

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:

Legislative Session to Secure Funding	Fiscal Year to Disburse Funding
2016 Legislative Session	Fiscal Year 2017: \$5 million
2017 Legislative Session	Fiscal Year 2018: \$10 million Fiscal Year 2019: \$20 million
2018 and 2019 Legislative Sessions	Fiscal Year 2020: \$25 million Fiscal Year 2021: \$25 million

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.