



What is Proactive Advocacy?

Every year, public officials make decisions about funding and priorities for afterschool and youth programs. The President sets, and Congress votes, on appropriations for major federal funding streams including 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Child Care Development Fund. At the state level, regulations and administrative policies dictate how the money is distributed out to the community level for direct service grants.

Every afterschool organization or program that is funded by all or a portion of federal, state or local funding should invest in proactive advocacy. Proactive advocacy is relationship building. Afterschool organizations must build relationships with public officials, state agency staff, and other key policy makers in order to expand awareness about the importance of afterschool and the successful outcomes from each program.

Advocacy is a critical component of a sustainable, high-quality program. Proactive advocacy is the skill of looking ahead and preparing your organization or program for long-term success. Instead of waiting for an issue, such as a cut in funding, proactive advocacy involves outreach to key stakeholders and strategies to develop relationships and trust.

Proactive advocacy is the precursor to issue-based advocacy efforts. When an organization already has strong relationships with a state legislator who knows about the afterschool program and the children and families who benefit, they can more quickly be called on when an actual issue, such as legislation, potentially affects the afterschool field.

There is a general misconception that advocacy must be adversarial between state officials and community organizations. However, the most successful advocacy efforts are from those organizations that invest time and resources in long-term relationship-building. It takes time and patience to build trust and find commonality.

This Advocacy Toolkit provides a set of useful tools for designing and implementing effective advocacy strategies, including **5 Strategies** for building in proactive advocacy activities into your organizational strategic plan, **Resources** for Using Data, and a **Self-Assessment Tool** to identify core strengths and opportunities.

Five Proactive Advocacy Strategies for Your Strategic Plan

1. Promoting the Success of Afterschool

Too often, afterschool and youth organizations are so busy running programs, finding resources, and finding/training staff that they do not pause to consider the importance of communicating successes. Finding simple, but successful, ways to market your afterschool program is one of the most important “first steps” in proactive advocacy. Promoting afterschool helps to attract families, funders, state and city leaders to your program, as well as builds awareness and support for afterschool overall.

Afterschool programs can be great influencers to demonstrate the powerful, positive impact afterschool can have on a child’s life. Research and data are important drivers of decision making, but personal stories from providers, parents and children convey messages that can never come across as effectively from statistics and numbers. Harnessing and mobilizing the stories and successes from your afterschool program are particularly effective strategies to engage state legislators, city leaders and other key stakeholders.

The Afterschool Alliance has developed an Online Marketing Tutorial highlighting topics such as Making the Case for Afterschool, Using Events such as Lights On Afterschool to Boost Your Program, Arranging a Site Visit and Media Strategies.¹ In addition, the Alliance points to specific tips for creating a 1-2 page Program Profile for your individual afterschool program.

Suggestions for Promoting Your Afterschool Organization:

- Use data to convey your message. As state budgets get cut, policy makers are more likely to continue funding for outcomes-based programs.
- Arrange a site visit for state legislators and funders – there is nothing better than a first-hand view of your program
- Create a newsletter and add public officials to your distribution list.
- Personal stories are important to show the direct impact afterschool has on the children and families who participate. Send artwork from children or letters from parents to state leaders, thanking them for their support of afterschool.

¹ The Afterschool Alliance marketing tools are available here: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/marketing.cfm>.

2. Collaborations with Providers

Today, there is a greater emphasis on collaborations to achieve common objectives. Collaborations are powerful, when used effectively, to bring the afterschool community together and develop a common vision and action plan for a school, a group of youth, or even a neighborhood or city. Effective collaborations bring a broad group of stakeholders, including providers, parents, youth, funders, school and business leaders, as well as public officials, together.

Many collaborations for afterschool achieve the following goals: (1) greater coordination of services, (2) limiting duplication of existing services, (3) leveraging of existing resources, (4) advocating for new projects or funding, and (5) strategic planning for expansion of services. Ultimately, collaborations are useful to figure out how programs can maintain quality, while expanding the number of children and youth served through community- or neighborhood-based service delivery approaches. Indeed, the trend for afterschool in the community requires both broad stakeholder investment and strong collaborations.

Strategies for Effective Collaboration:

- To initiate collaboration, bring together a group of afterschool and youth Executive Directors for monthly coffee discussions. Relationship building to establish trust and a common vision is a key step.
- Collaborations often begin when a group of people comes together around a specific problem, need or issue. Effective collaborations happen only when a group can move from being problem-oriented to vision-oriented.
- Research tools for effective community-based collaborations, coalitions, and partnerships.²

3. Authentic Partnerships with Schools

Expanded learning opportunities, extended day, community schools - the field of afterschool is always changing, and many funding sources require a partnership with a school and/or school district.

Community-based organizations must build in the internal capacity to successfully partner with school principals, teachers and other school staff, as well as other community organizations.

Even though schools and afterschool programs share the common goal of ensuring the success of the students they serve, each often has different priorities or different requirements. Take the time to learn about the principal's priorities for the academic environment, and find commonalities. Be a resource and subject matter expert to the school for afterschool. Afterschool programs can be funded through

² The National Network for Collaboration Training Manual is available at the Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network: <http://www.cyfernet.org/>.

federal education funds, such as Title I, but it is up to an afterschool program to build a compelling argument for redirecting these limited resources.

Best practices now suggest that a principal-led expanded learning initiative provides the optimal partnership for afterschool. Afterschool programs should be more than contracted services, but a critical component to the learning day. Partnership takes time to develop, and requires commitment from both the school and community-based provider. It is worth the time to research strategies for building effective partnerships between schools and afterschool.³

Suggestions for Authentic Partnerships:

- Take the time to learn more about the principal and the school's priorities. Be strategic and plan your message around how afterschool fits into the school's vision or improvement plan.
- Be the afterschool "subject matter expert" for the school, and serve as a resource to bring best practices, new learning activities and funding.
- Request (include in contract) that afterschool site coordinator attend school staff meetings.
- Invite teachers and afterschool staff to professional development trainings, cross-train on afterschool curriculum.
- Serve as the key resource for afterschool funding for the principal. Learn how 21st Century, Child Care Development Fund can be blended with Title I, Part A and SES funding.⁴

4. Public Awareness Campaigns and Media Strategies

Media is one of the best ways to bring awareness about an issue or program, and to get the attention of decision-makers. Many organizations lack resources to hire a professional public relations person, but still must incorporate media strategies into their advocacy plan.

Why is this important? Public officials and decision-makers all monitor the media. Many public officials will have a staff person devoted to collecting and circulating news clips related to that official's district or issues of interest. Legislative priorities are decided based on what is considered important to that district, and the media is a primary source for identifying key issues.

³ One useful resource, *Connecting School and Afterschool, 15 Ways to Improve Partnerships* (Boston Afterschool & Beyond) can be found at http://www.bostonbeyond.org/assets/pdf/UWMB_ConnectingSAS.pdf.

⁴ In 2008, the Afterschool Partnership released a Funding Guide for Afterschool and Youth Programs, available at www.gnoafterschool.org.

Media works quickly in order to keep information “newsworthy.” Understand how and when media sources make decisions on what items to include. It is helpful to know deadlines for news stories or letters to the editor to make sure your story gets attention at the critical moment.

When an organization is limited in resources, it is important to be creative to develop the capacity to regularly engage in media strategies. If you are an Executive Director, think about dividing responsibility among staff based on talents and interests where one person can use or develop their writing skills for press releases and another person can use their strong communication skills to be the phone contact for talking with reporters and the public.

Strategies for Public Awareness and Media:

- Write a Letter to the Editor and reach thousands of citizens, elected officials, funders, and other decision-makers.
- Schedule appearances on local news stations and radio shows to publicize program events such as a Parent Night or Special Afterschool Project. Taking children on a special field trip – notify your local newspapers.
- Use nationally recognized events such as Lights On Afterschool, National Mentoring Month, or Let’s Move to highlight specific initiatives within your afterschool program. Bring a parent or a child/youth participant with you.
- Create a media contact list and send press releases to the media for key events or fundraisers. Follow-up with phone calls for important issues.

5. Engage in Legislative Issues

I support afterschool – and I am a voter! As a voter, we all have a say in our democratic process – the priorities and services that are funded through local, state and federal investments. Afterschool providers can have great influence by educating legislators about the importance of afterschool programs, and mobilizing the afterschool community – particularly the parents and children served – around issues presented each year during the Louisiana state legislative sessions.

If an afterschool organization is at all funded by public dollars, then it is critical that the organization develop relationships with the decision makers including legislators and agency leaders. Building relationships with public officials allows for a more robust democratic process. You become more aware of how policy decisions are made in Baton Rouge, and stakeholders rely on you to give them information on the issue of afterschool.

Timing is always key. The best time to initially meet with a legislator or invite them to a site visit is during the months after and before the active legislative session. During the legislative session, state

legislators and state agency staff are working round the clock to review 1,000s of bills and it is often hard for them to schedule outside meetings.

Even if you have not met with a state legislator, it is equally important to go to Baton Rouge and visit the State Capitol if there is a particular issue being considered during the legislative session. One of the most important policy decisions made each year is the state budget. Outside groups, including afterschool providers, are important to provide justification for new afterschool funding programs or defend existing grant programs.

Advocacy is not lobbying, and lobbying is not advocacy. It is essential to understand the legal rules of advocacy and lobbying for non-profit organizations. It is often a misconception that nonprofits are not allowed to influence public policy.

Lobbying: any attempt to influence specific legislation

Advocacy: promoting a cause

It is important to remember that influencing elected officials requires preparation to develop a clear strategy. If you have the opportunity to talk to a legislator or present at a committee hearing, you will only have a few minutes to get your message across. Stay calm and respectful at all times, because even if you are not successful on your issue, you win by establishing a key relationship.

Strategies for Engaging in Legislative Issues:

- Plan to go to Baton Rouge at least once during the regular legislative session. Print out and bring copies of your program's one-page Fact Sheet. If you bring some children and parents, be sure to let your state legislators for your district know you are there.
- Be sure to contact elected officials on key issues affecting afterschool or your program, such as positive outcomes or cuts in funding. Some say that it takes just 5 emails to convince an elected official to look into an issue, particularly if it may directly affect his or her district's voters.
- Legislation session over? Remember to plan at least three more trips to Baton Rouge throughout the year to meet with Legislators or present at Legislative or Administrative Committees.

Appendix I

How to Engage in Louisiana’s Legislative Process

The Louisiana Constitution Article III, Section 1(A) vests the power of the state in the legislature, and establishes the Senate and House of Representatives responsible to determine state policy through the enactment of laws. The Executive Branch is responsible for the implementation of the constitution and laws. The Governor may also call a special legislative session under Constitution Article III, Section 2.

The Louisiana Legislature is comprised of 39 Senators and 105 Representatives, and is required under the Louisiana Constitution to convene regular sessions every year. During even-numbered years, the general session convenes at noon on the last Monday in March to extend for no longer than 60 legislative days during a period of 85 days. In odd-numbered years, a limited jurisdiction “fiscal” session convenes at noon on the last Monday in April for no longer than 45 legislative days during a period of 60 days. During the fiscal session, legislators are limited in the number of non-fiscal bills they can file.

This year the 2010 regular session begins on March 29 and ends on June 21. Information about bills, committee meetings, and agenda of items being reviewed each day are available at www.legis.state.la.us. For every organization, but particularly those that receive public funding, it is highly recommended that you plan at least one visit during the regular sessions to the State Capitol.

How to Get Started

The Louisiana Legislature website has a helpful “How Do I?” section on its website to answer frequently asked questions: <http://www.legis.state.la.us/> such as how to get information about a bill, how to find a legislator, or how to view broadcasts of committee meetings.

The Louisiana State Budget Process

The State Budget is the most important policy document for the field of afterschool. Each year, the Governor presents a proposed budget that the Legislature must debate and approve. The budget funds all state services, including funding for certain afterschool, summer and youth programs outside of federally funded grant programs.

In 2010, the state budget bill, HB1, was pre-filed on February 26th and referred to the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. Providers, and any citizen, have an opportunity to provide input through the legislative committee process. The Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations Budget Project has compiled a useful guide to understanding the Louisiana State Budget.⁵

⁵ Resources on the Louisiana Budget are available at the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organization’s website, available at <http://www.labudget.org/lbp/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/budgetbasics2008final.pdf>.

Before the Session Starts - Site Visits

If done well, inviting a state legislator to a site visit is one of the best ways to get to know your state legislators. Plan in advance to invite one or more legislators or other elected officials to visit your program while children are participating, and talk with staff, parents, and participants.

Tips for Planning a Successful Site Visit:

- Identify and prepare children and youth, parents, program staff, and school/community partners who will be present at the site visit.
- Designate and train official “tour guides” who will be on hand as various stations during the tour to greet the visitor(s) and talk about specific aspects of the program. Always allow your visitor to interact with children participants. For older youth programs, train youth to serve as guides.
- Allow time for school leaders and parents to talk about their perspective and share personal stories. Many principals and working parents are great advocates for the benefits of afterschool, but give them clear talking points and make sure they are strong communicators about the importance of afterschool.
- If there is time, arrange a small group meeting with program staff to talk about program accountability measures including records and data keeping. Show them filing and record keeping systems, including daily attendance taking. This is a helpful strategy to teach elected officials about the policies and procedures afterschool programs must be effective at to remain in compliance with public grants.
- Provide clear information about how your afterschool program is funded, particularly federal, state and local sources.
- Send a thank you letter after the visit.

During the Session – Advocating on an Issue

An organization should be prepared to mobilize from time to time around a particular issue – a cut in funding or an issue that affects afterschool overall. Participating in proactive advocacy throughout the year, knowing your legislators and other public officials, educating the general public, and understanding the legislative process will all be critical if at any time a bill or policy change is proposed that will adversely affect the afterschool program.

Tips for Crafting Legislative Strategies:

- Identify the problem, research solutions and identify who can make the solution possible.
- Create a clear and simple message that not only identifies the issue, but presents solutions.
- Engage parents, school leaders and other community partners to develop your goals and mobilize a campaign strategy together.
- Use the public and media to build support.

Appendix II

Louisiana: How a Bill Becomes a Law

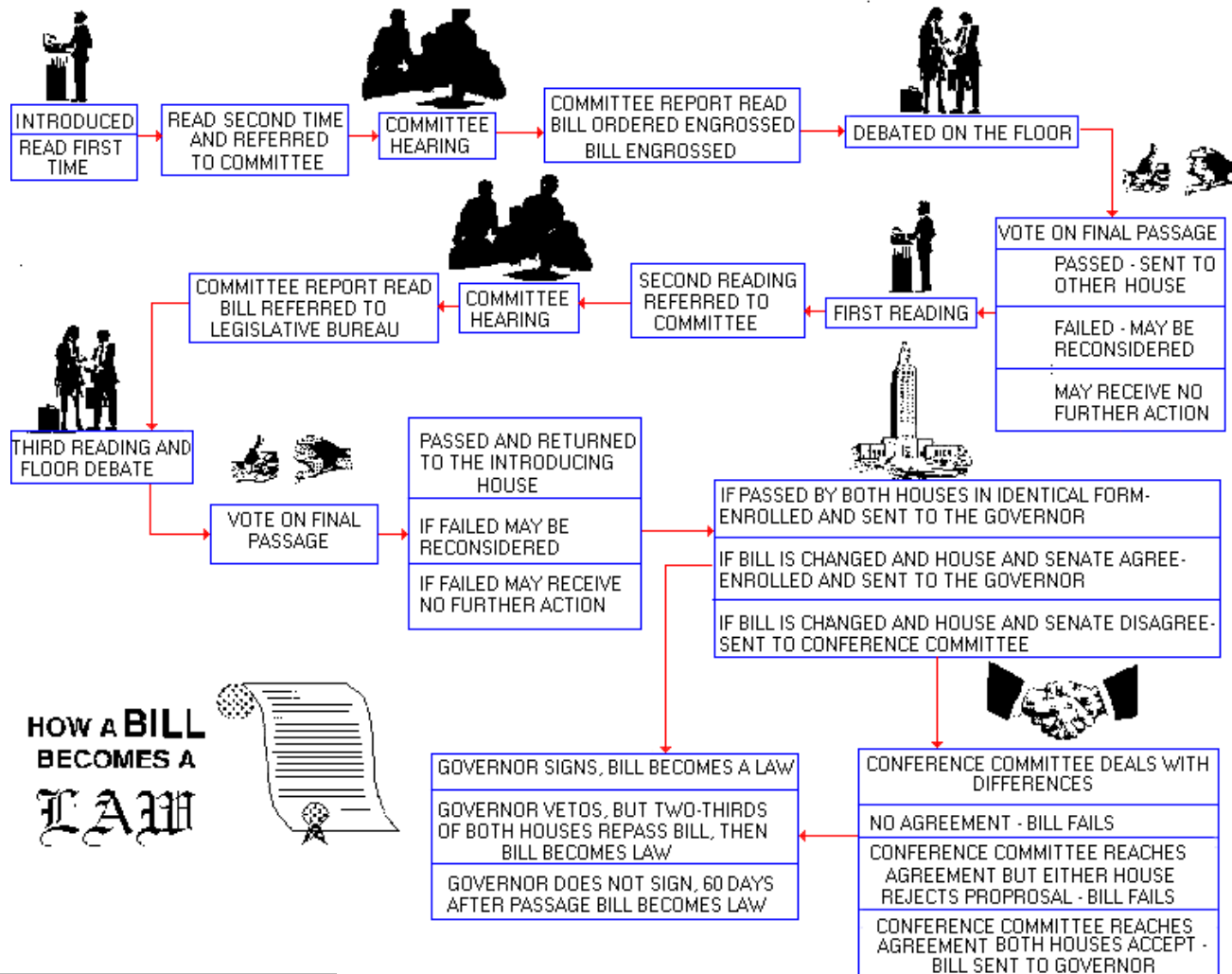


Image found on Louisiana Legislature's website,
Available at www.legis.la.us (accessed on March 19,
2010)

Appendix III

Orleans Louisiana Legislative Delegation

Louisiana Senate	Louisiana House of Representatives
Senator A.G. Crowe District 1 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Crowe/	Representative Neil C. Abramson District 98 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=98
Senator Ann Duplessis District 2 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Duplessis/	Arnold, Jeffery "Jeff" J. 102 Member H District 102 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=102
Senator David Heitmeier District 7 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/HeitmeierD/	Representative Austin J. Badon, Jr. District 100 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=100
Senator Jean-Paul J. Morrell District 3 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Morrell/	Representative Jared C. Brossett District 97 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=97
Senator Edwin R. Murray District 4 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Murray/	Representative Reed S. Henderson District 103 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=103
Senator Karen Carter Peterson District 5 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Peterson/	Representative Cameron Henry District 82 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=82
Senator Julie Quinn District 6 http://senate.legis.state.la.us/Quinn/	Representative Walker Hines District 95 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=95
	Representative Juan A. LaFonta District 96 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=96
	Representative Walter Leger, III District 91 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=91
	Representative Nick Lorusso District 94 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=94
	Representative Cedric L. Richmond District 101 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=101
	Representative Charmaine Marchand Stiaes District 99 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=99
	Representative Jim Tucker, Speaker of the House District 86 http://house.louisiana.gov/H_Reps/members.asp?ID=86

Appendix IV

Louisiana U.S. Congressional Delegation

<p>U.S. Senator Mary L. Landrieu 724 Hart Senate Office Building United States Senate Washington, DC 20510 Phone: 202-224-5824 Fax: 202-224-9735</p> <p>Room 326, Federal Building 707 Florida Street Baton Rouge, LA 70801 Phone: 225-389-0395 Fax: 389-0660 http://landrieu.senate.gov/</p>	<p>U.S. Representative John Fleming 4th District of Louisiana</p> <p>1023 Longworth House Office Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20515 Phone: 202-225-2777</p> <p>6425 Youree Drive Suite 350 Shreveport, LA 71105 Phone: 318-798-2254</p> <p>http://fleming.house.gov/</p>
<p>U.S. Senator David Vitter</p> <p>516 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510-1803 Phone: 202-224-4623 Fax: 202-228-5061</p> <p>858 Convention Street Baton Rouge, LA 70802 Phone: 225-383-0331 Fax: 225-383-0952</p> <p>http://vitter.senate.gov/public/</p>	<p>U.S. Representative Rodney Alexander 5th District of Louisiana</p> <p>316 Cannon House Office Building. Washington, D.C. 20515 Phone: 202-225-8490 Fax: 205-225-5639</p> <p>1900 Stubbs Ave. Suite B Monroe, LA 71201 Phone: 318-322-3500 Fax: 318-322-3577</p> <p>http://alexander.house.gov/</p>
<p>U.S. Representative Steve Scalise 1st District of Louisiana</p> <p>429 Cannon House Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-3015 Fax: 202-226-0386</p> <p>110 Veterans Blvd. Suite 500 Metairie, LA 70005 Phone: 504-837-1259 Fax: 504-837-4239 http://www.scalise.house.gov/</p>	<p>U.S. Representative Bill Cassidy 6th District of Louisiana</p> <p>506 Cannon House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Phone: 202-225-3901 Fax: 202-225-7313</p> <p>5555 Hilton Avenue Suite 100 Baton Rouge, LA 70808 Phone: 225-929-7711 Fax: 225-929-7688 Toll-Free 800-892-1253</p> <p>http://cassidy.house.gov/</p>

<p>U.S. Representative Anh Joseph Cao 2nd District of Louisiana</p> <p>2113 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515-1802 Phone: 202-225-6636 Fax: 202-226-1988</p> <p>400 Poydras Street 30th Floor New Orleans, LA 70130 Phone: 504-717-7551 http://josephcao.house.gov/</p>	<p>U.S. Representative Charles Boustany, Jr. 7th District of Louisiana</p> <p>1117 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-2031 Fax: 202-225-5724</p> <p>800 Lafayette Street Suite 1400 Lafayette, LA 70501 Phone: 337-235-6322 Fax: 337-235-6072</p> <p>http://boustany.house.gov/</p>
<p>U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon 3rd District of Louisiana</p> <p>404 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-4031 Fax: 202-226-3944</p> <p>828 South Irma Blvd. Suite 107 Gonzales, LA 70737 Phone: 225-621-8490 Fax: 225-621-8490 http://www.melancon.house.gov/</p>	

Appendix V

Using Data to Support Advocacy

As discussed earlier, research and data are important drivers of decision-making. Research and data come in many forms. Academic, “gold standard” research published in journals; program evaluation findings from your own program; and personal stories from providers, parents, and children all represent types of research and data you will want to mobilize to make your case to policy-makers and other stakeholders.

Academic research is produced by developmental psychologists, education experts, sociologists, policy analysts, and other kinds of researchers, usually at universities. Their research is considered “gold standard” because it meets a high level of scientific rigor, but for that very reason, these types of research projects are difficult, time-consuming, and costly to implement. Therefore, very few providers have this type of data from their own programs. However, we can all use the findings from academic research to speak *generally* about the impacts and importance of afterschool. If a study from Harvard finds that afterschool programs increase youth engagement in school, you can safely tell your own stakeholders, legislators, and other policy-makers that *programs like yours* help youth engage in school. It doesn’t matter that Harvard never came to your program – their findings apply to all of us, so long as our programs adhere to best practices. Many intermediary and youth development organizations put together *research briefs* that compile an overview of important academic research on afterschool as it emerges. For example, the Afterschool Alliance and the National Institute For Out of School Time both put together yearly summaries of the latest, most compelling academic research in the field of afterschool.⁶

Every high-quality program will also have **program evaluation** protocols built into their daily operations. Program evaluation serves many purposes. It tells your funders that you are meeting your goals as a program. It provides you with useful information about the effectiveness of your service delivery and how your program improves the lives of the youth you serve. Program evaluation data can

⁶ Find Afterschool Alliance’s yearly Fact Sheet at: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/researchFactSheets.cfm>
Find NIOST’s 2009 Making the Case fact sheet at: <http://www.niost.org/pdf/factsheet2009.pdf>

also be mobilized for advocacy, particularly at the municipal and state levels. While an individual program's evaluation does not generalize as broadly to all other programs as academic research might, it still provides useful data that speaks to the importance of *your* program within *your* community.

Finally, **personal stories** from your program's key stakeholders can also be mobilized as data. Researchers call this **qualitative** or **market research**, because it captures the rich (sometimes messy!) perspectives of stakeholders in your community (or "market"). In order to elicit the most useful feedback, you may want to build qualitative research into your program evaluation protocols. By checking in with stakeholders on a regular basis (using focus groups, surveys, interviews, and observations), you will build a storehouse of knowledge about why stakeholders appreciate your program. By seeking honest feedback (both critical and supportive), you can glean deep insights into the unique value-add your program has for your community, which in turn arms you with compelling vignettes and quotations you can mobilize for advocacy. Furthermore, engaging your stakeholders will allow you to develop a cadre of informal spokespeople for your program – the parent who says in an interview that she cannot live without your program, or the child who writes an essay about how your program changed his life, make excellent advocates in front of policy-makers and funders. Their stories are "straight from the horse's mouth" and carry a special kind of weight with decision-makers.

Appendix VI

Advocacy Strategic Planning

Self-Assessment Tool

How well does your organization incorporate proactive advocacy strategies to build relationships, engage with decision makers, and promote awareness about the importance of afterschool? Take this assessment and use the results to develop an advocacy strategic plan.

Proactive Advocacy Strategies	No	Some- what	Yes	Comments
Overall Strategy				
I understand why advocacy is a component of my long-term success and incorporate it into my strategic plan.				
I engage board members, staff and parents to assist in promoting the organization and/or afterschool program.				
I know who the key decision makers are and how to make the case for afterschool.				
Promoting My Afterschool Program				
I have created a 1-2 page fact sheet, using data and personal stories, about my program.				
I include key decision makers, including elected officials and state agency staff, in distribution lists for mailings and				

newsletters.				
I schedule and invite state legislators and elected officials to site visits.				
I engage parents and children/youth participants to bring awareness through their personal stories.				
Collaborations with Partners				
I understand ways to build effective collaborations, including building trust and developing a shared vision and common goals.				
I have identified key collaborative partners for my advocacy work.				
I actively participate in collaborations that focus on finding solutions for specific issues in afterschool.				
Authentic Partnerships with Schools				
When developing a partnership, I ask the principal about the vision and goals for the school and students, and incorporate those goals into the afterschool program.				
My organization is the afterschool “expert” and provides information on best practices and resources to my partner schools.				
I understand different public and private funding opportunities that can be combined to fund afterschool.				
My afterschool program is fully integrated into the school: site coordinators attend school staff meetings, teachers are cross-trained on afterschool curriculum, and principal is fully engaged as a leader for afterschool.				

Public Awareness and Media				
I have a media contact list and regularly send press releases about my organization's events and fundraisers.				
I submit a Letter to the Editor to my local paper at least once a year.				
I have met or talked to local reporters, and know when key deadlines are for news stories.				
I schedule appearances on local tv and radio shows at least twice a year.				
Engage with Policy Making and Legislature				
I plan meetings or make presentations at the State Capitol (benchmark: at least four times per year), and periodically attend and present at City Council meetings.				
Before and during the legislative session, I check in with local advocacy organizations to follow legislation and policy changes that may affect afterschool.				
I understand how the federal, state and local legislative processes work, and the funding opportunities connected to each level.				
I understand the legal differences between advocacy and lobbying.				

Sample Advocacy Action Plan

Get Started!

Use the results for the Self-Assessment Tool and identify action steps needed to incorporate Advocacy into your organization’s Strategic Plan.

Task	By When?	Who	Action Item	Benchmark
Task # 1	30 days (5/1/2010)	Executive Director	Develop a brief overview of organization’s advocacy goals for Board meeting	1-2 Board members are selected to work on outreach activities such as meetings with decision makers and elected officials
Task # 2	60 days (6/1/2010)	ED and staff	Identify a committee meeting to attend in Baton Rouge, and plan to travel and listen to the legislative session.	ED and staff have watched and understand the legislative process
Task # 3	90 days (7/1/2010)	Staff	Gather data and personal stories to create a 1-2 fact sheet	Afterschool organization has a prepared fact sheet to distribute at meetings
Task # 4	120 days (8/1/2010)	Board, ED, staff, parents and participants	Plan and invite an elected official to a site visit	Afterschool organization has begun to build a relationship with key decision makers.