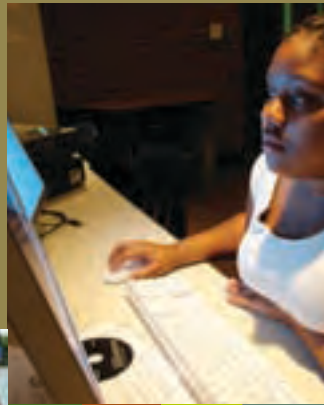


# BUILDING A Strong Foundation

JANUARY 2007



# foreword

**A**fterschool is a critical time in the life of Georgia’s children and youth. The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., as well as during summers and school vacations, can be a time to spend with family, pursue art or sports, or engage in service learning or technology projects that broaden children’s understanding of the world—beyond what they learn in the classroom. Unfortunately, it can also be a time of loneliness, boredom and danger for young people—a time full of unsupervised hours to engage in high-risk behaviors and crime.

*The Current State of Afterschool in Georgia: Building a Strong Foundation* is the first comprehensive exploration of Georgia’s afterschool landscape. We examine what communities, parents and children need and whether we, as a state, are meeting those needs. We look carefully at how quality is defined in Georgia’s afterschool programs and how programs are funded at the federal, state and local levels.

We know that Georgia has many excellent afterschool programs (several are highlighted in this report), and together we want to continue developing an infrastructure to support those programs. We also know, however, that Georgia can and must do much more for its youth.

Georgia has the third highest dropout rate in the country. We rank 44th out of 50 nationally on public school SAT scores, and 41st in the nation for teen births. Over 70 percent of Georgia’s school-age children live in families where both parents work. And, many successful adults can point to an “after-school experience” that helped shape their future goals and interests. Afterschool, though not a panacea, is perfectly situated to address each of these issues through focused, targeted programs that meet children and youths’ needs in ways that work for them, their families and their communities.

Afterschool is a time for enrichment, a time to foster young people’s social, physical, artistic, and educational interests and talents. Afterschool can ensure that young people build the leadership, teamwork and other abilities they will need to compete in a global economy—and become productive, contributing citizens in their communities.

In this report, we outline a comprehensive vision for afterschool developed by a task force of more than 40 partners throughout Georgia. We also include an Afterschool Action Agenda that defines and explores the steps toward realizing our vision—and makes real the promise of afterschool for all of Georgia’s children, families and communities.

Whether you are a policymaker, business leader, educator, afterschool provider, parent, student or simply a concerned citizen, we hope you will join us as we work to move this agenda forward.

Jill Riemer  
*Executive Director*  
*Georgia Afterschool Investment Council*

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# introd

Afterschool programs provide Georgia's children with skills that are critically important in school and in life. These are the very skills they will need to succeed in the global economy.

— Mark O'Connell, president of the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta



# uction

**F**or Georgia's youth, life is fast-paced, complex and filled with information and ideas. Even in our most rural areas, life extends beyond traditional community borders; it is rich with technology, diverse cultures and many languages. Today, Georgia's students need not only the basics of reading, math, science and social studies, but also an ability to think critically, problem-solve, make choices and self-motivate in a multicultural world. To thrive, students need to know how to interact with their peers and their elders and how to teach their siblings what they have learned.

Afterschool is uniquely situated to encourage and teach Georgia's youth to become successful, productive adults. Beyond test scores, afterschool programs measure success based on how students thrive in a multitude of ways. Afterschool programs complement the work of schools and provide additional learning alternatives to young people, while giving parents opportunities to help their children get ahead. Furthermore, afterschool provides support for Georgia's communities.

# introduction

## The Importance of Afterschool in Georgia

Afterschool is important in Georgia for several reasons:

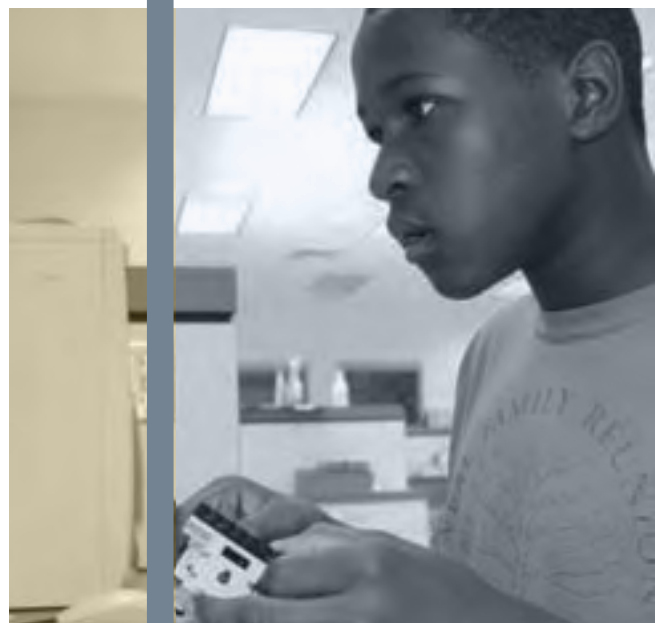
First, if properly designed, afterschool programs provide a safe and enriching space for kids to learn responsibility and grow outside of the traditional school setting. Kids can engage in project-based learning; dance, sing, learn to play instruments or participate in a sport; discover companionship in clubs; and do homework with specialized tutors. Afterschool programs are an important venue for addressing health and wellness issues such as physical fitness, child obesity and teen pregnancy that schools might not be able to tackle on their own.

Second, afterschool is an essential avenue for addressing the problems and challenges facing our youth. For example, Georgia has the third highest dropout rate in the nation. According to research

conducted by Voices for Georgia's Children, enrollment numbers for high school freshman and sophomore students decrease three times more during or immediately following the summer than during the school year between October and March, indicating that break time is high risk for some kids. Teens participating in engaging afterschool and summer programs are much less likely to drop out of school. They are also much less likely to become involved in crime or dangerous activities. Afterschool programs can engage our kids in subjects, ideas and activities that interest them, and it is an ideal setting for helping kids learn how to make responsible choices. Youth who may not see the value of school can be very committed to a sports team or a personal passion such as playing the piano or learning a foreign language, and stay in school—and out of trouble—as a result.

Studies show that after school is the peak time for teens to commit crimes, be a victim of crime, be in or cause a car crash, and smoke, drink or use drugs. Quality, constructive and highly supervised programs can cut crime immediately and convert afterschool hours into safe learning time.

Source: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids  
([www.fightcrime.org/issue\\_aftersch.php](http://www.fightcrime.org/issue_aftersch.php))





Afterschool programming can also be a vital tool for improving academic outcomes for Georgia's youth. Just this year, Georgia's public school SAT rank moved from 49th in the nation to 44th. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue is committed to improving this ranking even more. A targeted and focused afterschool effort can do just that—by giving young people the extra time, attention and preparation they need to succeed.

Finally, afterschool is an important way to prepare our kids to live, learn and eventually work and earn in a global economy. Innovative afterschool programs across the country are engaging kids in interactive high-tech activities that may not be possible for many students in traditional school settings. Georgia can and should build on programs like these that have begun to take root in our state, not only to better prepare our kids, but also to strengthen Georgia's economy and future workforce.

## The Good News

Georgia already has many excellent afterschool programs and, as a state, has begun to develop an infrastructure to support quality afterschool programming. This report—and the agenda it outlines—is the result of work done by more than 40 taskforce members, who represent partner organizations throughout the state that are committed to improving the welfare of Georgia's children and families, including Bright from the Start; the Children and Youth Coordinating Council; Family Connection Partnership; Georgia's Departments of Education, Human Resources and Juvenile Justice; Georgia PTA; Quality Care for Children; United Way; and Voices for Georgia's Children, among many others.

Through meetings and conversations facilitated by the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council (GAIC), one of 32 Statewide Afterschool Networks across the nation, partners have shared information and ideas, developed a unified vision for afterschool in the state, and are building a coordinated approach to establishing quality afterschool programs as well as a system to support those programs and the children and families they serve.



# introduction

## The Challenge

Despite the good news, there is much work to be done to support the development of a vibrant menu of afterschool options throughout Georgia. Consider these facts:

- Though afterschool programs exist throughout Georgia, in many counties they are limited and may not serve children and families who need them most.
- Quality varies widely from program to program, and without statewide afterschool standards, quality is difficult to assess.
- Funding is often hard to access and manage. A coordinated statewide funding effort could do much to increase financial support for afterschool programs.
- In order for afterschool programs to thrive and meet growing demand, Georgia needs to build a statewide afterschool collaborative with resources and supports to enhance the work of afterschool programs throughout the state.



Employers across Georgia are looking for employees with high-level skills, including the ability to work in teams and approach complex problems in innovative ways. Afterschool programs allow students to explore their interests and apply their school-day learning in new ways—ways that strengthen their knowledge and skills and boost their employability.

—Ann W. Cramer, director North America, IBM Corporate Community Relations

## How to Use This Report

The purpose of this report is to look at how afterschool could work in Georgia, to outline how it is working, and to determine what needs to be done to move from vision to reality. In the following order, the report:

- Offers a vision for afterschool in Georgia.
- Identifies the needs of Georgia’s children and families and gives a snapshot of Georgia’s current afterschool programming.
- Looks at the issue of afterschool quality and outlines an approach to establishing quality standards for Georgia’s afterschool programs.
- Examines funding for afterschool in Georgia.
- Outlines next steps and an action agenda for Georgia—based on the vision and the realities outlined in the report.

This Georgia afterschool report is just a starting place for improving afterschool throughout the state. The action steps listed at the end of the report provide a jumping off point for parents, business leaders, policymakers, youth development specialists and educators to work together to advance and strengthen programs and policies for afterschool across the state. This document also serves as a roadmap for partners of the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council.

## A Note on Methodology and Definitions

Over the last few months, GAIC has convened a series of conversations among afterschool providers, social service experts, educators, community workers, business representatives, government officials and parents to get their perspectives on afterschool in Georgia. GAIC has also conducted interviews with individuals working in or connected to the afterschool field. This report is the result of these conversations and research.

Afterschool, as it is used in this report, refers broadly to out-of-school time, including summer, school vacations, weekends and the hours immediately preceding and following the regular school day.

# vision

Afterschool programs keep kids safe, busy and out of trouble. When young people are engaged in afterschool activities, kids, parents and the whole community benefit.

—Eddie J. Moody, former chief of police, DeKalb County, Georgia



# On

## Vision for a Healthy Statewide Afterschool Collaborative

**M**any organizations in Georgia are dedicated to improving the lives of children, families and communities. To be successful, they must work together. This section takes a first step toward that end by outlining a comprehensive vision for afterschool in Georgia. It describes what a coordinated approach would look like and why such an approach is essential to the success of afterschool programs—and to the development of strong and healthy youth, families and communities throughout the state.

# vision

VISION FOR A HEALTHY STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL COLLABORATIVE

## **Ensuring That Every Child Is Safe, Healthy, Educated, Employable and Connected to Family and Community**

In 2002, the Georgia Partnership for Youth Investment—the Georgia Afterschool Investment Council’s predecessor—convened stakeholders to develop a set of principles to guide Georgia’s commitment to children and youth. These five principles have since been adopted by other Georgia organizations, including Voices for Georgia’s Children, and provide the basis for a coordinated set of afterschool programs and supports in Georgia.

According to these principles, a coordinated approach toward afterschool would help to ensure that every child is: safe, healthy, educated, employable and connected to family and community.

It is possible that some employed parents may only be able to provide supervision for their children by constructing a patchwork of care that changes day by day.

Source: *Out of School Settings for Youth: Cherokee County Parent Survey Results*. Cherokee County United Way, Christine Todd, Ph.D., et al.

An afterschool system would mean that every child is safe in the sense that she has a place to go after school where she is appropriately supervised, cared for and kept out of trouble. A coordinated approach would also help ensure that every child is healthy, mentally and physically—that he has nutritious snacks and access to physical activity, for example.

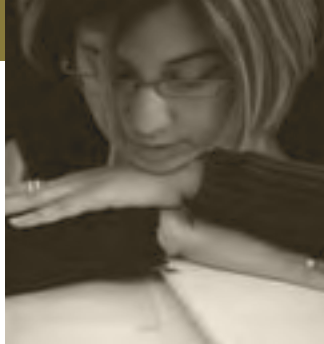
Additionally, the system would complement the formal school system, helping to guarantee that every child is educated and employable, not through more schooling, but through expanded learning activities—such as afterschool apprenticeships, arts programs, clubs, service learning projects and homework assistance.

Finally, a vital afterschool collaborative would connect kids to their families and communities. Parents would be partners in their kids’ afterschool activities, and programs, whether school- or center-based, would be rooted in community concerns and activities.

## **Working in Concert With Other Supports for Children, Families and Communities**

Beyond these five principles, a comprehensive vision for afterschool in Georgia would recognize that a well-developed afterschool system is an essential part of a broader set of family, social, school and governmental systems working together to improve child welfare.

Each afterschool program is confronted with issues of efficiency, sustainability, professional development, funding, quality, content and staff retention, among others. A statewide collaborative approach to afterschool would create and support an infrastructure that would address those issues for all programs in every area of the state.



Consider how a healthcare system involves not just doctors and patients, but also other entities such as hospitals, insurance providers, medical colleges, research institutions and government agencies. Similarly, an afterschool system is a complex, integrated network of people, organizations and institutions that work together to ensure that high-quality, accessible and sustainable afterschool programs are available to meet the various needs of the state's children, families and communities.

A thriving afterschool collaborative should be connected to other systems—formal (government and social-sector institutions) and informal (family and community connections)—to channel resources to the people and communities that need them.

In practice, this would mean that:

- Afterschool conferences and training sessions should help involved parties understand how families, faith-based organizations, schools, providers and government institutions can work together to improve the lives of all children.
- Afterschool coordinators and program directors should have good working relationships with school principals and teachers, whether afterschool programs are located inside or outside of schools.

This coordinated approach toward afterschool would seek to integrate and access resources, such as funding and professional development, from other related systems. School-based training for teachers, for example, might also be extended to afterschool educators, and vice versa, so that the systems (in-school and afterschool) would work together to improve child and family welfare.

### *Youth-Friendly Approach Draws Kids—and Helps Keep Them Connected*

**VOX Teen Communications**, founded in 1993, was initially designed by a group of 13 young people and 10 adult volunteers—with input from nearly 500 other local youth. Located in downtown Atlanta, the VOX center is open daily until 7 p.m. after school and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. During these hours, youth gather to develop, write, edit and design a monthly newspaper and disseminate it to 80,000 of their peers. Teen leaders and adult staff members facilitate three five-week training sessions per year for new members, and about 100 youth members can participate in team-building, technology and writing trainings throughout the year, learning marketable skills and other social benefits. Adult staff—and other volunteers from local businesses, such as Turner Broadcasting Systems, Inc.—are available to mentor teens as they work through the phases of newspaper and Web site production.

According to Meredith Tetloff, program director of VOX, the program's goal is to help teenagers find and project their voices, develop skills, and transition from high school into college and the working world. Participants come from more than 40 local high schools; some members have dropped out of high school, but are looking for an outlet for creative expression. They, too, are welcomed into the program. Tetloff says VOX helps build teens' social and academic skills. "Here, they use hands-on, interactive learning techniques that are based on teens' interests," she explains. For example, through writing, peer and adult reviews, and revisions of articles, teens learn valuable writing skills, which can then be applied in various learning and work environments outside the program doors. Students also learn design software and advanced photography.

All decisions about issues and stories for the publications are made by consensus in youth-led discussions, during which teens express their opinions, then work together to set goals and take steps to reach them. Teens at VOX can also serve on the organization's board of directors or as interns, increasing their leadership opportunities. Because of the high level of teens' ownership and decision-making in the program, the retention level in VOX's after-school programs is extremely high—with about 80 percent of participants staying involved until they graduate high school.

For more information about VOX Teen Communications, visit [www.voxrox.org](http://www.voxrox.org).

# vision

VISION FOR A HEALTHY STATEWIDE AFTERSCHOOL COLLABORATIVE

## Promoting Quality, Access, and Parent and Youth Friendliness

As afterschool programs across the country multiply, statewide afterschool networks are developing standards and benchmarks for what constitutes **quality** across a range of programs and supports.

Standards enable programs, parents, communities and funders to identify and measure quality in afterschool. A statewide afterschool collaborative can bring together diverse stakeholders to create quality standards to identify and measure excellence. Furthermore, a statewide collaborative can help develop an infrastructure to support uniform quality standards, through staff development and evaluation, for example.

Additionally, a vital afterschool collaborative would ensure that parents and youth have **access** to programs. Parents should be able to find appropriate programs for their children that are near their homes or their children's schools. Programs should be affordable and available to urban and rural, younger and older children alike. This is especially important in a state like Georgia, where many youth live in rural communities

in which the number and variety of afterschool programs are limited.

Third, programs should be **parent friendly**. They should engage parents as partners, and they should meet the needs of parents of all children. This means, for example, that a fully developed afterschool collaborative should constantly assess parental demand for programs. Programs should be in place to meet the needs of children with disabilities and children whose parents or parent work during afterschool hours.

Fourth, programs should be **youth friendly**—they should appeal to young people. Programs should also be built on sound youth-development principles. To address the dropout problem, for example, afterschool programs should focus on activities such as career exploration, arts and music that engage teenagers and prepare them for college and work after high school.

A vital afterschool collaborative is important for Georgia's kids. It is an essential tool for addressing the needs of kids who might otherwise fall through the cracks—those at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, dropping out, getting pregnant or failing to make it to college.

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## In Summary

A healthy statewide afterschool collaborative:

- Helps ensure that children are safe, healthy, educated, employable and connected to family and community
- Works in concert with other systems of support for children, families and communities
- Promotes quality through setting standards and establishing an infrastructure to support those standards; offering access and affordability; and encouraging parent friendliness and youth friendliness—to meet the needs of parents and youth
- Can pool resources and bring coordinated attention to the state's critical social issues (such as dropout rates)
- Requires the support of leaders in the public and private sectors throughout the state

### *Afterschool Program Helps Make School's Vision a Reality*

**The International Community School** was developed as a public charter school in DeKalb County, Georgia, with an explicit mission: to educate refugee, immigrant and local elementary school children in a setting that explores and celebrates cultural differences of students, staff and families at the school. Since it opened its doors in 2002, the school has developed into a place where students with diverse backgrounds come together to learn about themselves and each other, and to move toward academic excellence.

Over the past four years, the International Community School has grown to serve 340 students in the Metro Atlanta area—up from 113 in its first year of operation. The school boasts a strong focus on academics and international awareness. Its afterschool programs reinforce the school-day goals to help increase student learning and foster relationships between children and caring adults. In 2005–06, 75 volunteers came in small groups between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to work with about 150 students in math and reading. According to principal Bill Moon, partnering adults with students in the afterschool program means academic and social gains for students. “This is another opportunity to show the student—and his or her family—that the school really cares about them,” he explains. He says that often a buddy relationship is formed between student and volunteer tutor that extends beyond the time they spend together in school.

For students in grades 5 and 6, afterschool programming—such as band, choral, theater, speech and debate, art, study hall and tutoring—is integrated into the school day, which lasts until 4:45 p.m. Moon says he believes that the strong afterschool programs for students at all grade levels have a significant impact on student learning and community building. “Children learn cooperative skills by being with other children and adults,” he explains. Another benefit of the afterschool tutoring and special academic help is that students are showing gains on their classroom grades and standardized test scores.

Visit [www.intcomschool.org](http://www.intcomschool.org) to find out more about the International Community School and its afterschool programs.

## Relevant Resources and Research

Afterschool Evaluation Symposium. “Plenary IV: Developing and Evaluating After School Systems,” 2005 ([www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/conference/symposium2005/evaluation.html](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/conference/symposium2005/evaluation.html)).

Afterschool Investments Project Web site ([www.nccic.org/afterschool](http://www.nccic.org/afterschool)). Go to State Afterschool Profiles and click on Georgia.

Cherokee County United Way, Christine Todd, Ph.D., et al. *Out of School Settings for Youth: Cherokee County Parent Survey Results*, December 2003.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids ([www.fightcrime.org](http://www.fightcrime.org)).

National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks ([www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net)). For Georgia-specific information, go to About the Statewide Networks and click on Georgia.

National Institute on Out-of-School-Time (NIOST). “Making the Case: A Fact Sheet on Children and Youth in Out-of-School-Time,” January 2006. ([www.niost.org](http://www.niost.org)).

Promising Practices in Afterschool ([www.afterschool.org](http://www.afterschool.org)).

# snaps

Afterschool programs help businesses by allowing employees to focus on their jobs, rather than worry about what their children are doing once they leave school. If children are safe and occupied in productive afterschool activities, parents are more likely to be better employees.

—Martha Finn Brooks, chief operating officer of Novelis, Inc. (headquarters in Atlanta)



# Snapshot

A Snapshot of Afterschool Programs in Georgia:  
Addressing the Needs of Georgia's Youth

**F**or the first time ever, parents, policymakers, business leaders and educators can get a summary of the scope of afterschool in Georgia. This section provides a snapshot of the current afterschool landscape in Georgia. It should not be read as an exhaustive catalog of all the afterschool programs currently available to Georgia's youth. Rather, it is meant as a starting place for developing an understanding of afterschool in Georgia.

This section begins with a look at the demography of Georgia's families and youth. Then major afterschool providers and programs are identified, highlighting what is known and unknown about Georgia's current afterschool programming.

# snapshot

A SNAPSHOT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN GEORGIA: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S YOUTH

## The Demography of Georgia's Families and Youth

To put Georgia's afterschool programming landscape in context—to know what exists and where the gaps are—it is important to understand the needs of Georgia families and youth.

- Of the more than 9 million people living in the state of Georgia, almost 2.5 million are children and youth under the age of 18. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Seventy percent of children 6 to 17 years of age live in households where all the parents in the family are in the labor force (U.S. Census Bureau); more families need afterschool options, and many want them.
- More than 13 percent of families in Georgia live below the poverty line. (U.S. Census Bureau)
- It is estimated that 21 percent of Georgia's children live in poverty. (KIDS COUNT)
- Almost 50 percent of Georgia's public school students are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches, a percentage that has increased every year over the last three years. (Georgia Department of Education)
- Georgia currently ranks 44th in the nation in public school SAT scores, up from 49th just over a year ago. (Georgia Department of Education)
- More than 12 percent of Georgia students between the ages of 16 and 19 drop out of school, the third highest dropout rate in the United States (KIDS COUNT); 75 percent of state prison inmates did not complete high school. (Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice)
- Georgia's teen birth rate is 53.3 per 1,000 births. The national teen birth rate is 41.6 per 1,000 births, ranking Georgia 41st in the nation for teen births to girls ages 15 to 19. Less than one-third of teen moms ever finish high school. (KIDS COUNT)
- Thirty-five percent of children in Georgia live in single-parent families, compared to 31 percent nationally, putting Georgia 41st in the nation in this category. (KIDS COUNT)

U.S. Census Bureau, Georgia data: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html>

Georgia KIDS COUNT: [www.gafcp.org/kidscount/index.html](http://www.gafcp.org/kidscount/index.html)

Georgia ranks 44th in the nation, according to the 2006 KIDS COUNT Data Book—a state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The positive news is that overall trends for child and family well-being are improving. Yet in many communities across the state, children continue to lag behind.

Source: KIDS COUNT, 2006



### *The Four Georgias: A Mix of Poverty and Affluence*

In an effort to map Georgia's demographic trends, researchers at the University of Georgia have identified "Four Georgias"—or four predominant geographical regions in the state: Metropolitan Georgia, Suburban Georgia, Growing Rural Georgia and Declining Rural Georgia.

Metropolitan Georgia is a study in contrasts—populated by the wealthy and well-educated, both black and white, as well as the young, underemployed and urban poor. Suburban Georgia, concentrated around the larger metropolitan areas of the state, is largely affluent. Growing Rural Georgia tends to be concentrated in the northern portion of the state and is characterized by areas of scenic beauty or other attractions.

The last area researchers identified is "Declining Rural Georgia, perhaps the area in greatest peril. Several factors contribute to the decline. These counties are characterized by long-term population loss, a lack of employment opportunities, low levels of educational attainment and skill development." Declining Rural Georgia is concentrated in the southwestern portion of the state.

This demography must be taken into account in afterschool programming and system development in Georgia. The challenges of kids and families in Declining Rural Georgia are different from those in more affluent areas of the state. Funding needs are different as well. Partners working to build quality programs throughout Georgia must consider the varying needs of families in different parts of the state.

Source: University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences, [www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/gafacts/index.html](http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/gafacts/index.html)

### **Georgia's Afterschool Landscape—Major Providers**

There are afterschool programs throughout the state of Georgia, but distribution is unequal. In some places, parents and youth can choose from a number of programs; in others, especially isolated rural areas, few, if any, programs exist. And, if they do exist, many parents are unaware of them or unable to afford them.

Some of the largest afterschool providers and networks in Georgia include:

- 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs)
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- YMCAs
- YWCAs
- Communities In Schools (CIS)
- Parks and recreation departments
- Schools
- Churches and community centers
- Private providers



# snapshot

A SNAPSHOT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN GEORGIA: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S YOUTH

## 21st Century Community Learning Centers

[http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci\\_iap\\_learning.aspx](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_iap_learning.aspx)

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program is the largest federally funded afterschool grant program in the country; there are 21st CCLCs in all 50 states. Currently there are more than 250 21st CCLCs in Georgia—up from 209 centers in 2005—involving more than 200 schools and serving more than 25,000 students.

Given that Georgia has more than 2,000 schools serving more than 1.5 million students, however, the vast majority of schools do not have access to 21st CCLC programs. The Georgia Department of Education has received more grant applications for this program than there is money available.

Where they are located in schools, Centers serve primarily elementary and middle school students. In 2004–2005, for example, 67 percent of 21st CCLC students were in elementary school, 28 percent were in middle school and less than 5 percent were in grades 9–12.

Many 21st CCLC programs are designed to work in schools and communities in the following ways:

- To provide opportunities for academic enrichment and tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, meet state and local performance standards in core academic subjects.
- To offer participating students a broad array of additional services, programs and activities to reinforce and complement regular academics. These may include youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs.
- To offer families of 21st CCLC students opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

Almost all 21st Century Community Learning Centers are located in public schools. This has the added benefit of serving kids where they are—schools can integrate in-school and afterschool programs to meet the full range of kids' needs, and parents and caregivers do not face as many transportation barriers.



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## Boys & Girls Clubs

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

There are about 130 Boys & Girls Clubs in Georgia, with 21 clubs in the metro Atlanta area alone. Clubs are typically open from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. after school, daily on the weekends and during the summer. They serve kids ages 6 to 18. A few are connected directly to schools, but many operate independently.

Boys & Girls Clubs' programming emphasis is on health, education and employability. In metro Atlanta, Clubs offer program activities in five main areas:

- Character and leadership development
- Education and career development
- Health and life skills
- Arts
- Sports, fitness and recreation

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## YMCAs

[www.ymcaatlanta.org](http://www.ymcaatlanta.org)

YMCAs offer programs for children and teens during out-of-school time. The Metro Atlanta YMCA, for example, operates 115 state-licensed afterschool sites in the metro area alone, serving more than 6,000 children—and more than 50,000 youth participate in Y-sponsored summer camps and sports and recreation activities. A number of Atlanta YMCAs partner with elementary schools to offer aftercare programs at the school site. The program focus is on helping kids to become self-reliant, develop relationships, gain autonomy and enhance their skills in a secure, supervised and affordable place.

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## YWCA's

[www.ywcaatlanta.org](http://www.ywcaatlanta.org)

YWCA's in Georgia have created a number of programs specifically for teen girls. In Brunswick, a city in the southeastern portion of the state, the YWCA operates a Young Women's Career Adventure program, which includes an intensive two-week summer institute that brings together teen girls and accomplished professional women. YWCA of Metro Atlanta also operates a TGI Tech (Teen Girls in Technology) program, as well as a Teens on the Rise program for young women and men.

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## Communities In Schools

[www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org)

Communities In Schools (CIS) is a national organization with local and state affiliates. In Georgia, the Communities In Schools encompasses 48 locally managed programs serving students in 52 counties and 59 school systems. Many Georgia CIS programs, such as Future Force, a summer leadership development institute, are designed to address the needs of Georgia teens.

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## Parks and Recreation Departments

[www.grpa.org](http://www.grpa.org)

City and county parks and recreation departments also offer afterschool programs. Because parks and recreation departments function as independent entities within the state of Georgia, it is difficult to determine how many kids and families take advantage of their offerings, and how many participate in parks and recreation programs in addition to other afterschool programs.

# snapshot

A SNAPSHOT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN GEORGIA: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S YOUTH

## Schools

[www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us)

Like parks and recreation afterschool programs, school-based afterschool programs are not coordinated by the Georgia Department of Education, so it is difficult to find out how many Georgia schools offer afterschool programs.

What we do know:

- More than 200 schools in Georgia are part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.
- Georgia schools partner with public and private providers to offer afterschool through Supplemental Educational Services. As part of the Title I program, schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) are required to offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to low-income students. These services provide academic assistance such as tutoring, remediation and other educational interventions to increase students' academic achievement.
- Currently, there are 137 state-approved SES providers in Georgia. Some counties contract with a wide variety of providers—DeKalb County offers families a choice of 36 approved providers, for example—others with only a few. School districts must notify parents of their children's eligibility to receive services and, in turn, parents can select the services they want. In some cases, services are provided at the school; in others, they are offered offsite and even online. In many of these programs, the focus is on tutoring.
- Many schools offer activities like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, sports and clubs after school. Some activities are school-based and are coordinated by an afterschool program coordinator; others operate autonomously of school staff.
- Of the 59 elementary schools in the Atlanta Public School system, 48 schools—or 81 percent—have an afterschool program; many of these programs remain under-enrolled, however, mostly likely due to transportation challenges.
- Rural schools, especially those located in southwestern Georgia, may be struggling to provide afterschool opportunities to their students because of transportation difficulties and lack of community resources.

### *Afterschool Program Extends School Day in a Fun Way*

The **Paws & Claws** afterschool program serves about 450 students yearly in northwest Georgia's Catoosa County. The program, primarily funded by a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, prides itself on extending learning opportunities for students and parents in two school sites through varied enrichment programming.

Paws & Claws participants meet with staff to talk about their interests. Staff members also meet with participants' teachers in the schools to determine student needs. Young people then enroll in 10 of over 40 themed program options and develop a weekly schedule of afterschool activities. According to program manager Donna Jackson, program staff works to create program options that appeal to kids—and look and feel different from school-day learning. "We try to infuse fun into all of the activities," she explains. "We also try to pick up on arts and movement—which tend to be more restricted in the school day."

The Paws & Claws program menu includes options such as "Math Monkeys," "Silly Science," "Green Thumbs" and "Music Makers." Parents also get involved in the program through required participation in at least one of the workshops hosted by program staff. Workshops cover topics identified by parents, such as homework, nutrition and family literacy.

For more information about Paws & Claws, visit [www.pawsandclawsafterschool.org](http://www.pawsandclawsafterschool.org).

## *Reconnecting Youth in Meaningful Ways*

**Hearts to Nourish Hope**—a Clayton County-based non-profit agency—meets the needs of older youth, particularly those who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out, or who are involved in the juvenile justice system in the South Metro Atlanta region. According to cofounder and director Deborah Swank, the agency’s youth programs focus not only on academics, but also on career and life skills that enable students to get jobs and become active, contributing members of society—and keep them out of trouble.

Hearts operates several programs throughout the year. A GED-prep program targets youth who have been expelled from or dropped out of school. An “evening reporting center” serves youth who are in the juvenile justice system. They come to the program under a conditional release—if they attend, they avoid being incarcerated. If students are suspended from school, they can come to Heart’s suspension center, complete their school assignments and participate in center programming, and still work toward their high school diploma. Swank explains that all programs offered by Hearts are intertwined: a student, for example, who is required to attend the evening reporting center might also be suspended from school and therefore visiting the suspension center. If that student drops out, he may join the GED-prep program.

Hearts also runs several summer programs that prepare older youth for the workplace. One, offered in partnership with the Atlanta Regional Commission, places 70 young people in apprenticeships throughout the county during the summer months. A new addition to the Hearts agenda is a summer program run in collaboration with Clayton County Public Schools that helps students channel their artistic talents into the creation of media-related, dramatic or artistic productions.

According to Swank, it is essential that all students enrolled in Hearts programs learn life skills that help them succeed. “Most of the young people that come to us don’t learn by sitting in the classroom,” she explains. “We try to teach them how to take what they learn in the classroom and apply it to the real world.” Youth who attend the suspension center, for example, help operate a food pantry serving more than 300 families each month at the center. This gives students a chance to operate a simple business in a controlled environment. Swank says this hands-on work experience is invaluable. “It gives youth a chance to make mistakes and learn from them so that when they do reach the real working world, they will make fewer of them there.”

For more information about Hearts to Nourish Hope and its programs, visit [www.heartstonourishhope.org](http://www.heartstonourishhope.org).

- Schools are a tremendous, and still largely untapped, resource for Georgia students, parents and afterschool providers. They not only offer space and convenience, but they are also already focused on education and youth development. In-school/afterschool partnerships can create new synergy in schools, enhancing the total educational environment of the school, changing educational practices during and after school.

### Churches and Community Centers

[www.icmma.org](http://www.icmma.org)

Churches and community centers also provide afterschool programs. Some are faith-based; others are simply held in churches or community centers for space and proximity. Because many of these programs are privately funded and operated, it is difficult to determine their number or to estimate how many kids and teens they serve.

### Private Providers

In Georgia there are both for-profit and non-profit private providers. Many private afterschool programs also serve as Supplemental Educational Services providers. Others however, such as sports, dance and arts programs, operate independently. There are also informal home care programs throughout the state. Some are licensed; others are not.

Some private providers are primarily early care providers who offer afterschool care to working parents. While convenient for parents, these programs are often challenged by a lack of staff, space and developmentally appropriate activities for school-age youth. Because so many private providers operate independently, it is difficult to assess the number and quality of programs throughout the state.

# snapshot

A SNAPSHOT OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN GEORGIA: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF GEORGIA'S YOUTH

## *What the Research Tells Us—Findings from Parent Surveys in Six Georgia Counties*

Researchers looked at three age groups of children: K–2, 3–6 and 6–12. Approximately one-third of surveyed parents had children in the K–2 bracket, one-third had kids in the 3–6 bracket and one-third had older children.

Key findings from the surveys included:

- Parents cited affordability, availability of care in the summer months or on holidays/release days, not knowing what's available, and child safety as their main concerns with after-school programs.
- Affordability issues ranked highest with lower income families, and those issues did not disappear until families entered the \$60,000 income bracket, well above the average income for Georgia families.
- The needs of families and children vary; what is clear is that families want a variety of programs. Families of children with special needs and low-income families seem to be more interested in formal afterschool programs; more affluent families seem to be more interested in short-term, enrichment activities.
- Challenges for formal programs in rural areas include the following: a heavy emphasis on the value of relative and neighbor care; programs may be difficult to develop and implement because of limited school and community resources; transportation issues (parents live and work in different counties; children live and go to school in different counties); students are less likely to attend programs on a consistent basis.

Source: *Out of School Settings for Youth: Cherokee County Parent Survey Results*. Cherokee County United Way, Christine Todd, Ph.D., et al.

## Overlap

Afterschool programs often operate alongside each other. It is unclear how many children take advantage of multiple afterschool program offerings, or how much overlap there is between programs. Many YMCA programs, for example, are connected to 21st Century Community Learning Centers. And many school-based afterschool programs also involve other community-based providers.

## What Parents Want and Need

The state's resource and referral agencies refer parents to child-care programs. Quality Care for Children ([www.qualitycareforchildren.org](http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org)), for example, a non-profit organization that serves every region of the state, maintains a database of all of care facilities, and provides referrals online, in print and by phone to parents. However, simply knowing where afterschool facilities are does not provide an accurate assessment of parent demand for after-school opportunities.

Too often parents remain unaware of programs and options. A few years ago, Christine Todd, professor of child and family development at the University of Georgia, and a team of university researchers partnered with several county-level United Ways and human service agencies to conduct a series of parent surveys throughout the state. They found that availability and affordability were serious issues for parents. For more information on survey results, see the sidebar on the left.





## **In Summary: Much Work Remains to Be Done to Meet the Needs of Georgia's Youth and Families**

- Information on the breadth and depth of afterschool programming in Georgia is scant. Georgia partners should undertake a full-scale mapping project to determine programming gaps and overlap.
- Most afterschool programs in Georgia are not designed to meet the needs of older youth. Ninety-five percent of 21st CCLC programs serve elementary and middle school students, for example, and formal school-based afterschool programs tend to be clustered in elementary schools.
- The afterschool field must build on programs that community-based providers are developing to address the needs of Georgia's older youth. Stemming Georgia's high dropout and teen pregnancy rates must be made a priority. And we need to keep kids safe and out of trouble after school.
- Georgia must support the development of quality programs in the underserved rural areas of the state. The state must also address the needs of families who have children with disabilities. For all parents, the state needs to provide information about the afterschool opportunities available to them.

## **Relevant Resources and Research**

- Boys & Girls Clubs ([www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org))
- Cherokee County United Way, Christine Todd, Ph.D., et al. *Out of School Settings for Youth: Cherokee County Parent Survey Results*, December 2003.
- Communities In Schools of Georgia ([www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org))
- Family Connection Partnership ([www.gafcp.org](http://www.gafcp.org))
- Georgia Department of Education ([www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us))
- Georgia Recreation and Park Association ([www.grpa.org](http://www.grpa.org))
- Interfaith Children's Movement of Metro Atlanta ([www.icmma.org](http://www.icmma.org))
- KIDS COUNT. Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2006. ([www.gafcp.org/kidscount/index.html](http://www.gafcp.org/kidscount/index.html))
- Metro Atlanta YMCA ([www.ymcaatlanta.org](http://www.ymcaatlanta.org))
- Quality Care for Children ([www.qualitycareforchildren.org](http://www.qualitycareforchildren.org))
- U.S. Census Bureau (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html>)
- YWCA Atlanta ([www.ywcaatlanta.org](http://www.ywcaatlanta.org))

# quality

Just a few quality afterschool programs are not enough. We need a range of programs to meet the needs of kids and parents.

— Pam Tatum, chief executive officer, Quality Care for Children



# Quality

## Developing a Systemwide Approach to Quality in Afterschool

**P**rograms serving kids should, first and foremost, be quality programs. As afterschool programs have begun to multiply, and as statewide afterschool networks have taken root, many states have assembled parents, teachers, administrators, program providers, youth and policymakers to identify standards for quality programs.

# quality

DEVELOPING A SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH TO QUALITY IN AFTERSCHOOL

## The Challenge: No Consistent Quality Standards for Afterschool in Georgia

Currently, there are no uniform statewide standards for quality across the range of afterschool programs in Georgia.

Right now, the issue of quality is addressed in a variety of ways:

- 21st CCLC programs are required to complete annual assessments and to document indicators of quality in their programs.
- School-based programs often use school standards in their quality assessments.
- Bright from the Start and Quality Care for Children use several measures of quality in their licensing and referral procedures for child-care and aftercare programs. Most programs, however, are exempt from these procedures.
- Program providers such as Boys & Girls Clubs and YMCA use quality standards in their program assessments.
- The Georgia School Age Care Association and the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) work with interested program sites to address quality through the NAA accreditation process.
- Bright from the Start funds a few initiatives to improve quality. The Black Child Development Institute of Atlanta has received funding to develop model programs and a train-the-trainers support network for afterschool.

Despite these initiatives, however, there are no overarching standards for quality in Georgia afterschool programs. This makes it difficult for youth, parents, policymakers and funders to determine what quality means in different programs, and how it varies across programs.

### *Assessing Quality in North Carolina Afterschool Programs—Standards of Excellence*

**The North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP)** has developed seven standards of excellence for afterschool programs in North Carolina. These include:

- Active engagement of participants in learning
- Balance of academics and enrichment
- Consistent participant attendance
- Dynamic, qualified and caring staff
- Positive participant and staff interaction
- Orderly, safe and healthy environment
- Active family, community and school partnership

For each of these standards, NC CAP created a rubric that programs can use to evaluate their progress and determine what they need to do to improve quality.

These standards are used to create a statewide culture of quality for afterschool. NC CAP also endorses the use of other quality standards including the National AfterSchool Association accreditation process, the North Carolina Division of Child Development licensure rating system, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals standards.

The lack of quality standards also makes it difficult for smaller programs to demonstrate that they are meeting the needs of the children and youth they serve. Quality is connected to outcomes and funding. Broad quality standards and supports for those standards (such as training and professional development) help programs thrive.

Standards can also cut across licensing and accreditation procedures to bring together diverse

groups—such as Boys & Girls Clubs, schools, and private, for-profit providers—to work toward measures of quality that make sense to parents, kids and policymakers, such as maintaining child-to-adult ratios, food and nutrition requirements, and learning standards.

Georgia might consider adapting standards used by other states to develop standards that meet the needs of Georgia’s families and youth.

### *Ten Standards for Afterschool Quality*

**The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN)** has identified 10 standards (NYSAN uses the word “categories”) for a quality afterschool program:

- **Environment/Climate**—A quality program provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for all participants.
- **Administration/Organization**—A quality program has a well-developed infrastructure and sound fiscal management to support and enhance worthwhile programming and activities for all participants.
- **Relationships**—A quality program develops, nurtures and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, parents and communities to support the program’s goals.
- **Staffing/Professional Development**—A quality program recruits, hires and trains diverse staff members who value each participant, understand their developmental needs, and work closely with families, school partners and co-workers to achieve the program goals.
- **Programming/Activities**—A quality program provides a well-rounded variety of activities and opportunities that support the physical, social and cognitive growth and development of all participants.
- **Academic Alignment/Achievement**—A quality program has its staff work closely with school staff to ensure that afterschool academic components and activities are aligned with and enrich school standards and curriculum.
- **Youth Participation/Engagement**—A quality program provides opportunities for participants to participate in planning, to exercise choice and to engage in a rich variety of offerings and opportunities.
- **Parent/Family/Community Partnerships**—A quality program establishes a strong partnership with families and communities in order to achieve program goals.
- **Program Sustainability/Growth**—A quality program has a coherent vision/mission and a plan for increasing capacity that supplies continuing growth.
- **Measuring Outcomes/Evaluation**—A quality program has a system for measuring outcomes and using that information for ongoing program planning, improvement and evaluation.

Source: [www.tascorp.org/programs/building](http://www.tascorp.org/programs/building)

# quality

DEVELOPING A SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH TO QUALITY IN AFTERSCHOOL

## Licensure and Accreditation

One way to promote quality afterschool programs is through licensure. Some of Georgia's afterschool programs are licensed child-care programs. To ensure that a certain level of quality is maintained in child-care programs, Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning ([www.decal.state.ga.us](http://www.decal.state.ga.us)) licenses and monitors all center-based and home-based child-care facilities (approximately 10,000) that serve children up to age 12 in the state of Georgia.

Most afterschool programs, however, are unlicensed. There are a number of reasons for this—for instance, many see themselves as youth development programs, not child-care programs. Others are unlicensed or are exempt from licensing because of where or how they provide services. All summer programs, for example, are exempt from licensing in the state of Georgia.



Beyond licensing, an increasing number of afterschool programs are working to become accredited by the National AfterSchool Association (NAA). One function of the Georgia School Age Care Association ([www.gsaca.com](http://www.gsaca.com)), an affiliate of the NAA, is to help afterschool programs become accredited by the NAA. The accreditation process is long, expensive and demanding, however, and most programs in the state do not have the capacity or resources to undergo the process. For example, the required staff-to-child ratio necessitates staffing and human resources that many programs do not have, and the process itself takes two years

### *Programs Exempt From State Licensure*

The following are just a few of the types of programs that are exempt from Georgia state licensure:

- Programs for children 5 years and older that operate solely for educational purposes with an established curriculum during the school term for the customary seven-hour school day.
- A facility operated by a local school on school board property for children 5 years and older before and after the customary seven-hour day during the regular school term.
- Drop-in recreation programs where the children are free to come and go from the premises without being escorted by a parent or responsible person and short-term education programs or classes for children in which the supervision and care of the children are incidental to their participating in the activity or training in specific subject(s) such as music, dance, religion, etc., and the program provider is not assuming responsibility for the provision of daily child care outside the scheduled program.
- Day camping programs for children 5 years and older which have as the primary emphasis outdoor education and recreation and are operated between school terms for no more than seven hours per day or which are accredited by the American Camping Association or other national standard-setting agency or church camp accreditation programs which must provide standards equivalent to the American Camping Association standards.
- Child welfare agencies and other facilities and institutions wherein children and youths are detained which are operated by any department, or agency of state, county or municipal government.

Source: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning ([www.decal.state.ga.us](http://www.decal.state.ga.us))

## *Empowering Youth and Families—and Informing Practice in the Process*

**Empowered Youth Programs (EYP)** is an expansion of the highly recognized “Gentlemen on the Move” program in which approximately 120 elementary, middle and high school students, mostly African-American males, from the Athens and surrounding northeast Georgia counties participate. Every Saturday, the students meet on the University of Georgia (UGA) campus to participate in academic rotations, tutoring sessions and to work on social skills. Faculty, undergraduate and graduate students from UGA and Clarke County schools serve as teachers and tutors for the Saturday Academy. During these Saturday sessions, students are engaged in activities and discussions that focus on the EYP Top Ten Leadership Traits: respect, courage, responsibility, loyalty, honor, unselfishness, enthusiasm, initiative, integrity and forgiveness.

In all, about 120 students participate in EYP, which now includes Parents of Empowered Youth (PEY) who meet monthly to provide feedback, receive support and participate in parent workshops.

The goals of EYP are to develop and nurture academic and social excellence in adolescents, especially African-Americans, through several academic components including Saturday Academies, Exam Lock-Ins, and the Summer Leadership Academy.

EYP participants have also been tapped to help with original research conducted by UGA faculty members, thanks to funding from the Robert Bowne Foundation. In their Literacy Practices in Afterschool Web-based Youth Communities project, researchers Donna Alvermann and Jim Marshall meet with eight EYP participants—or co-investigators—each week to talk about the Web sites they visit each week; how they read from the Web; and whether or not that reading differs from the reading they do in school.

With the help of their co-investigators, Alvermann and Marshall are finding that the Web is an essential resource for young people that allows them to practice a wide range of reading and writing skills in new ways. These findings may have significant implications for teaching literacy skills in afterschool and school programs—in and out of Georgia.

Sources: Bailey, D. F. and Paisley, P. O. “Developing and Nurturing Excellence in Adolescent African American Males.” *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Winter 2004

Bailey, D.F., Phelps, R. Packer, C., Hardin, J., Stewart, A. Investigation of the effectiveness of an intensive exam preparation initiative on the exam performance of high school African American students ([www.coe.uga.edu/chds/research/bailey.pdf](http://www.coe.uga.edu/chds/research/bailey.pdf)).

to complete. Additionally, there are no incentives for programs to become accredited. Currently, 21 programs are accredited in the state of Georgia, and most of those are in the Atlanta area.

The result is that while there are many quality afterschool programs for children, there are no state-wide standards or measurement devices designed to ensure quality across all afterschool programs. Parents, therefore, are left without a means to assess options available to them.

### **What Standards for Quality Might Look Like in Georgia**

As a first step in the process of building afterschool standards for Georgia, partners who participated in a series of meetings leading up to this report identified these elements of quality programs:

#### Quality programs:

- Complement, and if appropriate, are connected to academic programs
- Are tied to youth-development principles and consider the unique needs and interests of diverse youth—including youth of various ages, youth with disabilities, and youth from diverse backgrounds
- Offer important opportunities for youth to be engaged, active decision-makers and contributors to programs and the community
- Offer hands-on, interactive and comprehensive professional development to staff
- Collect data and make data-driven decisions
- Define and track outcomes for participants

# quality

DEVELOPING A SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH TO QUALITY IN AFTERSCHOOL

- Pay attention to factors like dosage (the amount of time children and youth are engaged in programs—for example, two hours per day for five days a week)
- Engage youth, parents, community members and businesses as partners

## A Strategy for Excellence in Afterschool Programs

The goal in creating statewide standards for quality is not to license every afterschool program, nor is it to accredit every program. Rather, the objective is to enable parents, youth, funders and program providers to meet baseline standards for quality across programs and continuously improve programs along a quality continuum.

This might mean creating an “exemplary afterschool programs” initiative similar to the Schools to Watch program led by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Through the state Schools to Watch initiative, schools across the country are identified as being well on the way to meeting the criteria for high performance. National Forum members believe

that three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools:

- They are academically excellent. These schools challenge all students to use their minds well.
- They are developmentally responsive. These schools are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.
- They are socially equitable. These schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources and supports. To achieve this level of performance, high-performing schools establish norms, structures and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence. They have a sense of purpose that drives every facet of practice and decision-making.

Schools to Watch are highlighted each year, and information about how these schools meet each of the standards outlined above is shared with other schools across the country through conferences, publications, etc. Most middle schools that achieve this distinction offer an afterschool or summer program, which suggests that afterschool may be the key to their success.

### *Established Afterschool Program Looks to Increase Quality*

**The Statesboro-Bulloch County Parks & Recreation Department** was invited by the southeast Georgia countywide district to begin afterschool programs in schools in 1989. At that time, 89 children from five elementary schools enrolled in the program—now, 670 students from all nine elementary schools participate. All programs are fee-based, but program staff say they work hard to keep costs low; the fee for each child enrolled in its 2:15-6:00 p.m. daily program is \$120 per month, and parents pay \$40 per month for each child enrolled in the 2:15-4:00 p.m. programming.

While keeping costs low, program staff always strives to boost the quality of the programming. Program director Joy Deal says she constantly tries to keep abreast of best practices for afterschool service providers. This has led her to secure funding and resources—through partnerships with schools, statewide organizations and grants—to offer more options for students, maintain a low child-staff ratio (10 students to one adult), and begin the accreditation process through a partnership with the Georgia School Age Care Association. “Kids are able to do things with us that they wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to do.” Above all, she adds, “they are in a supervised, safe environment interacting with people who push their ideas of what’s possible.”



The standards serve as benchmarks for schools across the nation to improve their quality. In a similar fashion, an “exemplary afterschool programs” initiative could serve as a strategy for excellence in afterschool programs across Georgia.

### **In Summary: Creating Standards and an Infrastructure to Support Quality**

- The issue of quality is a very serious one. Licensure is designed for child-care programs. Most afterschool programs are unlicensed; in fact, most out-of-school programs—such as summer programs—simply fall outside the licensing rubric.
- To ensure a range of quality programs exists throughout the state, partners must look beyond the licensing and accreditation framework. We must work together to develop statewide quality standards, with indicators—or specific measures—that providers, parents, youth, policymakers and funders can use to assess the quality of all afterschool programs in Georgia.
- Georgia can borrow from what has been learned in other states’ efforts to construct a comprehensive quality initiative that works in our state. Other states, for example, have begun:
  - Providing training opportunities and professional development programs for afterschool staff
  - Supporting assessment and accreditation programs—such as NAA accreditation and Bright from the Start licensing—designed to improve quality
  - Identifying promising practices and model programs
  - Seeking grants and funding databases

### **Relevant Resources and Research**

The After-School Corporation Web site, Building a Quality After-School Program ([www.tascorp.org/programs/building](http://www.tascorp.org/programs/building)).

Westmoreland, Helen and Priscilla Little. “Exploring Quality in After School: Programs for Middle School-Age Youth,” Harvard Family Research Project, April 2006.

Learning Point Associates, Beyond the Bell ([www.beyondthebell.org](http://www.beyondthebell.org)).

National Association of Elementary School Principals and Collaborative Communications Group. *Leading After-School Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do*, 2006 ([www.publicengagement.com/practices/publications/documents/LASLC\\_ES.pdf](http://www.publicengagement.com/practices/publications/documents/LASLC_ES.pdf)).

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network Web site, After-School Opportunities ([www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/after\\_school/after\\_school\\_over.htm](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/effstrat/after_school/after_school_over.htm)).

National Middle Schools Association, Successful Schools in Action ([www.nmsa.org/Advocacy/PolicyGuide/SuccessfulSchools/tabid/791/Default.aspx](http://www.nmsa.org/Advocacy/PolicyGuide/SuccessfulSchools/tabid/791/Default.aspx)).

Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., Brown, B. B., Pierce, K. M., Dadisman, K., & Pechman, E. M. *The Study of Promising After-School Programs: Descriptive Report of the Promising Programs*, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. 2004.

# invest

Afterschool programs are in a unique position to address a range of municipal challenges and priorities—including reducing youth violence and risk-taking behavior, promoting youth development, improving student achievement and supporting working parents. Afterschool programs need to be part of every community, and mayors should help to lead that effort.

—Kenneth L. Turner, Mayor, City of Gordon, Wilkinson County, Georgia



# Sustaining

Investing in Afterschool: Ensuring That Programs Are Funded and Sustainable

**C**reating a sustainable, high-quality afterschool collaborative is not simply a matter of building a shared vision and uniform standards for quality. It also requires developing an adequate resource base and sufficient funding.

Afterschool programs do not exist in isolation; state, county and local partners are responsible for helping to sustain an afterschool system. Sustainability is not the sole responsibility of a single program director, but also of policymakers and the broader network.

This section maps Georgia's afterschool funding milieu—identifying current and potential funding streams and determining where the gaps are. This section also looks at funding challenges and identifies ways in which afterschool stakeholders might work together to leverage resources for afterschool in Georgia.

# investing

INVESTING IN AFTERSCHOOL: ENSURING THAT PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED AND SUSTAINABLE

## **The Challenge: Creating an Adequate Resource Base for Afterschool in Georgia**

Currently, almost all of the afterschool funds administered by the state of Georgia are federal funds. Other states have made a much more substantial investment in afterschool programs. Georgia needs a coordinated effort to create a sustainable resource base for afterschool programs. Though some funding is available, much more could be made available, and available funding could be better leveraged.

Afterschool providers are faced with the challenge of not only finding funding to get up and running, but also continuing to cultivate funding after programs have opened their doors. Often program staff do not know where to turn for support. Or programs become dependent on one or two sources of funding. If those sources dry up, programs are out of business. A coordinated statewide initiative could help all providers.

Fortunately, Georgia has a good base from which to build.

## **Current and Potential Funding for Afterschool Programs in Georgia**

Here is a breakdown of federal, state and local funding for afterschool, followed by a look at how these funding sources are bolstered with private support.

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### **Federal Funds**

Currently, most government afterschool funds come from the federal government. The largest source of federal funding for afterschool programs is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program. The 2006 federal appropriation for 21st CCLC funding is \$981,166,230—almost a billion dollars. Of that, Georgia received more than \$29 million dollars for fiscal year 2005.

Other sources of federal funds include Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grants, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Supplemental Educational Services (SES), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), among others.

Most federal funds are awarded to states, which award them to schools and local groups. 21st CCLC funds, for example, flow from the U.S. Department of Education to the Georgia Department of Education, based on Georgia's allocation of Title I funds. The Georgia Department of Education then awards grants to local education agencies—such as local school boards—on a competitive basis.

Organizations such as the Afterschool Alliance, the Finance Project and the Afterschool Investments Project advise state administrators and program providers on how to access and use these funds.

### *Child Care Development Funds (CCDF)— The Federal Picture*

**The CCDF (also called the Child Care and Development Block Grant, or CCDBG)** is one of the largest federal funders of afterschool care for school-age children of low-income families. It provides \$4.8 billion in funding to help more than 700,000 school-age children get before- and afterschool care, as well as access to summer programs. The state-level Quality Set-Aside feature of CCDBG offers funds for practitioner training, technical assistance and grants for start-up or expansion.

Source: Afterschool Alliance, Accessing Child Care Dollars for Afterschool ([www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding\\_accessing.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/funding_accessing.cfm))



#### State Funds

In fiscal year 2005, the Georgia legislature, recognizing the importance of afterschool programming, allocated \$10 million federal TANF funds for afterschool, along with \$4 million in state funds. About \$6 million of that allocation was provided directly to the Boys & Girls Clubs, and the remainder was set aside for two grant competitions administered by the Georgia Department of Human Resources—\$4 million for a High School Based Summer Learning Program for 14- to 15-year-olds and \$4 million for Summer Services for Children and Teens.

A survey conducted after the grant competition found that most eligible programs did not learn about the funding opportunity until immediately before the grant deadline. Despite the great need for afterschool funding, \$3 million went unused by afterschool providers as a result of a lack of outreach.

Federal CCDF funds are also an important source of afterschool funding in Georgia. Funds are administered by the Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Georgia Department of Education. The vast majority of these funds, however, are channeled to licensed child-care providers—centers or home care,

for example—who receive subsidies for low-income children in their care. Many afterschool programs fall outside of this umbrella.

The state also allocated more than \$1 million to summer-work and self-sufficiency programs for Georgia teens in the foster care system.

It is important to reiterate that almost all of the afterschool funds administered by the State of Georgia are federal funds. By contrast, other states are increasingly investing state dollars in afterschool programs. In California, for example, afterschool advocates, including Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, worked to provide afterschool throughout the state. Proposition 49, which was passed in 2002, will eventually provide more than \$500 million in state funds for afterschool programs.

The Department's Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases used \$2.75 million of the remaining funds to support a pilot program. The pilot provided summer recreational experiences to over 5,000 youth with serious emotional disturbances and/or co-occurring substance abuse, or those youth who are at risk for such disorders.

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## *Summer Program Thrives With Kid-Centric Approach—and TANF Funds*

In June through August 2005, **Wilkinson County High School** in the central Georgia town of Dublin launched an ambitious summer program for about thirty 14- and 15-year-old students. According to Alissa Jacques, Stay in School specialist at Wilkinson County High School, the program was a learning experience for everyone involved.

Student participants, selected based on income eligibility, engaged in a range of project-based learning opportunities. For example, they took financial literacy courses to learn how to balance a checkbook—and, for some, write checks. They also participated in health-related and workplace readiness activities. Throughout the summer, students also explored career options through trips to local colleges, hospitals, museums and business. Students' participation in apprenticeships further honed their technology, drama, nursing, graphic design, and other interests and skills.

Jacques, who developed the program from scratch after being told in May 2005 that her school would receive TANF funds, says adults involved in the program learned the importance of building a student-centered summer program that appeals to the young people they serve. "We're often selling these programs to kids who don't like school," she explains. "So we have to make it different from school and tailor it to what students, especially students at risk of dropping out, are interested in."

Summer program staff say that they have seen participants make marked improvement in areas such as responsibility and goal-setting. "They understand that what they do matters—and what they do today can impact their future," says Jacques. The success of the summer program has spurred the development of a new afterschool program at the school that will be supported through a combination of TANF, Stay in School and other funds.

## *Finding and Leveraging Resources to Benefit Kids and Communities*

The **Family Technology Resource Center (FTRC) Initiative** was launched in DeKalb County, Georgia, in 1996. It addressed a districtwide need: too many people in the community were unemployed or underemployed because of their lack of technology skills. The district implemented a unique and simple plan. Instead of locking up at the end of the school day, selected schools remained open in the afternoons, evenings, weekends and summers so that the community could benefit from school resources by taking classes, learning about technology and improving their professional skills. Dr. Mindy DiSalvo, assistant director for grants and community programs for the DeKalb County School System and a National Afterschool Ambassador appointed by the Afterschool Alliance in Washington, D.C., says, “The success of the program is in the partnerships. By leveraging school, community and family resources for a common goal everyone benefits.” Now a national model housed in the Smithsonian’s American History Museum, this simple afterschool and community education program allows parents, children and other community members access to technology, instructors, activities and courses. The result: multigenerational learners in the community boost their skill levels and partnerships form between schools, parents, businesses and community organizations.

While the FTRC initiative has spread to 24 metro-area Atlanta locations, it has retained its uncomplicated structure. Principals or district leaders apply to become an FTRC site. If accepted, local advisory boards—made up of parents, school staff, local business leaders and interested citizens—identify the needs of the community and develop program ideas. FTRC staff identifies new funding sources or leverages existing funds to help pay for staffing, equipment and other program-related costs. FTRC staff is committed to creative financing—Federal Community Technology Centers, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and even Homeland Security funds are channeled into FTRC programs.

To learn more about the Family Technology Resource Center initiative, visit [www.ftrc.org](http://www.ftrc.org).

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### Local Government Funds

Another important source of support for afterschool is local funding. This comes in many forms: through schools, city and county parks and recreation departments, and other organizations such as community foundations. Because local funding is often tied directly to specific programs, it is difficult to assess the total local investment in afterschool in Georgia.

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### Private and Local Foundation Support

In addition to local funding, afterschool in Georgia is supported with substantial amounts of private dollars. Many afterschool programs charge fees for their services, and others are funded with foundation and local fundraising efforts. The United Way, for example, provides more than \$10 million per year in afterschool funding for the Atlanta metro area.

In many cases, afterschool programs are aware of only a handful of funding sources. Additionally, without a statewide coordination effort, it is difficult to channel funding to critical, underserved

program areas—such as teen pregnancy prevention and rural youth development. Without a coordinated effort, it is also difficult to build an ongoing funding base to support the range of afterschool services needed by Georgia’s families and kids.

### Finding, Securing and Sustaining Funding

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#### Finding and Securing Funding

The most significant challenge afterschool programs face is how to find and retain funding. First, providers need to know where to start. Who provides funding, to whom and for how long? Afterschool technical assistance providers in the state report that most inquiries they receive are related to finding start-up funding.

For a time, the Georgia Department of Human Resources offered small start-up and enhancement grants (of about \$5,000) to programs throughout the state. From 1998–2000 the available funding pool was around \$180,000. It increased from

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2001–2003 to \$240,000 and again in 2004 to \$340,000. However, in 2005, because of revenue problems, the funding was cut.

Once funding is found, programs must then develop ongoing funding streams. 21st CCLC grants, for example, are awarded for a limited time. Once a grant is received, program directors immediately begin looking for additional funding, from sources such as school districts and local businesses, to survive beyond the grant period. The 21st CCLC program offers sustainability training to program directors, but the search for funding is still a major challenge. Many other grant programs offer similar limitations.

Some programs, like the Boys & Girls Clubs programs, have developed local funding bases. Others, however, must continuously cultivate support. Foundation funding, for example, is often given in the form of seed money for new or innovative programs. Afterschool programs are forced to keep reinventing themselves to secure additional money. Many programs resort to fee-based funding, which means that some parents are not able to afford programming.

## Accountability

As the drive for accountability in both government and foundation funding has increased, expectations for programs have also risen. Funders want to know how their dollars are being spent, and what outcomes they have generated. Programs should, of course, be held accountable, but it is difficult to develop evaluation tools and measures that meet the expectations of a variety of funders. Statewide afterschool networks can help by coordinating training and technical assistance to providers. Some funders provide assistance with evaluation, but many do not. In afterschool programs, where staff members often work part-time or seasonally, it is especially crucial that resources are in place to train staff on how to secure and manage funding.

## Strategies for Leveraging Funding in Georgia

### Brokering Local and Statewide Partnerships

Partnerships—between schools, community groups and businesses, for example—enable afterschool groups to do more for kids and parents than they are able to do on their own. Partnerships can help groups pay for existing programs, bring in new expertise and create new programs. Partners can offer in-kind or matching support as well.

In addition to helping kids and parents directly, strong partnerships can lead to state and local policy changes that benefit kids, parents, program providers, schools and communities. To make this process work most effectively, partners at the state and local levels should align their objectives and resources to increase access to and quality of afterschool programs across the state, and to build a resource base for afterschool in Georgia.

The Georgia Afterschool Investment Council (GAIC) can act as a facilitator in this process by helping develop statewide partnerships that foster the growth of quality afterschool programming that meets the needs and interests of kids and parents. GAIC can also help create a lasting pool of resources for afterschool throughout the state, strengthen existing partnerships and create the conditions for new partnerships to emerge.

### *Learning From Other States*

Recently, the **South Carolina Afterschool Alliance** board of directors and other key state players engaged in a sustainability planning process. As part of this process, an idea emerged from a key state leader in education—to have the South Carolina General Assembly earmark some funds for the SC Afterschool Network to help create a statewide technical assistance system for afterschool. Supporters worked with the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee to draft details of the earmark and secured the buy-in of the State Superintendent of Education and the South Carolina Governor’s Office.

The effort was successful. Now the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance has a \$250,000 appropriation to:

- Produce a model of voluntary quality standards for out-of-school programs
- Develop a directory of technical assistance
- Identify gaps in service

Source: Statewide Afterschool Networks Web site ([www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net))

### **PlusTime New Hampshire: Coordinating State Investments in Afterschool Programs**

This statewide organization was established in 1991 with federal child-care dollars from the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. The Department acted as the fiscal agent for PlusTime NH for six years, after which the organization became an independent non-profit with 501(c)(3) status.

PlusTime NH, which began as a coalition of representatives from established youth programs, is now an intermediary organization offering training, technical assistance, policy development and funding assistance for afterschool programs across the state. The organization manages and administers both public and private funds. It manages Out-of-School Matters!, a Nellie Mae Education Foundation grant providing funding for middle school programs, and coordinates New Hampshire’s 21st CCLC program.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the state Department of Education, PlusTime NH can conduct a joint request for proposals process for these two funding streams and ensure their coordination. Housing the state’s 21st CCLC coordinator and advising the Governor’s Kids Cabinet maintains PlusTime NH’s ties to public agencies, while its diverse board of directors is charged with securing funding from a range of private partners and donors. For more information, see <http://www.plustime.org>.

Source: *Making Smart Investments in Afterschool: A Policy Primer for State and Local Leaders*. Afterschool Investments Project, August 2006.

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## In Summary: Georgia Needs to Develop a Funding Agenda for Afterschool

Though there are a variety of funding sources for afterschool in Georgia, many challenges remain.

- Georgia needs a lasting and accessible funding base for afterschool. Partners could begin by creating a state-based allocation for afterschool, independent of federal money, as California and other states such as Connecticut, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, North Carolina, South Carolina and New York have done.
- More needs to be done to leverage funding for afterschool in Georgia. Many afterschool providers face common challenges: finding funds, managing them, and developing a sustainable funding base. By developing a technical assistance system for existing and potential afterschool programs, GAIC can help create a support network that boosts the quality and viability of afterschool programs throughout the state.
- Affordability tops many parents' concerns about afterschool programming. How can funds be found to support programming for all kids? GAIC can act as a leader to move this issue forward at the local and state levels.
- Finally, it is not clear how afterschool funds are being spent. How many dollars, for example, go to dropout prevention, SAT preparation or teen pregnancy prevention programs? It is also difficult to gauge the total amount of money available for afterschool—little is known about local sources of funding. Georgia partners should develop a funding map to see where money is flowing and to identify gaps. As part of a mapping project, stakeholders should look not only at where dollars are going but also how they are being spent.

## Relevant Resources and Research

The Afterschool Investments Project Web site, ([www.nccic.org/afterschool](http://www.nccic.org/afterschool)). Go to State Afterschool Profiles and click on Georgia.

Lind, Christian, et al. *The Costs of Out-of-School-Time Programs: A Review of Available Evidence*, The Finance Project and Public/Private Ventures, May 2006.

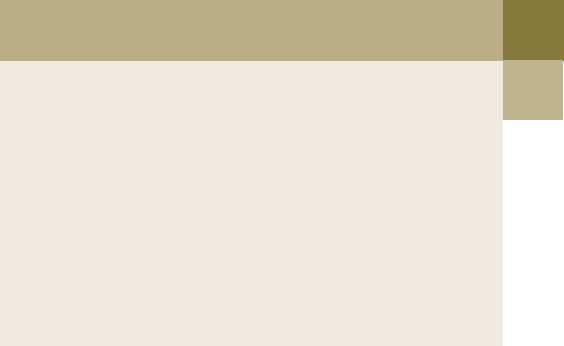
Minnesota Commission on Out-of-School-Time ([www.mncost.org/Briefs.html](http://www.mncost.org/Briefs.html)). "Overview of OST Funding Streams," May 2004.

Voices for Georgia's Children. "Budget Feasibility Study." Unpublished draft report on feasibility of developing a state children's budget.

Padgett, Heather Clapp. *Finding Funding: A Guide to Federal Sources for Out-of-School Time and Community School Initiatives*, The Finance Project, revised and updated February 2003.

Statewide Afterschool Networks Web site ([www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net](http://www.statewideafterschoolnetworks.net)).

Wright, Elisabeth and Sharon Deich. *Replacing Initial Grants: Tips for Out-of-School-Time Programs and Initiatives*, The Finance Project, December 2002.



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# Vision

## An Afterschool Action Agenda for Georgia

**I**n evaluating the vision for afterschool in Georgia, it is clear that though many good things are happening in the state, Georgia has a long way to go to develop a vibrant afterschool system. Below are several steps Georgia can take to realize this vision:

- **Develop a comprehensive map of Georgia’s afterschool programming and funding picture.** Though there is much data given in this report, this is only a starting place. Many gaps remain. Georgia could begin a full-scale data-gathering process by developing a comprehensive afterschool program map. This map should be data-rich. It could include information about what types of programs are available, where they are, how they are funded, what needs and challenges they are designed to address, and define the gaps in funding. To undertake this project, Georgia could build on lessons learned from a similar project in South Carolina.
- **Build a comprehensive afterschool collaborative in Georgia.** This report suggests that Georgia would benefit from building a comprehensive statewide afterschool collaborative. GAIC can take on a leadership role here—acting as a broker to organize the development of quality standards and of a support and accountability collaborative for afterschool. This process could include support for organizing, professional development for staff, database tracking and policy development. It might also incorporate a parent and youth component, ensuring that parents and youth have a say in the development of programs, and ensure that families are kept abreast of the programs available.
- **Create afterschool standards for quality in Georgia.** This process could include a summit that would bring together afterschool leaders, parents and youth from all over the state to develop standards and ways to help programs meet and exceed those standards. This initiative could draw on the Schools to Watch program for inspiration, as well as work done in New York and other states.
- **Develop a funding agenda for afterschool in Georgia.** As a follow-up to this report and as part of a mapping process, Georgia could develop an afterschool funding agenda. This agenda would identify which needs are not being met and how funding could be used to meet current and future needs. A coordinated funding effort is essential for realizing the ambitious vision outlined in the first section of this report.
- **Build an afterschool policy agenda.** Finally, this report will serve as a starting place for developing a full-scale policy agenda for afterschool in Georgia. This agenda should attend to the needs of all of Georgia’s children and families. It should especially address the challenges facing Georgia’s youth on the margins—those at risk of dropping out, becoming pregnant or simply falling behind their peers.

# conclusion

This report serves as a platform for raising public understanding and support for afterschool. GAIC can act as a broker in this process by working with partners, parents and youth to widely disseminate the report and begin building a campaign to support afterschool in Georgia. GAIC and its partners will identify champions, for example, who can lead this effort and ensure that afterschool is high on the agendas of state and local leaders.

Georgia partners must make a commitment to creating a system of afterschool programs and supports that work for all kids and families to ensure that every child is:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Educated
- Employable
- Connected to family and community

## **The Georgia Afterschool Investment Council and National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks**

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### The Georgia Afterschool Investment Council

Georgia's Afterschool Investment Council, a 60-member team from Georgia's public and private sectors representing government agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations and key afterschool stakeholders, is building a strategy for developing a quality afterschool collaborative that produces results for youth. The Council is a merger of two important groups working on outcomes for youth in Georgia: the Comprehensive Youth Development System and the Afterschool Network.

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### The National Network of Statewide Afterschool Networks

Funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the National Network brings together established statewide afterschool networks in their collective mission to build partnerships and policies that are committed to the development and sustainability of quality afterschool programs. There are currently 32 statewide afterschool networks and GAIC regularly shares best practices with its colleagues from across the country.

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Many of the photographs included in this report are of children and youth in Georgia afterschool and summer programs. Georgia photography by Moses Mitchell at Art of War Photos.

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