

STATE FUNDING SPOTLIGHT



Pennsylvania Invests in Afterschool



\$11.5 Million for Afterschool

Establishing the **Building Opportunity through Out-of-School Time (BOOST)** initiative, Pennsylvania's first dedicated investment in afterschool programs.

The Challenge

Pennsylvania's afterschool and summer programs have primarily relied on funding from school district budgets; federal grants, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers; and philanthropy. Understanding the limitations of this funding structure, advocates identified dedicated state funding for afterschool as a need for the field and began mobilizing toward this goal. Partners—including Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST), Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool and Youth Development Network (PSAYDN), Schools and Homes in Education Afterschool program (SHINE), and Sunrise of Philadelphia—built strong relationships with lawmakers, elevated community voices, and organized public engagement through events like *Lights On Afterschool* and legislative site visits. Their efforts led to the creation of the bipartisan Afterschool Caucus in the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 2015, which coordinated visits to programs like SHINE and amplified the field's value. In 2016, the Afterschool Caucus released a white paper regarding the value of out-of-school time (OST) programs to Pennsylvania's young people, families, communities, and economy. That same year, a Legislative Budget and Finance Committee report recommended the development of a statewide afterschool data infrastructure, marking a key step toward long-term policy support.

The Opportunity

From 2016 to 2018, Pennsylvania's Afterschool Caucus remained active by hosting events on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), issuing policy recommendations, and organizing site visits, coding demonstrations, and receptions to showcase afterschool's impact on education and workforce readiness. In 2018, advocates began laying the groundwork for a state return-on-investment (ROI) study. Leaders like Laura Saccente of PSAYDN testified before policymakers to emphasize the role of afterschool programs in STEM learning and workforce development.

Strategies

- ▶ Established a bipartisan Afterschool Caucus to develop afterschool champions in the state legislature
- ▶ Used data, storytelling, and site visits to show the impact and unmet need for afterschool programs
- ▶ Adapted messaging to match political priorities, helping secure bipartisan support and budget inclusion

Lessons Learned

- ▶ Long-term relationship building pays off
- ▶ Align with broader policy priorities
- ▶ Sustained advocacy is essential

Timeline

- ▶ **2015:** Bipartisan Afterschool Caucus established in the General Assembly to formally support afterschool policy and investment
- ▶ **2016:** A Legislative Budget and Finance Committee Report recommends exploring a statewide afterschool data infrastructure
- ▶ **2019:** House Resolution 180 passes, directing the Joint State Government Commission to commission a return-on-investment study
- ▶ **2021:** ROI study released; Rep. Schlossberg introduces HB 2429
- ▶ **2022-2023:** BOOST legislation passes in the House but fails in the Senate both years
- ▶ **2024:** Governor Shapiro includes \$11.5 million for BOOST in his proposed budget; BOOST is included in the final budget passed in July 2024



This effort led to the passage of House Resolution 180 in 2019, which formally commissioned the ROI study, released in 2021, showing that every \$1 invested in afterschool yields a \$6.69 return. In the 2021 regular session, Rep. Mike Schlossberg introduced HB 2429 to establish the Building Opportunity Through Out-of-School Time (BOOST) Grant Program and create a dedicated state funding stream. Although the bill failed, it strengthened advocacy efforts, expanded the coalition, and led to site visits and advocacy days highlighting the impact of afterschool programs on Pennsylvania's education system.

The Result

In summer 2024, the Pennsylvania General Assembly approved \$11.5 million for the BOOST initiative, the state's first dedicated investment in afterschool programs, after Governor Josh Shapiro included it in his budget proposal. Lt. Governor Austin Davis helped propel the effort by framing BOOST as a public safety and youth gun violence prevention measure, reinforcing its relevance across bipartisan priorities. Behind the scenes, advocates used data, storytelling, and coordinated outreach to position BOOST as both an academic recovery strategy and a community safety solution.

What's Next

Advocates are working to:

- Scale the BOOST investment statewide
- Embed afterschool programs into state education and workforce systems
- Institutionalize data collection infrastructure across state agencies



Afterschool Alliance

The Afterschool Alliance is working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs. Learn more at: www.afterschoolalliance.org



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