

Summary of Discussion Group on Financing for Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs

April 23, 2015

Overview

AYPF hosted a discussion group on the various ways that states and communities finance afterschool and summer learning programs. Statewide afterschool networks play a key role in supporting afterschool and summer learning programs by providing assistance in budgeting, financial management and planning, fiscal mapping, financial reporting, identification of funding sources, advocacy, and partnership building. Leaders from several statewide afterschool networks described the challenges faced and strategies used to ensure adequate resources for quality afterschool and summer learning programs. The information from this discussion group will inform a white paper AYPF is writing on financing for afterschool and summer learning programs, to be available in late summer 2015.

Presenters at the discussion group included:

- Terri Ferinde Dunham, Manager, National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks
- Jeff Cole, Network Lead, Beyond School Bells and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
- Joe Davis, Chief Executive Officer, Florida Afterschool Network
- Jessica Gunderson, Policy Director, Partnership for Children and Youth (California)
- Laveta Wills-Hale, Network Coordinator, Arkansas Out-of-School Network

Presentation – Statewide Afterschool Networks

Terri Ferinde Dunham, Manager of the National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks, helps oversee the statewide afterschool networks (SANs) in all fifty states with the goal to grow high quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

Terri outlined the three goals of the SANs. The first goal is to create strong partnerships that advocate for policy to lead to a sustainable structure of statewide afterschool and summer learning programs. The second goal is develop sustainable funding strategies by ensuring the development and growth of resources that are needed to sustain afterschool and summer learning programs. The third goal is to ensure that statewide afterschool systems promote high quality programs by providing support and technical assistance to providers.

Terri explained that 80 percent of the networks receive funding from their state departments of education, mainly through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, and some SANs receive state funding, while others do not. Terri described various tasks that SANs undertake, including:

- Identifying consistent, stable funding

- Advocating for increased funding for afterschool and summer learning in the state's budget
- Fighting proposed budget cuts
- Protecting against a narrowing of the focus of programs or eligibility
- Creating and staffing state task forces and commissions which can create legislative agendas supportive of afterschool and summer learning programs
- Focusing on quality
- Identifying other institutions that serve youth, such as libraries, that can be partners
- Building overall knowledge and support of afterschool and summer learning

Terri also discussed how SANs are supported and said various states have different funding and structures for SANs. For example, in Nebraska, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation serves as a fiscal pass-through sponsor but only provides some help with administrative costs, whereas in Arkansas, the University of Arkansas fully supports the network and provides funding for its activities and administrative support.

Panel #1

- **Jessica Gunderson**, Policy Director, Partners for Children and Youth, California
Joe Davis, Chief Executive Officer, Florida Afterschool Network

This panel explored the role that SANs play in states that have a dedicated funding stream for afterschool and summer learning programs. **Jessica Gunderson**, Policy Director at Partners for Children and Youth, in the Bay Area of California, discussed the history of afterschool funding in her state. California has been a leader in supporting expanded learning opportunities and passed Proposition 49 in 2002, which provides funding for afterschool and highlights the importance of and need for afterschool programs for all children. Although afterschool programs were funded in California before 2002, the state framed their investment as a violence prevention program rather than educational and enrichment opportunities for students.

In 2006, Proposition 49 was funded for the first time at \$550 million, and the funding has remained constant ever since. Approximately 400,000 students are served by afterschool programs. Funds are allotted to local education agencies, and priority is given to schools with high percentages of children receiving free and reduced price meals. The funding from Proposition 49 is used only for afterschool programs in the elementary and middle schools, so California uses its 21st CCLC funding to support summer learning programs and afterschool programs for high school students. When the Proposition 49 funds were first allocated, Jessica said they were concerned with how to ensure high quality programs when there was so much new money entering the system so quickly. In response, they provided a great deal of technical assistance to providers. In addition, while the local educational agencies (LEAs) are the grantees, the programs are primarily operated by community-based organizations (CBOs) so strong partnerships between LEAs and CBOs are critical and needed to be encouraged and supported.

Each LEA that receives education and afterschool funding must report on eight priorities and how it reaches those educational goals. Because afterschool can help LEAs meet certain priorities, such as student engagement, school climate, student achievement, course access, and

Common Core State Standards implementation, afterschool and summer programs are viewed as an important part of the LEA's educational strategy and are widely supported. Jessica also said that the Partnership has been very intentional about including language about college and career readiness, STEM, social and emotional learning (SEL), and summer learning when they talk about afterschool, as a way to appeal to other groups and strengthen support for afterschool. Despite these efforts, Jessica emphasized they need to build more coordination and intentionality with K-12. "We still need to push our way into K-12."

Jessica said that her organization works with local programs to help them raise money and build coalitions to leverage money from other sources. Most afterschool programs in California do charge fees, but most programs serve too many poor children to make money from fees. They look for other funding sources that might not be viewed as traditional afterschool funders, and said, for example, some programs use migrant education dollars to pay for transportation costs for children in afterschool and summer learning programs.

Jessica finished by discussing the roles that an intermediary, like the Partnership for Children and Youth, can play to strengthen the field. She said that intermediaries can help create high quality expanded learning programs if they advocate for supportive policies, seek and coordinate funding, and provide research and technical assistance.

Joe Davis, Chief Executive Officer, Florida Afterschool Network (FAN), began his presentation by providing context and background about afterschool programs in Florida. There are over 700,000 school-aged children in Florida that are left alone and unsupervised after school for multiple hours, and only 22 percent of Florida's students regularly participate in afterschool programs.

Joe explained that the mission of FAN is to provide unified leadership to advocate for the development, enhancement, and sustainability of innovative, high quality afterschool programs and policies statewide. The vision is that every child has high quality afterschool opportunities that are accessible, affordable, accountable, and inclusive.

Florida receives \$58 million from the 21st CCLC program, which serves 65,000 students and funds about 130 local grantees. The state has provided very limited funding to match the 21st CCLC grant, but Joe is hopeful that will increase soon. Florida has other sources of funding for afterschool including school-based afterschool programs, which are usually fee-based, programs offered by community- and faith-based organizations, parks and recreation departments, municipalities, and eight Children's Services Councils (CSC) located around the state. Children's Services Councils are local governing bodies that oversee funding for programs and services that improve the lives of children and their families. Funds are raised locally, and can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Usually between 5 percent to 30 percent of funds are dedicated to afterschool programs.

Florida also receives funds from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, for programs for delinquency prevention and intervention services both during and after school. Joe said that the Florida Secretary of Justice is a champion of afterschool programs and advocates for more support.

Joe discussed ways to increase participation and funding. He said that FAN is working with education superintendents around the state encouraging them to advocate for afterschool, but they need to engage them and mayors more deeply.

Joe emphasized the need to make people more aware of the value of afterschool and summer learning programs. He explained that public will needs to be built to support afterschool and summer learning as critical aspects of student success and that afterschool is just as important as early learning, which is a current hot topic.

Discussion

A participant asked about the relationship between child care funding and afterschool funding. Jessica explained that in California the afterschool programs do not currently get funding for child care. Joe explained in Florida there is a push to get every afterschool program licensed for child care, but reiterated that having the license does not reflect what afterschool education should be.

Another participant asked about the use of data systems and using data to improve collaboration. Joe explained that in Florida they are trying to increase the amount of data and good data they receive and use, but it is a big task. He went on to note that the 21st CCLC program has great data, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America programs have average data, but most other programs do not keep good data at all. One challenge, Joe said, is to determine what data indicates that a program is a high quality afterschool program, such as how many hours of service should be provided. Jessica added that she was dumfounded by the lack of good data, but said that they are working to improve data collection. The Partnership will be introducing a student identifier system so all programs can start collecting data on students. She went on to say that they are fortunate that there are some well-established afterschool programs in California, like LA's Best, and they have very good evaluation data, so that helps to make the case for afterschool.

One participant asked about advocacy and how the SANs developed the relationship with the lead champion and how to work with other champions. Jessica affirmed that it takes time to develop relationships with champions and that it is important to keep relationships strong as a champion moves into positions with more power. Joe explained a champion may not be someone who is in the trenches every day, but people who are behind the scenes in agencies, especially those that promote agency alliances. Joe summed it up well when he said, "You never know where a champion will come from. Champions are everywhere."

Panel #2

- **Laveta Wills-Hale**, Network Coordinator, Arkansas Out-of-School Network.
- **Jeff Cole**, Associate Vice President, Beyond School Bells and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE)

Laveta Wills-Hale provided background on education funding in Arkansas. In 2002, the Arkansas state education funding formula was found unconstitutional. In 2003, the state conducted an adequacy study and created a new funding equation. The amount now mandated to

be spent on public education is \$5 billion, which is about 41% of the state budget. This funding cannot be cut, so it sets education spending as a high priority. Since the new funding equation was implemented, the number of students who are proficient on state standardized assessments has increased.

Laveta said that even with declining budgets, afterschool and summer learning programs have remained a very high priority with the public, and 88% of adults support funding for them. But there is no dedicated state funding for afterschool, despite the fact that only 12 percent of Arkansas students participate in an afterschool program. The state receives about \$12 million in 21st CCLC funding, but can only serve about 12,000 students. Boys & Girls Clubs of America receives about \$2.5 million from the state, and a network of prevention services funds 16 prevention resource centers. However, these additional programs barely scratch the surface.

To expand access to high quality afterschool programs, in 2008, then-Governor Mike Beebe created a Governor's Task Force on Best Practices for Afterschool and Summer Programs. The goal was to improve the quality of youth programs and collaboration and partnerships. The task force report resulted in the development of legislation in 2009 that was designed to fund afterschool and positive youth development programs. Laveta said that while they hoped they could get the legislation passed and funded, there were concerns about whether or not the field would be ready to implement the agenda and if they would have the capacity to use the money. The legislation did get passed, but it has not been funded. Since 2009, in the expectation that funding will ultimately be provided, the Arkansas Out-of-School Network has lined up various forms of technical assistance for local providers to build capacity and improve the quality of programs.

Without funding for the afterschool legislation, the Network decided to ask for a two percent set aside from a \$200 million pot of funds that was allocated for closing achievement gaps to use for summer learning, as a strategy to improve student academic performance. However, the Arkansas Attorney General said that was not a constitutional use of funds, and that money is not available either. Laveta said they realize they are at the point where they need a sustained campaign to build the public will to push for the set aside or funding for the 2009 legislation.

The final presenter was **Jeff Cole**, Associate Vice President of Beyond School Bells and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Jeff said his organization only has 3 full-time staff and a budget of about a half million dollars, so they focus on building partnerships to advocate for policies that support and sustain high quality afterschool programs. One strategy they used was to develop fiscal maps to identify where resources to support afterschool exist and where there are gaps. They did two statewide maps and one map for Omaha. The maps help local providers see what is available in their communities and across the state and identify potential partners. Jeff said the NCFE developed a lot of credibility from conducting the fiscal maps, so it helped when they decided to focus on building citywide afterschool systems in ten communities in Nebraska.

Jeff said that one of their biggest challenges is to build the public will to expand afterschool programs and change long-established attitudes. "We say that we have a quality public education system, but we know we still have a lot of work to do to help all kids be successful. We position NCFE as offering expanded learning which can make a huge difference in achievement,

especially for low-income kids.” One strategy was to conduct a series of public television spots. NCCF created a relationship with Nebraska Education Telecommunications and developed television spots with well-known and highly-respected people to talk about afterschool, the benefits of afterschool, and how people can get involved to help.

Another area that the NCCF works in is to advocate for supportive policies. “We work with state government so you don’t have to – that’s what we tell the afterschool programs and other providers,” said Jeff. “We do the work for them. We use that to create partnerships with others in economic development, workforce, career and technical education, etc.” According to Jeff, NCCF also:

- Builds capacity by bringing urban and rural afterschool providers together, creating a coalition of city-wide OST systems. “We support local leadership development for mayor, superintendents, school board members, system directors. We developed an i3 grant for a coalition of communities, but we didn’t get it. However, we did cement some strong relationships and increased the level of knowledge of providers.”
- With funding from the Noyce Foundation, focuses on talking about afterschool as a strategy to improve STEM outcomes. This has been a “game changer, as people can see how they can get involved with afterschool to improve STEM outcomes.”
- Organizes coalitions to advocate for funding for afterschool. “We have brought numerous communities together and have them talk to legislators, and we ensure that we have a balance of urban and rural communities, as we need to have an urban-rural coalition in order to get anything done in our state.”
- Advocated for a bill that would allocate money from the lottery for afterschool innovation, which was approved, but only because the legislature sees the effort as serving both rural and urban, not just the cities. It includes a definition of quality afterschool and a school-community partnership focus. Now one percent of the lottery, which is about \$175,000, will be dedicated to afterschool. “We’ve cultivated many champions through this process.”
- Organizes policy breakfasts as a way to share our story and educate and inform policymakers about the work we do.
- Works with political leadership to build support for afterschool. “Our new governor promotes and believes in public-private partnerships which helps us in our messaging and work. He sees afterschool as a good investment and needed opportunity for every kid.”

Final Discussion

The group discussed a number of issues affecting the financing of afterschool and summer programs throughout the day as follows:

The SANs, and other intermediaries at both the state and community level, play an extremely important role in advocating for current, more, and new funds, identifying funds, and coordinating various sources of funding to support afterschool programs. SANs can also help educate the field after legislation is passed and provide technical assistance to ensure that implementation is of high quality.

There is a cost for quality afterschool and summer learning programs. Training and technical assistance, data collection, evaluation, and ongoing improvement and innovation require adequate funding. However, data is lacking, and it is often difficult to determine how much it costs to create a quality afterschool program.

Messaging and building public will about the value of afterschool and summer learning programs are critical. You need both to build the right champions. You also have to find advocates and champions to support the creation of new funds, grow existing funds, or allow the blending and braiding of funds.

The needs of urban and rural communities are different and oftentimes rural communities need additional support for afterschool programs (e.g. transportation in particular). However, working with both urban and rural communities and framing the challenges affecting them both can be a strategy to gain more support overall.

Flexibility is important to allow the coordination of funds and innovation at the local level. However, with increased flexibility comes the need for clear quality standards and a commitment to equity and ensuring that funds go to low-income communities. Also, with increased flexibility, states or communities could decide to spend less money on afterschool programs, so what structures could we put around flexible approaches that would cause more, not less, money to go to afterschool?