



Illinois After-school Alliance
FY08 After-School Policy Recommendations

THE ISSUE

The after-school system in Illinois is made up of multiple programs across state agencies that extend the learning day, promote academic achievement, and support youth development by providing opportunities such as adult-supervised tutoring, homework help, mentoring, arts programming, substance abuse and violence prevention activities, sports and workforce development opportunities. High quality after school programs provide a range of experiences adolescents need to shape who they will be as adults and instill in youth the skills needed for teamwork, decision making, leadership, and community contribution.

Still the need to increase the number and quality of after school programs in Illinois is great. Research by the Illinois After-school Partnership indicates that less than 7% of Illinois's 2.1 million school aged children currently participates in one of the state's three core after-school program or in programs funded by the city of Chicago. Teen REACH, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the Child Care Assistance Program are Illinois's core after-school programs.

In a recent survey conducted for the Washington, DC based Afterschool Alliance; seven of ten Americans who voted in the November elections want their newly elected state, local and federal officials to provide more funds for after school programs.

The Illinois After-School Alliance urges you to make the provision of after school programming one of your critical district and statewide priorities. Doing so will send a clear and definitive message to your constituents and colleagues that Illinois is committed to keeping kids safe, inspiring them to learn and helping Illinois families. We urge you to:

- **Support HR0384 to establish the Illinois After-school Funding Policy Task Force to develop recommendations for the administration, coordination, and sustainability of the ISBE After-School, Mentoring and Student Support line item.**
- **Expand the definition of after-school services, in Sec. 2-3.25p. of Senate Bill 0001 - Targeted Intervention Strategies, as viable approaches to learning and school improvement, include after-school stakeholders in the planning process, outline indicators of progress and strengthen community collaboration.**
- **Include providers of after-school programs as members of the Illinois Education Roundtable, in Sec. 22-45. Of Senate Bill 0001.**
- **Increase Teen REACH funding for FY08 by \$ 3.8 million to \$ 22.9 million to retain current level of service delivery to school aged children and youth.**
- **Restore Summer Bridges to the FY02 funding level of \$26 million.**
- **Support the continuance of the Child Care reimbursement rate increase and insure parity of increase for center-based programs.**
- **Monitor policies that support further development of Community Schools, including the Community Education Act.**

70 East Lake Street
Suite 720
Chicago, Illinois 60601

T 312.986.9200
F 312.922.2277

preventingviolence.org



Illinois After-school Alliance
FY08 After-School Policy Recommendations

Passage of HR0384 will establish the Illinois After-school Funding Policy Task Force to develop recommendations for the administration, coordination, and sustainability of the ISBE After-School, Mentoring and Student Support line item. More children and youth gained access to afterschool activities in FY06 and FY07 because of increased legislative commitment to addressing critical shortages in services and activities provided by after school programs. The current funding level of \$24 million should be maintained. To assure program quality, cost effectiveness, and positive outcomes for children and youth, without sacrificing flexible program design, the Illinois After-school Funding Policy Task Force, as proposed in HR0384, will submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly that includes:

1. Outline of priorities and administrative guidelines,
2. Recommendations regarding flexibility to meet community needs,
3. Recommendations for baseline measures of accountability and transparency,
4. Determination regarding the feasibility of establishing this line item as a sustainable source of after-school funding

Expand the definition of after-school services, in Sec. 2-3.25(p) of Senate Bill 0001 -Targeted Intervention Strategies, as viable approaches to learning and school improvement, include after-school stakeholders in the planning process, outline indicators of progress and strengthen community collaboration.

1. The expansion of the definition after-school tutoring and alternative enrichment activities to include after-school, extended day, and summer school programs that provide positive and safe environments for school-aged children and opportunities for them to participate in rewarding activities, to improve their academic performance, develop positive relationships with peers and adults, as well as gain self-confidence.
2. The targeted intervention plan, as described in sub section (k) include the New Day for Learning concept (*“a comprehensive, seamless approach to learning that values the distinct experiences that families, schools, afterschool programs, and communities provide for children.”*), as a viable alternative to previous interventions that have not improved student achievement levels.
3. That student, municipal, community and faith-based organizations that provide after-school programs and businesses in the community where the school is located be included as members of the State Intervention Team as described in sub section (g) and requiring their participation in the development and implementation of the strategic intervention plan.
4. Improved school attendance, fewer failed courses, higher graduation rates, lower drop out rates as well as improved student achievement levels, and others as indicators school progress.
5. The utilization of the Illinois After-school Partnership, as a state resource, to the various interest groups working to strengthen this line item,
6. The utilization of the Illinois After-school Alliance, as a representative voice of the Illinois After-school community,
7. Deletion of the words, *attempt to*, as set forth in subsection (j) (2), in order to preserve the collaborative nature and intent of the targeted intervention plan developed under this section.

Include providers of after-school programs as members of the Illinois Education Roundtable, in Sec. 22-45 of Senate Bill 0001.

Increase Teen REACH funding for FY08 by \$ 3.8 million to \$ 22.9 million to retain current level of service delivery to school aged children and youth. Established by IDHS in 1998, Teen REACH (Responsibility, Education, Achievement, Caring and Hope) is a proven, model program that offers academic support, positive services and activities for youth between the ages of 6 and 17 during non-school hours. For the second consecutive year 3000 of the 26,300 thousand children and youth enrolled in Teen REACH programs across the state, were informed that their programs might be forced to close due to a discontinuance of state funding, which for many translates into diminished interest in the positive development of 3000 Illinois kids. Funding Teen REACH after-school programs at the total FY07 funding level of \$22.9 million will exemplify a continued state commitment to all children and youth currently served.

Restore Summer Bridges to the FY02 funding level of \$26 million. The Illinois Bridges Program is an extended learning program designed to improve the reading, writing, and mathematical skills of students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 6 in districts where a significant number of students do not meet state learning standards based on the ISAT. This program is designed for students who are at risk of academic failure in pre-kindergarten through grade 6 with a concentrated curriculum on reading and writing. During its funding peak, 75-88% of Illinois students showed gains in reading. Over 90% of teachers reported increases in student knowledge of reading instructions. And, up to 90% of parents and teachers reported improved student attitudes toward reading.

Support the continuance of the Child Care reimbursement rate increase and insure parity of increase for center-based programs. Last year's budget achieved part of this goal but there are still too many Illinois children and youth being denied access to high quality childcare because many providers are unable to serve families in need and enrolled in the Child Care Assistance Program.

Monitor policies that support further development of Community Schools, including the Community Education Act. The community school model is rooted in partnership between local schools and the varied community institutions that impact student life and development. This includes family, community organizations, businesses and government, and together they create an integrated program of learning that acknowledges that all learning does not occur during the traditional school schedule. Afterschool services are a critical component of the community school model.

*For more information, please contact Lydia Taylor,
Illinois After-School Alliance Coordinator at 312-986-9200, ext. 229*