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## BOSTnet Information

### December 19, 2007

#### "Accreditation"

- [Special Announcements](#)
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### Special Announcements

#### Upcoming BOSTnet news and events:

- **Leadership Roundtable-Afterschool Program Quality Improvement:**  
Thursday, January 3rd, 2008  
10am - 12noon  
Museum of Science, Boston, MA.


The January Roundtable focuses on an important issue in the out-of-school time field: Promoting Positive Human Relationships. [Click Here](#) for Directions. Contact BOSTnet for more information or to RSVP at [info@bostnet.org](mailto:info@bostnet.org) or 617-720-1290 x232. [View the 2007-2008 calendar](#).

#### Out-of-School Time Field Announcements:

- **BOSTnet's 20th Anniversary** - BOSTnet is celebrating twenty years of helping families obtain a rich network of out-of-school time opportunities that challenge, reward, and inspire children

and youth. Help us continue our mission to enhance the quality and increase the capacity of out-of-school time programming for Boston's youth! It is so important - [donate online](#) today!

- **Notice to Programs** - BOSTnet encourages you to review and update your program information on BOSTNavigator ([www.bostonnavigator.org](http://www.bostonnavigator.org)). If you already have your username and password, please login to [www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/](http://www.bostonnavigator.org/admin/). If you need a username and password please contact us at [help@bostonnavigator.org](mailto:help@bostonnavigator.org). Your help will make this new tool the place for parents and families to find youth opportunities in the City of Boston.
- **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](mailto:jzuman@incre.org); 781-643-2142) or Michael Bennett at BOSTnet ([bennett@bostnet.org](mailto:bennett@bostnet.org); 617-720-1290 x 240).



Strengthening Programs...

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### ***Quality in the Out-of-School Time Field***

Out-of-School time programs know the benefits of their programs from parents/guardians telling them or providing positive feedback through formal parent surveys. This may offer the most powerful validation for a program -- happy families and youth, returning families, and families that refer others to a program. So what does a quality program look like? Different people may have varying ideas about quality programs. This is where widely recognized standards have a role. Common understanding about how a program is managed, how staff should be working, and what children and youth should be gaining from an out-of-school time program are valuable for everyone involved, whether it is families, children and youth, program staff and others with a stake in offering children and youth quality opportunities during out-of-school time hours. As many programs know, there are many different systems of quality measurement and sometimes these may add significant administrative burden on programs, devolving into measurement for measurement's sake. While some standards are a work in progress, the power of standards to communicate the quality and impact of out-of-school time programs is as powerful as--and sometimes helps to bring about--the happy parent at pick up time.

At BOSTnet, we have been working for 20 years to improve quality in out-of-school time programs through development of and training in best practices. We have led the way in helping programs improve Inclusion, Family Engagement, Promoting Positive Behavior, and Management practices among others. We have also worked on several initiatives on quality standards.

### ***Improving Program Quality through Accreditation***

Our current work includes supporting a group of out-of-school time programs as they work toward gaining National Afterschool Association (NAA) accreditation through the Boston After School Quality (BASQ) project. Accreditation requires adherence to standards laid out by the NAA around the

following quality areas: Human Relationships; Indoor Environment; Outdoor Environment; Activities; Safety, Health and Nutrition; and Administration. There is a seven step process to achieve accreditation. Programs must start with creating an Assessing School Age Quality (ASQ) Team. The ASQ Team brings parents and staff together to observe the after school programs and recommend changes based on the NAA Standards. BOSTnet has supported the programs in our initiative to work on an action plan and identify strengths and challenges as they pursue accreditation.

Challenges have included administration, indoor environment (as many programs share space), and human relationships. Based on these most common challenges, BOSTnet developed a Roundtable series on Quality and each of these three topics. Our Quality and Administration, and Quality and Shared Space Roundtables occurred in October and November respectively and one on Human Relationships is coming up on January 3. Please read our article on Shared Space for highlights (below) from our Shared Space Roundtable.

Successes in this BASQ project include programs that have been able to undertake the steps toward accreditation in an approach that integrates their current activities and assets. For example, Ellis Memorial After School Program at Berkeley has engaged families in their program through events and surveys. In their work toward accreditation, they have channeled the success from their family engagement activities into the development of an ASQ team. They have more parents than they originally expected contributing to the ASQ team, which requires, beyond just involvement, parent leadership. They are an example of a program that has been able to take on the often overwhelming accreditation process by leveraging their existing strengths.

### ***Making the Most Out of Shared Space***

BOSTnet's December 6 Roundtable on After School Program Quality: *Making the Most Out of Shared Space*, is the second in our series on Quality (the first was on Administration and the last on January 3 will be on Positive Human Relationships). Through our Boston After School Quality (BASQ) initiative, we determined that these areas were the most common challenges to programs working toward National Afterschool Association (NAA) accreditation. In response, we developed the After School Program Quality Roundtable series to provide the field with insight and strategies in these areas.

Based on the show of hands at this Roundtable, nearly all afterschool program providers have had to share their program space with another group at one time or another. Whether it's sharing your own space or operating out of space that belongs to another organization, a great deal of cooperation, respect and creativity is required. It could be that two or more programs are trying to operate from a shared space at the same time every day, or maybe your program has to leave the room in the same way you found it at the end of each day because the "host" program's purpose and agenda are vastly different from your own. Whether your afterschool program operates out of a school-based building, community center or faith-based facility, creativity is key to successfully sharing that space and turning it into a fun and interactive environment - even if temporarily - for your youth.

All three Roundtable panelists highlighted the importance of building a strong relationship between your program and the host building/organization. Debbie Kneeland of For Kids Only After School, Inc. warns that you can't work in isolation: "It takes a community to work with our kids!" Almost all of the Roundtable attendees indicated that they do homework with their students in their program, which Debbie points out is a direct bridge between the program staff and the schools. If your program operates out of a school building, then Debbie encourages direct care staff to communicate with principals. Afterschool staff spend many hours a year with their youth and therefore have a lot of input to provide -

so think of creative ways to invite principals and teachers to visit your programs! Invite the community to visit as well - schedule an open house after hours so that people can attend and view all the wonderful opportunities your program provides.

Similarly, Anna Adler from ReadBoston urges afterschool staff to make their program's presence known to principals and teachers - help them understand that your job is to work with their students and help in classroom-related projects and assignments; build that cooperative bridge! For afterschool programs that don't have a lot of resources, you can create a book exchange with other programs. Anna suggests persistence even when your resources are limited: think about what conditions you'd need in order to reach your reading goals (i.e. if you are operating out of a cafeteria, how can you turn that into a useable afterschool space?). Anna has helped to successfully turn many small, sterile spaces into friendly, functional learning environments and mini-libraries for afterschool programs. Retractable bookshelves, room dividers and creative storage ideas are just some of the ways you can transform your shared space into something magical and useful!

Montrez Williams of the Tent City Afterschool Program at Ellis Memorial advises making **your** program's priorities the priorities of others. When the space you are using is not your own, you may be subject to being "bumped" out of it at any time. Therefore, afterschool staff need to elevate the importance of their program by talking directly with Board members, parents and their community. Create a positive feedback loop by tapping into your program's Board members, many of whom may be parents themselves, and impress them with your creative use of space. At the same time, highlight concrete ways in which increased funding will improve your program's functionality and success. If you can peek their interest with all the creative solutions you've thus far devised to manage in that shared space, then persuading them to assist with ways to improve your program (such as securing funding for a larger space or more resources), will come more easily.

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Access for All...

### ***Promoting Positive Behavior***

John throws blocks; Sally sits quietly, but does not participate in any activity. Thinking of your program, which student gets more attention? Does your site have the best environment just because it lacks "problem students," or the "kids are just kids" but are overall "good?" Promoting Positive Behavior looks at all students and takes a step back from actions to look at how environmental changes can lead to a more inclusive and functioning program. Behavior is not just prevention of negative actions, but learning how staff can create an atmosphere of participation and positive action among all students. BOSTnet supports quality programs by continuing to pilot the Promoting Positive Behavior Initiative. Promoting Positive Behavior will kick off January 3rd at the Leadership Roundtable for "Promoting Positive Human Relationships," a discussion on how to improve program relationships of adults as well as youth. Over the next semester, five middle and elementary school sites in greater Boston will use tools developed by BOSTnet and PEAR to improve program quality and foster environments where positive behavior is not a final goal achieved through stricter classroom management, but ongoing management through participation, positive modeling, and process inclusion. In the coming months,

these sites will refine the work as well as offer valuable feedback to the field by presenting at a future Leadership Roundtable, with the expectation that these tools can be used by sites where there are high levels of negative behavior, as well as those which function on a day-to-day basis but could develop children's ability to make positive choices and problem solve when times are tough.

policy update...



### ***Public Funding of Out-of-School Time - ASOST Commission Findings***

Whenever we speak of improving program quality, expanding access, or building a comprehensive system of out-of-school time opportunities for children and youth in Massachusetts, one question rises to the top - where is the money? While quality and access will never be solely an issue of money, financial resources are critical to a healthy, sustainable system of opportunities. Funding for OST-both federal and state-is fragmented into multiple agencies with different purposes and service targets, each with their own eligibility requirements, application processes and reporting demands. There is a lack of coordination that results in limited resources reaching the field. The findings of the ASOST commission's report are clear: the field is under-resourced and without clear and consistent funding streams it will be difficult to sustain and strengthen the existing system.

There are currently 1.3 million school age (5-19) children and youth in the state of Massachusetts. Of these, about 20%, or over 250,000, participate in some form of afterschool or OST activity. In FY2006, less than 5% of children participating received public funding amounting to about \$2733 per child. The percentage of youth served through public funding increase in FY2007 to 5.5%. Overall, funding for school-age childcare and afterschool and out-of-school time increased by 24% in FY2007 to \$195 million. The majority of this funding came in non-core areas, such as expanded learning time, Shannon Grants and Youth-at-Risk Matching Grants.

There are at least 18 state agencies that administer OST funding, the great majority of which comes from federal sources. The Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Education administer the majority of core funding. In FY2006 DEEC provided nearly \$77 million to serve 17,226 low-income children between 5 and 13. Yet, there are still about 7,000 children who remain on the waitlist for EEC vouchers statewide. The DOE provides nearly \$20 million in funding for afterschool and OST primarily through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers and the ASOST grant. According to the new study, "Supporting Student Success," there is about \$80 million in public funds spent annually to support school-connected afterschool and OST programming in Boston alone. Over 70% of this funding is federal, and about \$34 million fund OST programs, with the other \$56 million funding health and mental health programs and other supports and community services. The study shows that while funding has remained relatively stable, this has not translated into program sustainability because the recipients of funding change from year to year. To be more successful, the study argues that the system could be improved through a more results-based funding strategy linked to a unified vision of desired youth outcomes. The study also argues for strengthening community-based partnerships and partnerships between state and city agencies. Perhaps more innovative, the study argues for the potential value of creating a Child and Youth Budget for Boston to better align funding streams and strategies.

There are over 100 federal funding streams available that can potentially serve the OST field. Clearly, as The Finance Project argues, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts needs to maximize its ability to tap these federal dollars. The commission report laid out a number of recommendations related to funding out-of-school time. They include: 1). Develop coordinated funding streams to better leverage existing dollars, 2). Identify and tap multiple funding streams to provide more options and choice, 3). Improve access to funding opportunities for community-based organizations, and 4). Develop more multi-year and continuous funding cycles.

### ***Lobby Day is Coming!!! February 27, 2008***

In order to get the most leverage out of the ASOST Commission report, we are holding Lobby Day earlier this year. Please keep this day open to join us in advocating for Boston's out-of-school time opportunities. Stay tuned for announcements on organizing events and meetings to help us prepare for this opportunity. If you won't be able to join us at the State House on February 27th, please take the time to write or call your representative. The time is right and with the newly released report we anticipate that the state legislature will be more receptive to our requests.

We have a few budget issues on the table that we will be pushing, although it is likely that the final numbers will change as the process unfolds:

- Increase of ASOST grant from \$2 million to \$14 million
  - o Include language to push for multi-year funding
  - o Expand MAP earmark and related activities
- An additional \$10 million additional funding to reduce the Department of Early Education and Care waitlist through expanded vouchers and contracted slots
  - o Extend school-age voucher eligibility to age 14 or 8th grade.
- \$6 million to create a new Afterschool Professional Development Fund

***Get Ready To Mobilize! Thank you for your continued support!***

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***To access more Community News, Events, Resources and Job Listings, please visit our website, [www.bostnet.org](http://www.bostnet.org), to view our Resources Page.***

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## Contact Information

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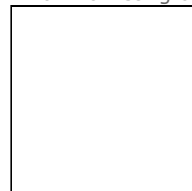
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