Ignite Afterschool Policy Platform

High-quality afterschool and summer learning programs provide hands-on learning experiences that narrow the opportunity and achievement gap, build critical 21st-century skills, and support working families by ensuring their children are safe and engaged in learning outside of school. Minnesota needs to ensure a bright future for our young people and our state by investing in afterschool programs to expand access for all young people.

Policy Platform

Create a new state funding stream of $25 million/year that will provide afterschool programs for an additional 25,000 young people by funding competitive grants to afterschool programs. These funds will prioritize programs primarily serving youth below 185% of the federal poverty line (youth eligible for Free & Reduced Price Lunch).

We propose the following timeline to reach the $25 million/year target investment by 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Session to Secure Funding</th>
<th>Fiscal Year to Disburse Funding</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016 Legislative Session</td>
<td>Fiscal Year 2017: $5 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 Legislative Session</td>
<td>Fiscal Year 2018: $10 million Fiscal Year 2019: $20 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018 and 2019 Legislative Sessions</td>
<td>Fiscal Year 2020: $25 million Fiscal Year 2021: $25 million</td>
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Key Policy Details:

- **Step up state investment.** Minnesota has no state public funding accessible to the broad range of afterschool programs. We propose a competitive grant process - administered by the Minnesota Department of Education - that will restore lost funding, complement existing federal and private investments, and leverage new private funds.

- **Invest in low-income families to close the opportunity gap.** Prioritize funding for programs that primarily engage school-age young people whose families are at or below 185% of poverty.

- **Remove barriers to funding.** Allow collaboratives or partnerships of organizations to apply together, to increase the likelihood that small- and mid-sized programs can access funds too.

- **Boost 21st century skills and career readiness.** Fund programs that build 21st-century skills, to prepare Minnesota’s young people for success in a rapidly-changing world and economy. Focus statewide evaluation efforts on 21st century skill outcomes.

- **Promote choice and diversity of learning experiences.** Prioritize under-supplied learning experiences such as high-quality STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and career readiness learning experiences.

- **Support program quality to ensure results.** Allow up to 7% of funds to be used by the Minnesota Department of Education to support a statewide quality and continuous program improvement framework which promotes local coordination; and for statewide evaluation and administration of grants.

- **Ensure statewide distribution of funds.** Require funds to be distributed so that communities across Minnesota have access to funding, regardless of geography or community size.