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L.D. 63
RESOLVE, CHAPTER 211
Legislation Enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature

REPORT

To the Joint Standing Committee on
Education and Cultural Affairs
124th Maine Legislature

Senator Justin L. Alfond, Chair
Representative Patricia B. Sutherland, Chair

Submitted by the
Resolve Chapter 211 Legislative Action Committee

February 6, 2009

Report to the Legislature
Submitted by
Resolve Chapter 211 Work Group
February 6, 2009

After-School Funding in Maine

BACKGROUND:

“Resolve, To Study Ways to Increase Access to After-school Programs,” (Resolve Chapter 211) was originally LD 63 of the 123rd Legislature, “An Act to Increase Access to After-school Programs,” which requested funding for Afterschool program start-ups. At the close of the session it was revised to the Resolve, requesting no funding, but rather, action to be taken by the Administration toward eventually achieving the goals of the initial legislation.

The Resolve requires DHHS and DOE “to gather information pertaining to methods to establish and fund after-school programs in communities that currently do not have after-school programs,” seeking input from the Maine Afterschool Network and reporting to the joint standing committee on education and cultural affairs in January of 2009.

WORK GROUP:

The Resolve 211 Work Group convened on December 2, 2008. The group consisted of Susan Gendron, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Education; Brenda Harvey, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services; Carolyn Drugge, State Child Care Administrator, Office of Child and Family Services, DHHS; Lauren Sterling, Director, Maine’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers and Governor’s Children’s Cabinet; David Stockford, Team Coordinator, Special Services; Chip Curry, VISTA/Americorps Director at Communities for Youth and Children; Karen Hatch Gagne, Associate Professor, U.Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H; Rita Fullerton, Director, Child Care Options Resource Development Center; and Deb Chase, Director, Maine AfterSchool Network.

Since access to quality Afterschool programs is primarily an issue of funding, both for program development and for program affordability, discussion covered the resources currently available for Afterschool funding in Maine, the current limiting conditions for increased funding, positive factors bearing on the situation, and potential next steps to improve the situation. Minutes of the meeting are available upon request from the Maine AfterSchool Network (Cynthia.stancioff@maine.edu).

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE RESOURCES

The following resources were noted as available to varying degrees for partial funding of Afterschool programs. This list is not comprehensive but contains many of the applicable funding sources in Maine.

Resources Specifically in Use for Afterschool in Maine:

1. DHHS administers the “12- to 15-Year Old” program from Tobacco Settlement funds of \$650,000 specifically for prevention, including reducing risky behaviors and providing character-building, with 16 programs applied for by most but not all counties.
2. DOE administers the federally funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program, specifically for quality school-based Afterschool and summer programming statewide

Currently, Maine's 21st CCLC funds 35 grantees involving 120 schools and 300 community-based partners with approximately \$4 million federal grant dollars. Over 10,000 students PreK through grade 12 are served 50 percent of which are identified as failing in reading, math, and/or writing before entering the program. One-half million dollars of 21st CCLC funds are available through the new competitive RFP in 2009, which will award priority points for new programs where there have been none previously (but applications must also meet all other criteria and score over 100).

3. U.S.D.A. periodically offers competitive funding for "Children, Youth & Families At-Risk" Sustainable Community Projects in 3- to 5-year grants of \$100,000 - \$150,000 to deliver educational programs that equip youth at-risk-of-not-meeting basic human needs with skills they need to lead productive and contributing lives. In Maine, grants are applied for and administered by U-Maine Cooperative Extension which has a pending application for a new 5-year grant for connection to multiple afterschool sites through two base learning centers at Bryant Pond (near Bethel) and Tanglewood (Lincolntonville), and eventually at Tidewater (Falmouth).

Resources Used Incidentally in Afterschool Programs in Maine:

1. Approximately one-third of the \$20 million of Child Care Development Fund dollars are spent on subsidy in both vouchers and contracted child care slots for school-age child care, including before- and After-school care and summer care.
2. Juvenile Justice Advisory Group-administered federal funding (less than \$1 million for 2008), including Title II Formula Grants, Title V Delinquency Prevention Funds, and Juvenile Accountability Block Grants can all be used in Afterschool programs, but also have specific mandates;
3. The federal Drug-Free Schools program (granting to Maine DOE, which sub-grants to the Office of Substance Abuse for distribution) provides small amounts between \$500 to \$5,000 on average that support various school activities that address violence and substance prevention;
4. Federal Americorps/VISTA volunteers are sometimes placed in Afterschool programs specifically for capacity-building.

Resources of Uncertain/Potential Availability for Afterschool:

1. Maine's federal DOL Workforce Investment Funds are often used in high schools and might be available to Afterschool programming;
2. Town Parks and Recreation departments all over the state fund Afterschool programs that operate apart from schools or other partners and are not tracked from a central authority;
3. There are a number of foundation sources for summer camp scholarships, including the 5th graders program of the Libra Foundation; there is unexplored potential in foundations.

LIMITING CONDITIONS FOR EXPANDED FUNDING:

In the context of developing a strategy to bring increased funding to areas un-served by Afterschool programming in the state, certain factors need to be considered and addressed.

- **State Budget Constraints:** The Commissioners are unequivocally in an environment of constrained funding, and cannot offer any increased financial commitment;
- **Competitiveness:** Many rural schools have been unwilling or unprepared to comply with data collection, reporting or other documentation requirements of funding sources, for many reasons; also, Maine sometimes has problems competing nationally for funds due to lack of volume (population numbers) for impact statistics;
- **Quality Needs:** In addition to the need for new programs, there is also a need for resources directed at quality improvement and professional development in afterschool programming,

- Information Needs: Information is incomplete on the location of existing Afterschool programs around the State of Maine, so that the work of identifying un-served areas has yet to be done; also, there is a need to define “Afterschool program” in a way that is consistent, appropriate and workable.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS, STRENGTHS AND POTENTIAL

Ways of improving the climate and stimulating funding availability were noted as follows:

Advocacy:

The Reaching Potential Through Quality Afterschool Report, delivered to the Maine Legislature in March of 2008 by a large and diverse stakeholders group under the Network’s leadership, is a comprehensive guide for quality before- and after-school programs which can be used to educate and advocate for Afterschool. Members of the 123rd Legislature were each provided with a copy of the report, and this should be repeated for the 124th Legislature.

The Learning Season report of the Nellie Mae Educational Foundation could be used with policy-makers to advocate for Afterschool, due to its impressive representation of the impact of summer learning loss and socio-economic status.

Superintendents and school building principals should be educated about the importance of Afterschool; the “Spotlight on Maine” Maine Principals’ Survey results should be used in this effort. Data collection by school systems should be significantly improved to provide a more accurate picture of the effect of programming in rural areas.

Commissioner Gendron and Commissioner Harvey will work to promote Afterschool development on the Children’s Cabinet; Commissioner Gendron is involved in a New England multi-state education policy consortium where she intends to promote Afterschool as an item for their agenda.

The Maine AfterSchool Network has commissioned a promotional video production illustrating the nature and impact of Afterschool and summer programs, for use with funders, policy-makers, and potential partners.

Expand/Focus Availability of Existing Funding

There is reason to believe Title 1 funds will become more flexible under the new federal administration. Efforts have already commenced in Maine to channel 21st CCLC funding to new Afterschool programs (see above under Resources).

The Curriculum Coordination Association has an Executive Board that could be approached to become more aware of and involved in Afterschool, summer, and extra learning opportunities work in their grant funding process.

Inexperienced communities/schools could be paired with mentors to help with grant proposals to meet data-based and quality-related programming expectations of funders, thereby increasing the success rate of Maine’s Afterschool funding proposals.

Invite New Participants

The Network Director believes that the potential in expanded conversation among all sources of possible funding and a mutual recognition of their common goals promises a more effective blend of funding if we are determined to collaborate. Town recreation departments should be invited statewide. Foundations serving Maine should be invited and educated.

Increase Quality

If quality of programs is increased, sustainability, positive impact on children, and success in pursuing funding will all increase. Many children lack access to Afterschool because

issues related to quality limit the ability of the programs to meet their needs. Many quality rating tools exist and can be employed in this effort.

NEXT STEPS TO ADDRESS CHAPTER 211

Still to be addressed is quantification and identification of the communities in which there are no Afterschool programs. Lauren Sterling suggests utilizing a matrix developed by the Children's Cabinet to track various school-based prevention funding. Data from the 12- to 15-Year-Old program, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, and the Children, Youth and Families At-Risk program can be overlaid on this matrix, as well as any data ultimately gathered on miscellaneous programs around the state.

There is reason to believe that interns to help with mapping might be available through contacts at the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. If the mapping project is defined in a way compatible with the Network's approved budget, some financial assistance for mapping might be available through the Network.

The Commissioners both supported the idea of this mapping project. It was suggested that Phase I of Chapter 211's required research should be having state agency staff partner with grad students to undertake a mapping project to be completed by February for use in her supplemental 21st Century RFP.

A second phase should consist of the Network exploring existing and potential funding for programs to fill the identified gaps and propose a strategy to address them. In the course of the mapping and recommendation process, strategies to support improvements in quality of Afterschool, summer programming and Extra Learning Opportunities should be incorporated.

When the mapping project is complete, the result should be identification of a distinct set of communities with no available Afterschool programming, and special efforts could be made from State offices to encourage school superintendents of these communities to pursue funding opportunities and spur local programming collaborations.

CONCLUSIONS

In approaching the task of finding ways to establish and fund Afterschool programs in communities that do not have them, the main tangents are the identification of existing and potential resources, the expansion of resource availability; the identification of un-served communities, and the pairing of these results.

The Work Group suggests a mapping project to be undertaken by staff and others in order to target the needs of Maine's un-served children. Meanwhile, a number of efforts will be pursued (noted above) to increase collaboration among potential participants; to enhance awareness of the benefits of afterschool and summer learning; to better focus available funding; and to increase providers' understanding of program quality and its effect on sustainability, access to funding, and impact on children and communities.

For more information, feel free to contact:

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