



NEWS RELEASE
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New Research on Afterschool in Maine: Inadequate Funding Prevents State from Meeting Demand for Afterschool, Summer Programs

Portland, Maine – The vast majority of school principals in Maine agree that afterschool and summer programs are a necessity, but say funding is inadequate to meet the need for these programs across the state. This is according to a recent survey of principals conducted by the Afterschool Alliance in cooperation with the Maine Afterschool Network and funded by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. It was released today at a panel discussion in Portland.

“There’s some work to be done here in Maine to expand access to summer programs,” said Maine Afterschool Network Director Deb Chase. “Principals, other educators, parents, community members and policy makers agree that summer programs are an important source of learning beyond the school year. We need to continue to develop public will and expand available resources to provide affordable and accessible programming for all children in Maine.”

The report, *America After 3 PM: Spotlight on Maine*, is the fifth in a series of reports on afterschool in New England. It is the first report to focus exclusively on afterschool and summer programs in Maine, and it is based on the results of a statewide survey of school principals.

According to *Spotlight on Maine*, an overwhelming majority of Maine principals say that it is important for all children and youth to have access to quality, affordable summer programs and that there are students in their schools who could benefit from summer programs who currently do not participate. The survey also found that principals believe that summer learning programs should include not just academic support, but also a range of activities including recreational sports and hands-on learning.

“Summer programs provide the same kinds of benefits as afterschool programs and are every bit as valuable,” said Nellie Mae Education Foundation President and CEO Nicholas C. Donohue. “Unfortunately, there is not nearly enough funding to ensure that all children in Maine have access to programs that provide opportunities to learn and to engage in sports and other physical activity. We need to do much more to give all our children the chance to participate in summer programs that keep them busy, safe and learning.”

Among the key findings in *New England After 3PM: Spotlight on Maine*:

- More than half of respondents say they do not have enough funding to meet the demand for programs at their school, and one in three has no funding for summer programs.
- Forty-three percent of principals say their school does not have a summer program that includes a coordinated offering of academic, enrichment and recreational activities.
- Ninety-three percent of respondents say there are students at their schools who could benefit from participating in a summer program who currently do not participate.
- Seventy-six percent say that the primary focus of a high-quality summer program should be a combination of academics, enrichment and recreational activities.
- Seventy-two percent of survey respondents say that the federal government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs and three in four think the Maine state government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs in their communities.
- Only 16 percent of respondents say their school receives 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding (the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool programs)

While there is strong support for afterschool and summer programs, some principals participating in the survey indicated that community agencies rather than schools are the appropriate venue for summer programs. Several noted that in their communities, community organizations, parks and recreation departments and other partners can share responsibility for providing the academic, enrichment and recreational opportunities to meet the needs of students.

“A growing body of research shows that during the summer months, many children lose some of the academic gains they made during the school year,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “Summer programs help to stem those losses and also give kids a safe place to be while their parents are working and essential opportunities to engage in physical activity. Unfortunately, in Maine too few children are able to participate in these programs because there’s not enough funding to meet the need.”

The report is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org/ME_3pm.cfm or from the Afterschool Alliance media office at 202/371-1999.

In developing *Spotlight on Maine*, the Afterschool Alliance worked with the Maine Afterschool Network, in cooperation with the Maine Principals’ Association, to survey school principals in the state. Distributed via the Internet in May 2008, the survey asked Maine school principals about their views on school-based afterschool and summer programs in their communities and the role these programs play in supporting student success. The Afterschool Alliance received responses from 194 school principals, representing more than one-third of the 525 principals

contacted through the Maine Principals' Association. All responses are voluntary and anonymous.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

*The purpose of the **Maine Afterschool Network** is to enable every child to have access to quality, inclusive, affordable after school programming that meets the needs of the child, the family and the community. More information is available at: www.maineafterschool.net.*

***The Nellie Mae Education Foundation** is the largest philanthropy in New England that focuses exclusively on promoting access, quality, and effectiveness of education. The Foundation provides grants and other support to education programs and intermediary organizations in the region to dramatically improve underserved students' academic achievement and to investigate and promote high quality, varied approaches that allow students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary in the 21st century. The Foundation also funds research that examines critical education policy issues and public understanding about education in order to better inform efforts to improve education. Since it was established in 1998, the Foundation has distributed nearly \$83 million in grants. Currently, it primarily provides funding through five strategic initiatives: Early Learning, Pathways to Higher Education, Time for Learning, Adult Learning, and Systems Building. For more information, visit www.nmefdn.org*