



Afterschool Alliance

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M. Freeman We're here today with the hope of accomplishing two things. The first is to share with all of you the key findings from the July-August 2001 Mott Foundation/JCPenney Afterschool poll gauging American voter's views on issues related to afterschool programs; and second, to provide an up to the minute update on federal legislation regarding afterschool programs.

J. Samelson: For those of you not familiar with the Alliance, let me briefly tell you that we are a public awareness and advocacy organization that emerged out of the C.S. Mott Foundation's interest in afterschool programs. Mott, as I'm sure many of you know, has a 70-year history of supporting community school partnerships, so when the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program of the U.S. Department of Education emerged as a community school partnership initiative, the Mott Foundation was eager to support it, including funding for public awareness and advocacy.

The Alliance has endeavored to use public polling as a foundation for creating an informed public and encouraging public action in support of afterschool for all kids. The poll we will discuss today was funded by the Mott Foundation and JCPenney Afterschool.

M. Freeman We were very fortunate to have two premier polling firms working on this survey for us, helping us to get as clear a picture as could be had of American views on the subject. The first voice you're going to hear will be that of Alysia Snell, who is a partner and Vice President of Lake Snell Perry & Associates. She will be joined in the presentation by Dave Sackett who is a partner in the Tarrance Group. They've both done great work with this survey, and I'll turn it over to them right now.

POLL: AFTERSCHOOL CONTEXT

A. Snell Thank you, Matt. First, before we get started, just a little background on the poll. We did a nationwide survey of 800 registered voters. We conducted it July 31st through August 2nd, 2001, and before we actually get into the actual graphs that you see before you, I'm just going to give you a brief overview of what we found.

There's near unanimous agreement that afterschool programs are a necessity, and they continue to say that ensuring access to these programs is personally important to voters. Throughout the data, we see broad and deep support for afterschool programs. You'll hear us say numerous times during the presentation that this support holds true across demographic groups, across party lines, across racial lines, and that shows us that people support these programs.

There is also universal awareness of the problem of finding afterschool programs, and voters are willing to make afterschool programs a spending priority....

They're even willing to say that there's to be a national commitment to making sure every child has a space in an afterschool program, and they're even willing to increase their own taxes to see the problem solved.

D. Sackett I think that one other point that we would want to make is that, as Judy had mentioned, this is our fourth or fifth go-around with the research, and we've seen some real consistency in the data. So, one of the challenges that we set forth for ourselves was to not just measure attitudes but to push back on people a little bit, and you'll see several places in the survey where we do a fairly tenacious job of challenging support and trying to find places where the wheels might fall off in terms of support for afterschool programs and for funding them. I think that the most exciting bits of data are found even when you try to put some impediments in place that support continues to be very strong for this program.

A. Snell Over the course of the past three years more than nine out of ten voters continue to support the need for organized afterschool activities. Currently, 94% of voters agree that there should be some type of organized activity, or place for children and teens to go after school every day, that provides them opportunities for them to learn. Of that 94%, 73% are in strong agreement. If we look at it across demographic groups, we have more than six out of ten voters strongly agreeing that there should be some type of organized activity for these kids to go every day.

D. Sackett This issue very much crosses partisan lines, and there really is no partisanship. While you have about 96% of Democrats saying that they would agree that there should be some sort of organized activity, you find virtually the same level of intensity amongst both Independent and ticket voters in this country, but also amongst Republicans—93% of partisan Republicans in this national survey would agree. I think it's very significant to know that [support for afterschool] really has moved well beyond the spectrum of partisanship or ideology and is really a much more fundamental concern across the entire broad scope of the electorate.

A. Snell You'll see that 86% of voters say that it's personally important to them that all children have access to afterschool programs, which includes 51% saying that it's very important. Again, when you look at it across all demographic groups, 75% of voters are saying it's personally important to them to ensure programs for all kids, and that's including your seniors, as well. Even 75% of seniors are saying that it's very important to them that there are afterschool programs.

D. Sackett The next chart asks whether voters believe afterschool programs are a necessity for their communities. Again, this is something that we've tracked over time, and eight out of ten voters, 80%, would characterize or quantify afterschool programs as a necessity. Again, very strong intensity on this—50% of voters would strongly say that it is a necessity.

This is one of the first places where we pushed back on voters a little bit. We did a split sample, took half of all the voters and said, "Okay, would you say that [afterschool programs] would be an *absolute* necessity?" By adding a very strong adjective, what sort of erosion you would find? In fact, you find very little erosion.

Seventy-five percent, or three out of every four voters in this country, would say or would characterize afterschool programs as an absolute necessity for their community.

A. Snell Two-thirds of voters out there say that there're not enough afterschool programs available for children in America today.

D. Sackett Almost six out of ten voters, 57%, say that they would like to see a daily afterschool program take place in public schools; 16%, said that they would like to see them take place in community organizations; 9% talked about public facilities; 6% indicated that it would be most effective in churches or temples; 3% in libraries; and 1% in cultural institutions.

Every demographic group says that public schools would be the most important, or the most effective, place in which to hold these. I think, again, that this underscores two things. Number one is that people are answering the question in terms of what would be best for the kid, but, [number two], there is also an element of convenience or regularity for the parents of these children, as well, and [parents] see public schools as a place that can help make their life easier in terms of where [afterschool programs] should be held.

POLL: AFTERSCHOOL CONTENT

A. Snell We then asked them if they would favor or oppose a "comprehensive afterschool program that uses public school buildings during afterschool hours five days a week to provide children with fun, enriching learning opportunities that extend beyond school's traditional academic style, that challenge them as it gives them more individualized attention." When we read that description to them, 94% of the public are saying that they favor that program with two-thirds, 66%, saying that they strongly favor it. We upheld

that same support from when we first started doing these polls. From August 1998 to July 2001, we're holding nine out of ten people saying they favor these programs.

D. Sackett In fact, when you look at this trend-line data, it's very significant that support for these afterschool programs is stable across various different economic times. If you go back to 1998 through July 2001, we've had various economic conditions going on. We've been in the middle of some very boom times, and by the time we had gotten to July 2001, there was a level of recognition that the economy was tougher, but the views on this are not driven by either prosperity or difficult times in terms of the national economy, and it goes across the board...there is virtually no difference between voters who are parents of children under the age of 18 and voters who do not have children under the age of 18 in their household. As we've worked through this and began this process, we were not at all surprised to see intensity of support amongst voting parents of younger children, but the fact that there is such strong support now for afterschool programs amongst non-parent voters is very suggestive of the broader community benefits that these people see accruing from afterschool programs.

A. Snell When they think about this program, they think that the kids are going to be better off taking part in the programs than they are going home afterschool—77% of voters say that children will be better off taking part in the program with 46% saying that they would be much better off taking part of it. That's seven out of ten voters across all groups thinking that the kids would be better off taking part of the program, and it crosses your racial lines, your partisan lines—all of your lines.

D. Sackett We would suggest that this represents a fairly significant cultural shift. If we had asked this question of voters as little as seven or eight years ago, there would have been a much stronger pushback in terms of whether or not kids would be better off staying at school or going home, and the whole cultural morals of parental responsibility and kids being safer in the home. When you find that 77%, or almost eight out of every ten voters, are saying that kids would be better off at school, it is a clear societal recognition that many of those options don't exist anymore ...

We as the society, and we as communities in the states and nationally, have to do things together collectively in order to do things better to make things safer and better for kids ... We can't simply say that this is an individual family problem anymore.

POLL: AFTERSCHOOL OUTCOMES

A. Snell One of the things that [voters] believe is most likely to happen by the creation of more afterschool programs is that working families will be helped; 80% of the people say that that's something that's almost certain or very likely to happen with 46% saying it's almost certain to happen. That was followed by kids will be exposed to more creative activities with 82% and 42% saying almost certain. Then we got into the kids will be safer, so 78% said that they were almost certain or very likely with 38% saying that it almost certain.

D. Sackett So, for those of you responsible for messaging on this issue, or on this program or idea, while ultimately the objective is to do that which will be of greatest benefit to the kids, it is important to recognize that much of the support for afterschool programs, particularly among non-parents, is the fact that it would do a lot to help working families. At this point in time where time as a resource is very important, we should not shy away from the fact that there are benefits to this program that go well beyond the children themselves, but deal with public safety issues and also the issue of helping working families to be able to do a better job in their daily lives.

As you message on this issue, understand that these three messages—kids being safer, working families being helped and kids being exposed to creative activities—are the messages that have the greatest level of saliency amongst the broadest part of the electorate. Everybody on the telephone has some experience with messaging, and seven or eight or ten different messages are all going to get lost in the woods. You have to move the level of focus and the number of messages down to the three or most important ones. And these are the three messages that will provide the greatest opportunity amongst policy makers, amongst folks in the press and the media, and amongst regular voters in terms of increasing motivation or support or saliency behind the movement towards increasing focus on afterschool issues.

POLL: AFTERSCHOOL FUNDING

A. Snell We know now how important afterschool is to people, but we need to see if they're willing to put money behind it.

What we found, no matter how we tested, is that people are willing to commit federal funds and their own funds to making sure that afterschool programs actually can be expanded and that every child has a space in them.

Voters are saying that there should be a national commitment to making sure every child has a space in an afterschool program; 86% agree with that statement with 45% saying they strongly agree. We then wanted to see, if we add money and total that money and not just make it a broad statement, if that support holds. We still get nearly seven out of ten voters agreeing that there should be a national commitment even if we're going to increase spending by \$800 million a year.

D. Sackett This is probably the single most important finding in this body of data, whether you're looking at children's issues, or at healthcare issues or whatever the issues are, where the wheels fall off in terms of support is when you get into specificity of resources. Who is going to say that there should not be a national commitment to making sure that every child has a space in an afterschool program? That is an intellectual construct, there is no cost to the taxpayer, to the voter, to the respondent in responding in that format and so, of course, you're going to find strong numbers.

We very specifically in this survey decided to provide voters with some pieces of information that will allow them at the same time that they're making a values judgment to also make a financial judgment on this issue. So, we said to people, "All right, the federal government currently spends \$846 million on afterschool programs." I would

guarantee that there are probably not 2% or 3% of the people that we interviewed that would have had any concept that that much money was already being spent on the program, and then we said, “This program would require an additional commitment of another \$800 million in order to be accomplished.”

We very much were fascinated to find that you’re still in a situation where seven out of every ten voters—and when you have a number that high, it’s not just moderate liberal voters, it’s not just working women, it’s not just 18- to 34-year old voters...

You have a very broad spectrum of voters including conservatives, including fundamentalist Christians, including 65-year-old Republican men, saying that we are still in a position where it’s important for the federal government to be able to [spend additional money on afterschool].

Again, I think this is one of the more important findings, because time and time again, [in our experience] as we looked at issues of children’s healthcare and other educational issues, people are very happy to support a program or an idea or a concept until they understand the financial consequences of it themselves, and then they pull back. That is not the case here.

A. Snell Voters also think that it’s extremely or very important for their state to expand their own afterschool programs; 67% are saying that it’s important with 2 % saying that it’s extremely important. A majority of voters across all groups feel that exact same way.

Then we asked them how willing they would be to use additional federal or state taxpayer money if they knew it was going cost \$1,000 per child per school year to put these programs in their community. Seventy-five percent of voters say that they would be willing to use additional money to pay for these programs with 35% saying that they would be very willing. Again, more than six out of ten voters across all groups are saying that they’re willing to use additional federal or state taxpayer dollars to put the programs into their community.

D. Sackett This, in fact, represents an increase over the last year. If you go back to June of 2000, only about 66% or only about two-thirds of the electorate, said that they would be willing to use additional federal or state funds knowing that it would cost \$1,000 per child per year. Arguably, the economy was much better in June of 2000 than it was in July of 2001. Yet, by July 2001, again, 75%—three out of every four voters in this country—said that they would be willing to invest additional federal or state tax dollars into afterschool programs.

A. Snell We then wanted to say, “Okay, so you’re willing to pay additional federal or state tax payer money—what if it’s going to cost you and increase your state taxes by \$100 a year?” Even here, we had two-thirds of voters saying that they favor, and 67% with 33% strongly favoring, having their state taxes increase by \$100 per year to pay for every child to attend an afterschool program.

D. Sackett This is where the rubber hits the road. This is where we say to people, all right, put your money where your mouth is—I am going to raise your taxes by \$100 a year in order to fund afterschool programs. We have now given them four separate opportunities based on specific dollar figures to say this is just too great of a financial commitment, and it cannot hold up against other commitments or concerns that we have with regard to healthcare funding, with regard to public safety funding, with regard to a whole other series of priorities. Still, at this point, 67% say that they would be willing or in favor of raising their own taxes in order to make sure that every child had an afterschool program. That says a great deal about the value that is perceived in these sorts of afterschool programs extending well beyond the kids themselves and the very significant societal benefit that voters believe exist through these afterschool programs.

A. Snell So, on every measure we tested, every funding mechanism we tried, voters are saying they're willing to commit federal funds, state funds, their own funds to make afterschool programs a reality. As we said at the beginning, the support is solid indeed, and voters are telling us that they want to make a commitment to afterschool programs.

POLL: Q&A

M. Freeman Thank you, Alysia and Dave. Now, I want to put a couple of the questions we've gotten to our experts. This is a question we've gotten from a number of places. I'm holding one in my hand that's from Oakland, California. The question notes that the survey was administered in July [and August] of 2001 and wonders how the events of September 11th have changed the landscape or how you think the intensity of the issue has been affected by September 11th?

D. Sackett It's an issue that we've thought about and, in fact, both Alysia and I went back and looked at the data with a very critical eye after September the 11th. I would make the following comments. Number one, when we look at how the political environment is different today than it was on the 10th of September, we see a number of things. Number one, there is a much greater level of confidence in our government leaders and our government institutions than existed on the 10th of September.

Number two, and I think, most importantly, there is significantly greater concern in the minds of voters about public safety in general and the safety of their children, in particular.

Number three, there is growing concern about the conditions of the economy and the capacity to make ends meet. So, it is my view, and Alysia will speak to this question on her own in a moment, that if we were to go back and do this survey now that every single one of the key numbers would be as good or probably better than it was prior to September the 11th. If you go back and look at what folks said afterschool programs were going to provide to both kids and to society in terms of benefits, and all of those things continue to exist today. I think that voters would find the \$100 increase in their taxes as a significant investment.

Alysia and I went back and looked at this and noted that if you look at all of the off-year elections that occurred in 2001—the bond elections, the referendum elections—there was an increase of about 40% in terms of the number of bond and financial referendum initiatives that passed. It was much higher in terms of supporting government spending

proposals and bonds and referendums than there has been probably in the last 15 or 20 years. I think these are all very clear signs that the data would only be affected, I think, in a positive way by the events that occurred.

A. Snell I would just say briefly that in other research that we've done, we found that people are actually starting look more inward and more homeward in how to address problems that exist here. In afterschool programs, since we've been doing this poll since August 1998, the support has remained strong, it has remained broad and it has remained deep throughout. I don't think that afterschool programs is an issue that voters are just going to suddenly decide, after four or five years, is not a priority. This is a priority that will remain a priority to them, as we've seen for the past five years.

D. Sackett In many ways, this represents a significant messaging opportunity that as we talk about how do we improve public safety, how do we increase safety for our kids and our families...

There is a tremendous opportunity to say that afterschool programs offer one of the best, most effective, most efficient ways to make sure that our children are safer not only during school hours, but in those hours after school...and that this is something that is critical now in these more uncertain times.

M. Freeman Let me ask another question we've gotten from at least one place, and I'm not sure whether the question was intended with September 11th in mind, so take that however you'd like to. Is safety still the strongest argument for afterschool programs? How does academic achievement fit in the public view of afterschool? Do you want to start, Alysia?

A. Snell I think that from what we see in the data, safety in afterschool programs will always be intermingled in voters' minds. They want their kids safe first and foremost, but they also want them to have the academic achievement and be exposed to the different activities that afterschool programs provide, which is what they're saying to us when we're looking at the outcome piece of it. They want their kids safe, but they want them exposed to the creative outlooks, as well. I think there will always be a safety and academic connection for voters in their minds, but I think that's also a good thing for us, because that's a strong message that we can put out there.

D. Sackett It goes back to what we said before in terms of messaging. [Afterschool programs] are not an "either/or." It is not safety or academics or creative outlets. It is all three of those elements in conjunction with each other that create the critical mass of support. So, in terms of messaging, those need to be the three legs of the stool whenever anybody out there is talking about afterschool programs because just focusing on one or two of those elements means that you're going to miss a significant part of the electorate in terms of where their support is based.

M. Freeman I'm going to ask one more question. This one is from Tacoma Park, Maryland, right around the corner. Was there any definition of the word "kids" in the survey? In other words, do we think that people were thinking across age groups or answering their questions with little kids in mind versus bigger kids?

A. Snell One of the first questions we asked was if you agree or disagree that there should be some type of organized activity or place for children and teens to go after school, so that was the reference that they had in their minds.

D. Sackett When we started this project three or four years ago, we had some preconceived notions about levels of support amongst parents of younger children, elementary school children versus middle school kids versus high school kids. Frankly, we were quite surprised to find that there really are not any significant distinctions between the parents of those three different groups of kids and that parents of high school aged children were as supportive and as motivated to have afterschool opportunities for their kids as were the children of middle school children and younger children. So, the data certainly tells us that it would be incorrect to focus on only one segment of the student population in terms of support for afterschool programs.

M. Freeman Thank you to both of you. We're going to have a chance to ask some more questions of Alysia and Dave in just a few minutes, but we're going to stop right there for now and hear a little about the current state of federal legislation respecting afterschool. Then, as I say, we'll take some more questions.

Ellin Nolan is the Director of the Government Relations Practice for the firm of Dean Blakey & Moskowitz in Washington, D.C., and she's going to talk a bit about afterschool policy issues in Congress. Ellin?

E. Nolan Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to meet everyone on the line. Although many of us have never met, I feel like we've been working together quite effectively for the past year. It's nice to be part of the call today.

For the past three years, actually, Congress has attempted to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. For quite some time, strong partisan viewpoints interfered and slowed down this process. This year, however, with strong pressure from the Bush Administration, Congress was able to sign the necessary middle ground and move forward.

There's public interest in and support for greater federal investment in education throughout Republicans and Democrats alike, so the conclusion is that they really needed to enact an education reform proposal that would speak to greater accountability, flexibility, parental involvement and more resources for our nation's schools.

The Afterschool Alliance, with help from all of you because this would have been impossible without all of your help, has worked closely with legislators to shape this important legislation. Although the final proposal for extending the life of the 21st Century [Community Learning Centers] program is not exactly what we asked for, we are confident that the voices of proponents of universal afterschool have been heard and our recommendations seriously considered.

To quote a recent report from the Senate Appropriations Committee, "The committee has been alerted to the increasing demands made by parents and school administrators for afterschool programming and encourages local innovation to remedy the multitude of social problems that arrive after school hours."

The new law is not yet finalized. Many details about the extended 21st Century program are known, and I will try to review a few highlights for you.

- The 21st Century Learning Centers program will stand as a separate program. It will not be block granted with Safe and Drug Free School programs, as was first presented.
- Community-based organizations and schools will be encouraged to work in partnerships to present the best possible options for kids and families, but those can receive grants independently.
- Schools are the most obvious sites for afterschool programs, but if they are equally accessible, alternative sites are allowed.
- The terms of the grants are for between three and five years, and the local match may be required but will not be mandatory.
- The program will be extended for six years.
- The program will be administered by each state with a formula distributing funds to the state education agency. The details of that transition from a national to a state-based program have not yet been developed but will be in the next few months.

The funding recommendation for the 21st Century program for this year by the Congress is \$1 billion, an 18% increase over last year.

The Senate bill that authorized monies to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act had an even higher funding level recommended within S-1, and actually every time an amendment to the 21st Century program came up during the debate on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provisions that improved or strengthened the programs were adopted and, again, you all were a big reason why that occurred.

We fought hard to retain the community schools nature of the program to avoid limiting grants to programs that only provided afterschool tutorial services. Though the emphasis has shifted to academic support, other enrichment activities will clearly be eligible uses for these funds.

In keeping with other changes throughout the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, grants for afterschool will be targeted to lower income communities that have the greatest need for support.

Our funds are also reserved for national and state activities that are aimed at supporting local communities who are trying to implement programs and evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Until the final bill is written and reviewed, it's difficult to provide more complete details for you, but note that on the [policy section of the Afterschool Alliance] website, comparison of current law, the Senate adopted proposal, the House adopted proposal and the recommendations of the Afterschool Alliance are listed. As soon as the final legislation is available, that will be there, as well, along with an explanation of all the details that we can put together.

I did hear today [November 20, 2001] that the conferees on H.R. 1, and that is what the final bill will be called, plan two meetings next week. They are anxious to finish the bill, and President Bush has made his support for this effort clear, as well, so people are optimistic that that will happen in the next few weeks.

One important issue remains for the conferees to resolve regarding the 21st Century Learning Centers program, and that is a proposal that is commonly referred as “Straight A’s.” As written in the Senate passed bill under certain circumstances, states would be allowed to combine funds appropriated for 21st Century programs with other program funds and use them for those other purposes. Conversely, they could increase funds for 21st Century programs by taking dollars from other federal accounts. The Alliance has strongly opposed this provision, because we think it would undermine future planning, future support and put programs at risk, generally.

In the legislation adopted by the House of Representatives, they specifically kept the 21st Century program out of any block grant initiatives, and we are hopeful that the conferees will ultimately agree with the House viewpoint. You should know that we are joined by many other education organizations with programs serving youths in that position.

What does the future hold for the 21st Century program? We’ve reached a critical point in terms of funding—\$1 billion is considered a very large federal investment. Future growth for that will depend on cultivating more and stronger champions of afterschool.

The polling information that has been discussed today reinforces our collective belief that the public wants kids in safe and stimulating environments during afterschool hours. The stories all of you have to tell about the success of programs in your communities helps to strengthen this message and will be critical to our efforts.

The Alliance will continue to forge strong partnerships with many of you who are on this call and other organizations that share our commitment to universal afterschool. We will target new funding sources next year and find more resources at the federal level to support programs in your communities. At the same time, we’ll continue our focus on a revised and strengthened 21st Century Learning Centers program.

I look forward to working with you, and I congratulate you the extraordinary growth of this program and the strong support that is gained in the mind of the public and elected officials.

POLICY: Q&A

M. Freeman Thank you, Ellin. Ellin mentioned that there’s a chart on the Alliance website, and it’s really extraordinarily rich with information. I would encourage you to look at that. It’s at http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/esea_chart.cfm.

Now, we’re going to take about 15 minutes to address a few more questions that we’ve gotten in. Here’s one that I think that folks certainly want a response to. Are there segments of the population that are less or more supportive of afterschool either based on ethnicity, political party affiliation, age or gender, or are there any particular segments that you would point to?

A. Snell No. As we noted throughout the presentation, this issue has broad and deep support—it crosses racial barriers, and it crosses partisan lines. Everyone’s on board, basically, for afterschool programs.

- E. Nolan I might add that just among policy makers in the reauthorization of the 21st Century program, really the only disagreements were about how the program would grow and what role various entities would play in terms of operating programs, whether or not it would be extended to community based and religiously affiliated programs for direct grants. So, it really was opposition, but it was a question of how the program was to grow in the future.
- M. Freeman Let me ask one more question we've gotten. This one is from Wisconsin, I'm not sure where. I guess it's a clarification about the \$1,000 tax issue. Are taxpayers saying that they would be willing to pay \$1,000 more per student for afterschool programs?
- D. Sackett No. The question said that if we told you that the program will cost \$1,000 per child per school year, how willing would you be to use additional federal or state taxpayer money to put these programs in your community? Very willing, somewhat willing, not too willing or not willing at all? We were simply, again, trying to provide respondents with the information that if you make a commitment to this, understand that it's going to cost \$1,000 per year per kid. With that specific information, how willing are you to use additional federal or state taxpayer funds? That was not \$1,000 of their own money, but there was an implication that additional federal and state taxpayer funds were going to come from the taxes that they pay.
- M. Freeman This is a question that I suspect Ellin may want to take. What criteria are being proposed in the legislation for the selection of sites to be funded with respect to school sites, LEA [local education agency] sites and private entities and private organizations? Are there particular criteria in the bill that have been put forward?
- E. Nolan I think there probably will be. At this point in time, without having actual legislation to look at, I can really only speak generally to that question and say that community-based organizations will be eligible independently for these grants, but I think that the language will be written to encourage partnerships.

Most everyone agrees that the most effective programs, particularly where there's emphasis on academics, can be forged between schools and community-based organizations.

I think there's a basic assumption that the schools are readily accessible and familiar sites for communities and will be encouraged to use them, but if another applicant has a site that is just as accessible, then a state could make a decision to have the center housed outside of a school.

- M. Freeman Another poll question here. What does the poll tell us about the people, though it's a small percentage, who say "no" -- people who are not on our side, aren't interested in committing tax dollars to a national commitment to afterschool. The follow-up to that is how do we go about winning these people to our side? Any clues in the data?
- D. Sackett There are two segments of that community. Again, it's not a very large community. The first segment would be people that ideologically still have a problem with the idea or

concept that government at any level should be involved with taking care of children. They still see that as directly a familial responsibility.

There is another segment for whom \$100 is a significant amount of money that is beyond their means, and they're worried about their own personal financial situations.

It would be very difficult to [find] anything to change the views of any either one of those groups of people. If within your own mind that is a financial burden that you can't assume, you're not going to be in a position where you're going to change your mind about that. If you're particularly with the movement that we've seen in favor of this, if you still have fundamental ideological concerns, that's not a group of people that you're going to be able to move either.

Frankly, from a political perspective, the more important task at hand, as you move from the realm of public opinion into policy and appropriations is managing the erosion so that, over the course of it, you lose as few [of the] people who are currently supporting afterschool funding as possible.

- M. Freeman One question we've gotten from a couple of folks is: Tell us something about the sample of folks that you did the survey on. How did you ensure that there was a broad constituency base?
- A. Snell We polled 800 nationwide registered voters. It was a random digit dial sample, which means that it allows you to get into listed and non-listed numbers.
- D. Sackett Our methodology says let's start by looking at all the registered voters across the county and apportion them by state. Then, say, in each state, Alabama gets 14% of all the interviews—let's make sure that they're apportioned across the state of Alabama in the most accurate way so that we're very careful to distribute the sample across the entire country based on overall registration figures and turnout figures. Then you set some quotas to make sure that 48% of the sample is men and 52% of the sample is women. The stratify cluster random digit dial methodology ends up being a very accurate way and the most accepted way to sample to ensure that you get accuracy in terms of age levels and education levels and ideology and all of the other key demographics that you'd want to look at.
- M. Freeman We have a question here from Indianapolis. The asker notes that voters appear to believe that school-based afterschool programs will yield better kid safety, and she wonders whether or not there was any data in the poll or other research work that you've done to suggest that people think that the schools themselves are safe to begin with?
- D. Sackett She said better, and I guess my answer would be better than what. I think that there are concerns that voters have about safety and crime and violence in schools and that that manifests itself across a whole body of data, but what's still in most people's minds is that, when compared to other entities, schools are still viewed as very safe places.
- Number two is remember that part of the answer in why schools are the best places to have afterschool programs, a big part of it is safety, but let's be honest with each other—a

big part of it is also convenience. If you are a working parent, having to get your child from school to another location for an afterschool program adds a further inconvenience or problem to those working families. So, to be able to have their kids stream right from the academic day into an afterschool program makes their life a great deal easier. For non-parent voters, particularly the older voters—senior citizens who still have a different view of schools and education systems based on their own experiences and the experiences of their children—they still view schools as probably the single safest places out there.

- M. Freeman A question from Eugene, Oregon. The question is: While afterschool educational opportunities were highlighted in the survey, was there any research done, or any questions in the poll, that focus on respondents' support for recreational activities, or is there any data that compared the two?
- A. Snell We did include in the outcome section, recreational or sports type activities in the list that we gave to them. What we presented to you was the top tier of things that people thought as the most likely outcomes that would happen. So, yes, that was included in it.
- D. Sackett What we did find was that, as an add on, the opportunity for recreational activities, the opportunities for new experiences in terms of music and art and those things were found to be desirable incomes but only on a secondary or tertiary level. It is not until their concerns about safety, about adult supervision and about academic focus are taken care of. Then, to the extent that you can provide any additional values training to these students, those were the primary objectives or outcomes that they hope for. If you were able to provide those more creative opportunities in addition to, that was acceptable, but not instead of. That was very clear in all of the data that we've seen over the last three or four years.
- M. Freeman Here's a question that I can imagine all of our panelists might want to weigh in on in some way. These are national poll numbers, and the questioner wonders, "How do I make them relevant to my community, to my state and to my town? Are there resources that would help me translate those things and to action at the local level?"
- D. Sackett There are materials that show some of the breakouts by region and those sorts of things. I think that with very few exceptions, I can't imagine many communities across this country where most of this data would not be applicable in terms of overall support. More importantly, the things to take from this data would be less whether support is at 67% or 55% but what we've learned in terms of the themes and messages that are most important in terms of building on and developing additional support for afterschool programs. That's not going to change based on where you are in this country. Expected and desired outcomes of afterschool programs, that's not going to change very significantly depending on where you are in this country. Finally, the fact that overall there is a growing perception that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity—that's not going to change. We've been very sensitive throughout this process over the last four years to look for significant regional differences, and we're simply not finding that many.

A. Snell

I would also say that in other work that we've done for candidates, afterschool is an issue at all levels that is one thing that candidates and elected officials are talking about.

Starting at the mayoral and going on up, afterschool is a priority in all levels. Like Dave was saying, this data, when you do look at it across regional boundaries, there isn't much difference between them. So, the numbers are not going to vary by much from the national numbers when you get down to different states or different communities.

E. Nolan

I would just reiterate that in terms of our advocacy on Capitol Hill, whether it was a member from a rural state, an urban state, a rural or urban community, support of this program was a reflection of what voters are asking members to support, and you couldn't make distinctions. I think that if you couple that with the information from the Department of Education about the funding gap, which was one of our most effective tools to increase appropriations over the years, there are many more communities applying for funding than funds are available, so I think it is pretty universal as opposed to ...

D. Sackett

You can't defy the laws of physics here. If support for afterschool program was based on population density and we were only finding significant intensity in very urban areas or collar counties, then the overall numbers would be significantly lower than they are. When you're looking at numbers in the high 70s, 80s and 90s, you're reaching down into—I think there's some folks on the phone from Wyoming—you're reaching into the northwest corners of Wyoming in terms of attitudes there not being very much different from somebody on Staten Island.

M Freeman

Let me ask one more question we've gotten, which is this: After 21st Century funding goes to the states, who or what's the mechanism by which there will be decisions about how the criteria will be applied at the state level about which grant applicants will actually get the funds? Will states decide schools versus community locations, or will there be guidelines in the federal legislation. Also, what about faith-based organizations? Will they be eligible as well?

E. Nolan

In terms of the eligibility of faith-based organizations, that is an issue that remains unresolved among the conferees. But, given current practice in the program and the involvement of faith-based organizations, I would suspect that in some way or another the answer will be "yes" about faith-based.

In terms of how the selections will be made in a state competition, those sorts of details are yet to be developed. Once the law is passed, the responsibility of developing the regulations that will provide the guidance to the states will fall to the U.S. Department of Education. From their experience with the current 21st Century program, they'll provide that information to the states. But grants go to the SEA's [state education agencies], and the SEAs are directed to develop plans and describe how they intend to distribute the funds, but I would imagine that states will have some degree of flexibility within the general parameters of eligibility. I think you're going to have to wait for some of those details until the law is enacted and the Department of Education has some time to digest it and come up with that kind of guidance.

M. Freeman Another question about the legislation: Does service-learning play a role in the current legislation, or do we expect it to appear in what finally emerges?

E. Nolan I don't know that it's mentioned in the current bill, but I would certainly see an interface there.

We've spent some time, and we'll spend more in the future, looking at other sources of funding for expanding afterschool, either helping states find continuing funding after the three-year grants expire that currently are out there or finding other ways to develop more programs.

Service-learning is certainly a possibility there in terms of the young people who are interested in working in afterschool sites and volunteering or being paid to work in afterschool. It certainly makes good sense.

M. Freeman Another question that may require some crystal ball gazing in terms of the legislation: Is it likely, or do we have any idea, that surely there will be some lag of a year or so, I would presume, before the next round of grants are available from states as states go about the business of setting up to administer these proposals. Any clues about what that's going to mean?

E. Nolan Again, I don't have a really firm answer here. I can tell you that in conversation with legislators, their view is that as the current grants expire, the pot of money available to be distributed by formula to the states will grow. Also, new money, increased money, appropriated for the 21st Century program will increase that pot. I think that, in essence, they see one program of the nationally organized administered program will shrink, and the amount of money going out to the states will grow over the course of two or three years, is what I would imagine.

M. Freeman We have one more question here that I think is going to be our last question in this set. There was some discussion about income and poverty levels playing into the decisions about who was going to get grants. I want to ask this both in the terms of the legislation and also in terms of the polling, and why don't I start with the polling: Was there anything in the poll that spoke to the respondents' views on whether or not afterschool funding should be focused on communities with lower income levels?

A. Snell We did not look at that but, if you look at support of afterschool programs either across regional, meaning the area urban, suburban or rural, as well as college, non-college or racial, the support remains the same for these programs.

D. Sackett Politically, that would be the single stupidest thing that this Alliance or anybody could do. Again, let us go back to the fundamental fact that support for afterschool programs is as strong amongst non-parents and people who would not be directly affected as it is amongst parents. There are societal benefits, there are punitive benefits, and there are safety benefits and crime prevention benefits. If this is viewed, if this is construed, as any

sort of welfare program or federal assistance program that is only aimed at a certain element of our society, you're going to see support for this drop like a stone.

[Afterschool] is supported because it is viewed as something going on across the entire country, and whether it is true or not, middle class, suburban, white voters feel that they have as much need for afterschool programs as would a single African-American mother living in an urban environment.

Politically, I can guarantee you that the numbers would fall through the floor if the public began to get a sense that this was a narrow cast [program] targeted towards only one segment of the country.

E. Nolan You asked about a policy debate on extending the life of the 21st Century Learning Centers program. I never heard a discussion that would contradict what was just said. Certainly, everyone believes that afterschool is important for all kids and that safety crosses any economic line.

When you're looking at a finite amount of money that is being appropriated by the Congress, and you're looking at members of Congress writing legislation, they're going to target these funds to lower income communities first -- I don't think to the exclusion of other communities, but you are going to find language within this legislation speaking to the importance of serving the lowest income communities or lower income communities, some variation of that, first.

A. Snell In the past, we did used to ask the question about support for [afterschool] for all children versus children in the community, and we stopped asking it that way because there was truly no difference in voters' minds. They were willing to support it for all children, as much as they wanted it for kids in their community, so it is something that we explored in the past, but there was just no reason to continue it because voters' support for it, they want it for all children and not just for their own kids.

M. Freeman I think we're going to stop the Q&A there. We'd like to now have you hear again from Judy Samelson, who is the acting Executive Director of the Afterschool Alliance, who's going talk to a bit about how all of these threads connect.

BUILDING THE AFTERSCHOOL MOVEMENT

J. Samelson Thank you, Matt. I have to say that I've heard Dave, Alysia and Ellin speak on these issues on more than one occasion, but they never fail to buoy my spirits about just how strong an issue this is and how tremendous the potential is for us to move this issue if we can bring the voices together. Thank you to all three of you. It's always great to hear it again, and I learn something every time you all talk.

I do hope that you all will agree that there's a great deal of good news in what Dave, Alysia and Ellin are sharing today. Clearly, the public is signaling both consistent but increasing support for afterschool programs, and what we're seeing and hearing at the state and local levels suggests that there's no shortage of interest in helping that agenda along at that level either.

I'd like to just tell you few things that we're doing. Clearly, there are many, many efforts going on out there on afterschool. We've got states doing some really marvelous things, and we've got a number of cities—Boston, San Diego and Houston—a number of places doing great programs like LA's BEST, which I'm sure all of you are familiar with. We have great programs to hold up as examples and say that these programs are making a difference for the kids.

I want to tell you just a little bit about what we're doing at the national, state and local level and see if I can, in fact, tie some of this together. Locally, the Alliance is trying to work through training opportunities to reach practitioners and urge them to tell the story of the work that they're doing and also to see the critical role that they play as afterschool advocates. The National Center for Community Education has been a tremendous partner with us in putting this kind of information in front of 21st Century grantees, whom they are training as part of that initiative. Also, as that training moves out into regional programs, and all afterschool providers are invited to those trainings, they are getting wonderful material, and we're getting a chance to work with local people and create real advocates at the local level to get those voices moving.

At the state level, there really is a great deal going on. I want to go back for a moment to some of the questions raised about 21st Century going to the state level. We are all very interested in what happens when this program goes down to the state level. There are a number of things that continue to make this program strong and build on the momentum, and there are things that could happen at the state level that could undermine that.

One of the things that we are doing is we're working with the Mott Foundation in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Center for Community Education to put on a two-day conference in Tampa for state education agency representatives. There will be two state agency representatives invited along with two afterschool experts, or advocates, from each state in the country. The idea is to bring them together, tell them what's worked about 21st Century, give them as much information as we can and hope that they will take from that conference the information they need to build on this program and not reinvent it when it gets down to their level.

We'll try and keep you posted about what happens out of that conference and, very likely, there will be additional regional conferences as well, because the educational agencies are going to have 21st Century as one more project that they have to do, and we want to give them all the support we can.

In addition to that specific effort, the Alliance has, for as long as it's been in existence practically, targeted a number of states with which to work, recognizing that we can't work in all 50 but that we need to work in as many states as possible. Particularly as the word gets out more and more about afterschool and people in states come to us, we want to be responsive to anything that we can do to support their efforts to move an afterschool agenda forward in the states. Obviously, we'll have particular interest in particular states, depending on where our policy focus will be in 2002 and, as that shapes up, we would be happy to share that with you, as well.

In addition to our ongoing work in the states, we're also working as part of a group of Mott grantees. These include policy groups like the National Governors Association, The National League of Cities, the National Conference of State Legislatures and also The Finance Project, all of which are working in certain states in the country on afterschool

issues. The group has come together as a group of Mott grantees and defined four states—Wisconsin, Texas, Maryland and Mississippi—in which to work together as a coalition. We're keeping that effort going even as we are working in other states. This group, which is called the Afterschool Technical Assistance Collaborative, is also sharing information about what each of us is doing individually in other states. It's a real wealth of information, and we hope to be increasingly moving that information onto our Web site so that we can share in as many ways as possible what's happening in the states.

That's not all, however. The Mott Foundation has begun conversations with a number of national and other organizations about building networks and infrastructures to support afterschool in states. We think that holds great promise, again, to both help create a national coalition, if you will, or a loud national voice on afterschool programs, but also to identify groups within states and create networks within states that are going to be tremendous advocates. So, this issue both in-state and at the national level. As you can imagine, taken together, there is potential for a significant coalition to support afterschool in all of this, and we think that a lot is going to develop on this over the next many weeks and months.

We would, in fact, like to follow this call with you by sharing with you what our policy agenda is going to be in 2002 and discuss ways that perhaps we can work together to advance that [agenda]. [This is] assuming that, hopefully, everybody on this call is in agreement that we need to get more money into afterschool programs in this country.

In the meantime, we're going to be doing as much as we can to keep a national discussions going on on afterschool. We are looking toward a new PSA campaign next year to build on our "What Is a Hero?" campaign. We also plan to be offering a new youth campaign aimed at involving kids, catching the eye of our young people and getting them interested in an afterschool program. We're also going to keep working on getting the media around afterschool. We've seen a tremendous increase in media interest this year on afterschool programs, and we want to continue that in every way possible.

Hopefully, many of you are familiar with our *Lights On Afterschool!* program. This past October, our *Lights On* program tripled with almost 3000 events. Arnold Schwarzenegger was our national chairperson. We believe that this event increasingly is going to become a great piece of our advocacy agenda to move afterschool forward.

Some of the other things that we're looking at this next year are to try and share more of the great stories that are out there on afterschool programs and also maybe taking it to some heroic levels, if you will, and building on that "What Is a Hero?" campaign. Then, we are looking toward, in March, having something we're calling a "Challenge to the Nation" where we hope to convene a group of high profile stakeholders and get them to challenge this country to step up behind this national commitment for afterschool programs.

I think that, by all accounts, there is a tremendous afterschool movement out there, and there is wonderful momentum, but the challenge for all of us is realizing that afterschool is going to be best served if we can find the right way to marshal of these voices in a coordinated approach.

As Ellin said, we need some champions for afterschool. We need them in the Congress, we need them in the state capitals, and we need them all over this country speaking out on behalf of afterschool programs.

We would love to join with you in making this happen, and we look forward to talking with you as this audio conference ends and we go forward in all of our work.

M. Freeman Thank you, Judy.

I want to thank the C.S. Mott Foundation and JCPenney Afterschool for their continued funding of the Alliance's research and dissemination efforts, particularly this poll.