whom have a stake and role in creating future opportunities for the Commonwealth’s children and youth.

The Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council will be charged with implementing the Commission’s recommendations in the five key areas:

- Building public awareness;
- Providing information and increasing access;
- Improving quality and supporting the workforce;
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations; and
- Sustaining the effort

The Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Public/Private Coordinating Council would bring sustained attention to the afterschool and out-of-school time field and become a key player in ensuring the Commonwealth fully accepts its obligation to prepare our children and youth for successful adulthood.



*Boys and Girls Club of Worcester
Worcester, MA*

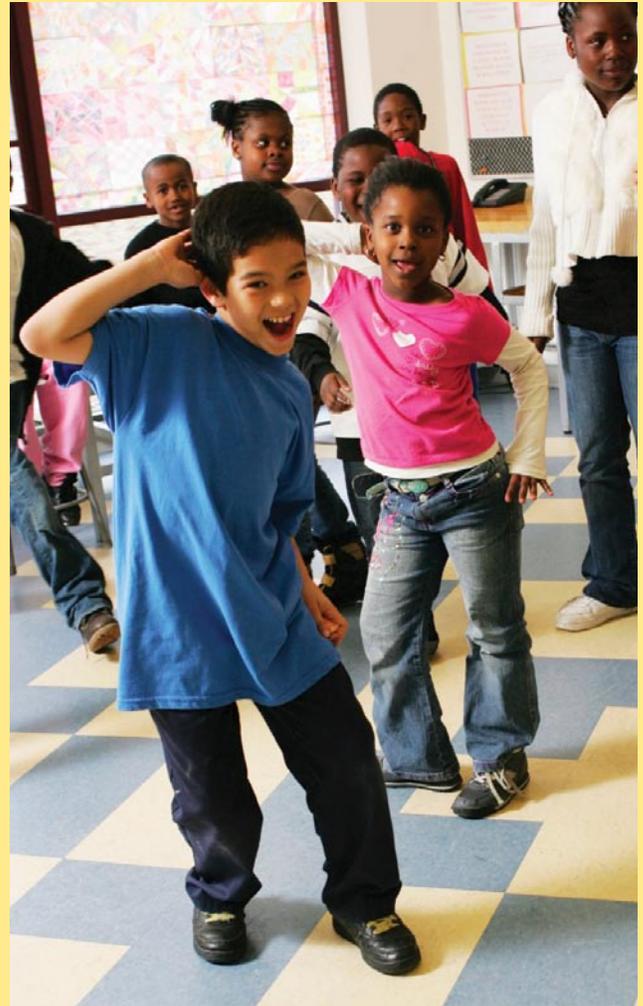


*Roxbury Preparatory Charter School Enrichment Program
Roxbury, MA*

Conclusion

If the public hearing process taught us anything, it is that residents of the Commonwealth have faith in their government and in themselves. Hundreds of people waited for hours to talk to us because they care so deeply about providing the children and youth in their lives and in their communities with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential. They understand how afterschool and out-of-school time programs provide young people with the positive relationships and experiences they need to develop into engaged and successful adults. They expect that their government will listen and take action to make it easier for their children, youth, and families to access the quality afterschool and out-of-school time experiences that will encourage and spur their future growth.

We have listened to these hundreds of voices, discussed, debated and analyzed the issues in our work groups, and together reached consensus on these recommendations to improve afterschool and out-of-school time programs across the state. We consider the release of our report to be the end of a new beginning. We look forward to continuing to work with all those we met on this journey to ensure that our children and youth reach their full potential as future members and leaders of our communities.



*Boys and Girls Club of Worcester
Worcester, MA*

Acknowledgments

Our jobs as Co-Chairs of Massachusetts Special Commission on After School and Out of School Time would have been impossible without the significant contributions of many individuals. In ways, both large and small, their participation made it feasible for us to do our work with integrity, commitment and passion.

First, we dedicate this report to the hundreds of people who came, listened and testified at our 10 public hearings. People waited patiently for hours to talk to us about why they care about this issue so deeply; our gratitude to them and to the service they provide to the young people of the Commonwealth is heartfelt. The names of everyone who signed in at the public hearings are an integral part of the final report and we thank you.

Second, we salute our hard-working staff, Jess Torres and Vanessa Fazio. With skill and grace, they have helped support us and this complex endeavor in a myriad of unseen but essential ways. Any future successes of the Special Commission's work will be due, in no small part, to their efforts.

Members of the Special Commission worked hard and diligently over the last several months to help us determine the best ways to prepare the children and youth of Massachusetts for their futures. We thank: Senator Robert Antonioni, Michael P. Cahill, Erik Champy, Maryellen Coffey, Joan Connolly, Dr. Deborah Dancy, Edward Doherty, Margaret Donnelly, Sally Fogerty, Joseph Gillis, Jr., Laurie Glassman, Gwynn Hughes, Donna Jasak, Deborah Kneeland, Representative Stephen LeDuc, Ben Lummis, Ed Madaus, Berna Mann, Maureen Marshal, Kathleen McDermott, Frederick Metters, Ann Nunes, Susan O'Connor, Senator Robert O'Leary, Lisa Silverman Pickard, Commissioner Ann Reale, Representative Pam Richardson, Gerry Ruane, Lourdes Sariol, Sharon Scott-Chandler, Harold Sparrow, Senator Karen Spilka, Carole Thomson, and Representative Alice Wolf. We also thank Fran Barrett, Michael Bennett, Phil Baimas, Donna Avery-Cohen, Erin Craft, Kathleen Hart, Amy Kershaw, Swapnil Maniar, Cathy O'Connor, Karyl Resnick, and Donna Traynham for their involvement in the Special Commission's work.

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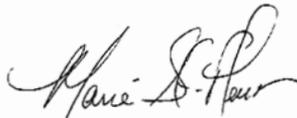
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We hope all our combined efforts will lead to more positive opportunities for our children and youth of the Commonwealth.



Senator Thomas M. McGee, Chair
Labor and Workforce Development Committee
Co-Chair



Representative Marie P. St. Fleur, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
Co-Chair

Endnotes

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- ²⁹ Synthesized from National Afterschool Association//SAYO-APT-NY State, Harvard Family Research Project, and RAND reports
- ³⁰ Little, P. M. D. (2004). A recipe for quality out-of-school time programs. The Evaluation Exchange, 10(1), 18-19. [Available at www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/eval/issue25/expert3.html.]

“A couple of years ago I was visited by a former student who had been in our program since kindergarten.... On the day she graduated from school where she got a scholarship to attend Fitchburg State college, she presented me with a yearbook. The inscription under her picture read, ‘Thanks to M for always showing up for me! I’ve never been so honored in my entire life.’”

— Michelle McDonald, Staff
South Shore Day Care Services
Quincy Public Hearing, July 19, 2007



Top:
Roxbury Preparatory Charter School Enrichment Program
Roxbury, MA

Above:
South Shore Day Care Services
East Weymouth, MA

Above left:
Gregg Neighborhood House, Lynn, MA
Program Site Visit – September 20, 2007

Our Common Wealth: Building a Future for Our Children and Youth

*The Report of the Massachusetts Special Commission on
After School and Out of School Time*
November 2007

This report was prepared by Debra McLaughlin with Dr. Julia Gittleman and Kathleen Traphagen. Judy Caplan, John Moukad and Christine Johnson-Staub also contributed to this report.

The report was designed by Carol Maglitta of One Visual Mind.

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