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Policy Update

Your Action is Needed TODAY!

On Wednesday, April 16th, the House Ways and Means Committee released its FY2009 budget. As expected, there were no significant gains in afterschool and out-of-school time funding due to the overall economic health of the state. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) request for \$14 million for Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Quality Grants was funded at \$2.5 million. This represents a 25% increase in funding from FY2008 and the Governor's budget proposal that level-funded the grants at \$2 million. As many of you know, the ASOST grant is a flexible and important source of funding for any afterschool program that serves children and teens ages 5-18 across the Commonwealth. The House budget also called for an \$11.8 million increase in funding for children in supportive childcare and \$30.8 million in TANF related childcare at the Department of Early Education and Care. The DESE also requested doubling funding for Expanded Learning Time grants from \$13 to \$26 million, but only received an increase to \$15.5 million in the House budget. The Youth Violence Prevention Grant at DPH and the Early Childhood Education Scholarship program at the Department of Higher Education were level-funded from FY2008.

So, what can we do now? On April 18, 2008 a number of amendments to the House budget were filed and will be debated **TODAY**. Please [Contact Your Representatives](#) and the offices of House Speaker DiMasi at 617-722-2500 and House Ways and Means Chairman DeLeo at 617-722-2990 to encourage them to support these key amendments:

- Representative St. Fleur - **Amendment 1502**: Increase ASOST Grant funding from \$2.5 to \$8 million.
- Representatives Haddad - **Amendment 1481**: Increase funding for EEC by \$16 million to address waitlist for low-income families, of which no less than \$2.4 million for homeless youth.
- Representative Binienda - **Amendment 318**: \$21 million additional funds for multiple line items in EEC appropriation to improve quality, infrastructure and capacity of early care.
- Representative Wolf - **Amendment 779**: Increase Early Childhood Education Scholarship funding from \$4 to \$6 million.
- Representative Koutoujian - **Amendment 492**, and Representative Forry - **Amendment 1511**: Increase funding for DPH Youth Violence Prevention Program from \$2 to \$7 million.
- Representative Canessa, **Amendment 1491**: Increase funding for Shannon Anti-Gang Violence Grant from \$11 to \$15 million.
- Representative O'Day - **Amendment 1061**: Increase funding for the Youth Works Public Sector Jobs for Teens from \$6.7 to \$9.2 million.

On Friday, April 25th, BOSTnet staff visited the offices of each member of the Boston delegation of the House of Representatives to encourage their support of Amendment 1502. We highlighted the importance of this grant to the more than 500 programs we work with in all neighborhoods across the city of Boston.

Please [call your representative](#) today to let them know how this grant can benefit **your** program and serve the children and families in **their** districts.

Thank You for Your Support!

Policy Contacts for additional information:

BOSTnet at info@bostnet.org OR MAP at kmagrane@massafterschool.org or 781-348-4277.

Special Announcements

Upcoming BOSTnet news and events:

- **Coming Soon! Middle School Half-day forum: Ways to Increase Middle School Youth Participation.** Thursday, May 15th from 9am-12noon at The Boston Foundation. This event is FREE but you must RSVP to info@bostnet.org in order to reserve a spot!
- **Save the Date! June 6, 2008 Families Matter Conference-** BOSTnet and the United Way are holding a conference on family engagement with the latest tools and strategies developed for the Out-of-School Time field. What new tools are available that will help you survey family interests or engage parents in program planning? How do you make parents/guardians advocates for your program?
 - At the Families Matter Conference, you will have a chance to:
 - Learn from programs that have been implementing family engagement plans;
 - Adapt tools and strategies for your own programs;
 - Discuss the latest issues in family engagement;
 - Network with other programs in the field!

Taking place at the United Way of Massachusetts Bay from 9am-12noon. This event is FREE but you must RSVP by clicking on the following link in order to reserve a spot!

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[Click Here to Register for Families Matter! 2008](#)
Please complete some basic information and click "Register" when you are done

- **Promoting Positive Behaviors (PPB) in Out-of-School time** - The Emotional Support Assessment Tool, developed by PEAR and BOSTnet, is being field-tested. This tool facilitates a discussion between staff and administrators around the challenges of certain behaviors and ways to create a positive environment. As part of this field-test opportunity, BOSTnet has a limited number of slots available for programs to receive the tool and an evaluation of the assessment at no cost. For further information or to learn more about PPB, contact Peter Griffin at 617-720-1290 x230 or Patricia Stahl at 617-720-1290 x241.
- **Revised BOSTnet Leadership Roundtable and Half-day forum schedule:** Please note that there are a few changes to our calendar as we finish up the 2007-2008 academic year. To view the updated calendar, please click here. To RSVP for one of the Roundtables or Half-day forums, please call 617-720-1290 x232 or info@bostnet.org.
- Please visit BOSTnet's [Community Resources & Events](#) and [Community Job Postings](#) webpages to view the latest in events and career opportunities in the OST field!

Out-of-School Time Field Announcements:

- **Teen Empowerment's annual Youth Peace Conference** brings over 800 youth together each year for an afternoon of exploring the root causes of violence in urban communities through an original multi-arts stage show created and performed by Boston youth. This year's conference, Step Up to Change: From the Strand to the State House, will be Saturday, May 10, 12:45-5:00, at the Strand Theater in Dorchester. It is open to youth from urban communities across Massachusetts. For more information, contact 617-536-4266 or visit www.teenempowerment.org.
- **Teachers Looking for Summer Jobs** - Citizen Schools Boston teachers are looking for meaningful summer employment. If your organization has summer job openings then please contact Ryan McCarthy at ryanmccarthy@citizenschools.com or 617 695 2300 x161.
- **Free Training is still available for the Sunflower Science Curriculum** - An innovative, hands-on science curriculum developed especially for afterschool programs by the Intercultural Center for Research in Education (INCRE). Designed specifically for children in grades 2-4, the Sunflower Science Discovery Curriculum is fully bilingual and highlights the accomplishments of Latino scientists. To take part in this wonderful opportunity, contact John Zuman at INCRE (jzuman@incre.org; 781-643-2142) or Michael Bennett at BOSTnet (bennett@bostnet.org, 617-720-1290 x 240).
- **The Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW)** is pleased to announce that the Robert Bowne Foundation is awarding more than \$2.1 million over five years to the Centers' National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) for the National Afterschool Matters Initiative which will promote research and professional development for the out-of-school time field. The primary objective of this award is to ensure the continuation of the well established Afterschool Matters Initiative which includes a Practitioner Fellowship Program; the production of the Afterschool Matters publications; the Edmund A. Stanley, Jr. Research Grants program; and Research Roundtables as forums for connecting research

Research Grantee program; and Research Roundtables as forums for connecting research and practice.

Strengthening Programs

Strengthening Program Quality

BOSTnet continues to develop innovative approaches to program quality improvement that address real needs of the field based on research and over 20 years of working with out-of-school time programs. To this end, BOSTnet is developing the Promoting Positive Environments (PPE) initiative, a unique model that centers on creating sustainable change in staff skill, and program interventions that positively affect all content areas in OST environments. The PPE model provides an overall introduction to methods of increasing staff self-awareness and skill in order to create positive social and emotional environments for children. When staff are asked to actively and intentionally participate in healthy program and youth development, their confidence, level of engagement and job satisfaction grows. From there, specific content-focused trainings and technical assistance on behavior, family and community engagement, and inclusion are offered in the context of each individual program environment. PPE always builds on existing program strengths and encourages initial and ongoing program assessment and evaluation as a way to promote continuous improvement.

BOSTnet is currently developing trainings and materials around this new approach, and seeking funding to support the initiative over the next year. Please stay tuned for more information about this exciting program. For more information contact BOSTnet Senior Program Director, Patricia Stahl at 617-720-1290 x 241 or stahl@bostnet.org.

Out-of-School Time Landscape

Access for All

Promoting Inclusion in Out-of-School Time Programming

- **NEW to this Edition: Middle School Program Listing** - find out which programs serve middle school students. We only include those programs that serve youth of all middle school ages (11-14) as these programs often have middle school specific activities.

For programs looking for support in curriculum, presenters, artists, equipment, and other resources, BOSTnet includes a **Resources for OST Programs** section. Find out how to enrich your out-of-school time programs with health, arts, outdoors, inclusion, history, literacy, leadership, mentoring, and many other activities from organizations that specialize in these areas.

You may continue to update your program information through www.BostoNavigator.org.

Check out the new **Summer Search** function on Bostonnavigator to find the latest summer programs.

Access for All

Promoting Inclusion in Out-of-School Time Programming

Without doubt, your out-of-school time program is made up of youth of varying abilities and if you work in a program where disabilities are prevalent, then inclusion is a pressing topic. When you work with children who fall into every category on the ability spectrum, patience and innovation are paramount to creating ideal inclusion opportunities for everyone involved. "Inclusion" means zero exclusion, so that will often entail special considerations when you design activities so that everyone is able to participate and have access to quality learning experiences. **On April 3rd, BOSTnet's Leadership Roundtable at Citizen School Headquarters** brought together a group from the Boston Children's Museum (BCM) and from Until Tomorrow Productions to highlight some of their tips and strategies to create more inclusive arts programs.

The BCM is one of Boston's best interactive & inclusive facilities -- a colorful and exciting haven of imagination for children of all abilities. Ellen Thompson works on accessibility & inclusion and stresses the importance of training staff to be particularly sensitive to the needs and ability levels of all children who visit the museum. For example, Ellen invited a deaf and blind sculptor to come in and work with the children - an artist who is an amazing role model of how to turn "limitations" into "possibilities." Resounding agreement came from both our panel group and Roundtable attendees that afterschool programs deserve quality materials to work with and that the socialization process is vitally important. Youth can find new opportunities to blossom in afterschool because it doesn't (and shouldn't!) look like school - it's an opportunity in the day for youth to run, jump, play, be loud and demonstrate their creativity. Furthermore, afterschool is an environment where kids can be themselves; sometimes in a traditional school setting they may have fears of showing their differences. Donna Folan of Until Tomorrow Productions says it's remarkably useful to put icons next to your program's advertisement to draw in youth of all abilities (i.e. "wheelchair accessible," or "sign language interpreter present," etc.).

To point you toward some terrific resources: Juli Brownrigg at the Children's Museum runs the [Museum Kits](#) program that provides multiple modalities for students of all abilities. These kits can be requested for use in your own program - inside each you will find an assortment of fun, visually and tactile-stimulating objects that can spark the imaginations of the kids you work with. Youth get a chance to practice using senses they might not normally rely on and educators can help them gain understanding about alternative ways some of their peers engage with the world around them. For more information on kits and other resources contact kits@bostonchildrensmuseum.org.

[VSA Arts](#) provides educators, parents and artists with the resources and tools to support arts programming in schools and communities. VSA strongly advocates that all children, youth and adults with disabilities deserve complete access to cultural facilities and activities. Check out [VSA's](#)

adults with disabilities deserve complete access to cultural facilities and activities. Check out [Let Your Style Take Shape](#), a free publication from the VSA Arts website, aimed to guide educators in their efforts to create inclusive learning environments.

Quick Links

- [BOSTnet website](#)
- [Newsletter Archive](#)
- [BOSTnet Publications](#)
- [Connecting You to Resources](#)
- [Donate](#)

BOSTnet just finished celebrating twenty years of helping families obtain a rich network of out-of-school time opportunities that challenge, reward, and inspire children and youth. We need your support to continue working toward our mission to enhance the quality and increase the capacity of out-of-school time programming for Boston's youth! **Please consider a [donation](#) today.**

To access more Community News, Events, Resources and Job Listings, please visit our website, www.bostnet.org, to view our Resources Page.

email: buzz@bostnet.org

phone: 617-720-1290

web: www.bostnet.org