
Ignite Afterschool

▲Policy Platform Criteria

As Minnesota's Afterschool Network, Ignite Afterschool is committed to ensuring all young people can participate in high-quality afterschool and summer programs, regardless of income or race. This commitment stems from our belief that relationships with caring adults and hands-on learning are the key to unlocking young people's potential. We look forward to working with those who share this belief. Here is our list of criteria we use to evaluate a policy's alignment with our platform; the first three below we recognize as highest importance.

- **Addresses racial and income disparities** Policy is explicitly designed and implemented to counter implicit bias and promote equity regardless of race, income level and geographic region.
- **Political Feasibility** Policy proposal is capable of attracting enough bipartisan support from grassroots stakeholders and political leaders to pass into law and activate a dedicated constituency in support of it.

- **Supports Statewide and multi-program access.** A broad range of programs from communities across the state are eligible to access funding. specific programs do not meet this criteria.

- **Supports Strong Programs** Policy acknowledges the importance of fostering high-quality programs, and is structured to strengthen intentional supports for program quality and continuous improvement through evidence and accountability.

- **Allows flexibility to local context** Policy allows flexibility in how funds are used to meet local needs. Funds can be directed to various types of programs or system infrastructure efforts, so long as they meet local needs.

- **Sustainability** Policy is structured to provide stable, long-term investments that help programs and the afterschool field build capacity over time.

- **Maximizes Existing Resources** Policy promotes partnerships and leverages existing infrastructure,

systems, or resources already in place to maximize impact.

- **Shares Power** Policy proposal ensures that afterschool and community stakeholders have meaningful input into how the policy is implemented and developed over time.

- **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.

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



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▲Policy Partnership FAQ

Illustrating the ways Ignite approaches and prioritizes our policy work and support we provide to policies aligned to our Policy Platform.

Q: What policies has Ignite Afterschool supported in the past?

A: Ignite Afterschool has supported the Afterschool Community Learning Grants (ACLG) bill, which would establish a competitive grant program administered by the MN Department of Education (MDE) that would distribute funds to afterschool programs serving low-income youth.

We have also supported a School-Age Care Licensing Exemption bill ([SF 814 | HF 1193 in 2015 legislative session](#)) to exempt certain types of afterschool programs who don't operate under a school-age care model from having to comply with school-age care licensing requirements. This bill was passed into law during the 2015 legislative session.

Finally, we have supported and continue to support legislation that would increase the amount of funds in the Youth Afterschool Enrichment formula funding, which funds afterschool programs in school districts across Minnesota through Community Education.

Q: Does Ignite prioritize the policies it supports?

A: Yes. While we believe all of the policies we support would deliver important benefits to Minnesota's youth, we have to prioritize our limited staff time and resources to the policy we think will be most impactful. Our top-priority policy issue has consistently been the ACLG bill, which was written to align with the Key Policy Principles laid out in our Policy Platform, which was adopted before the 2015 legislative session. However, we have also supported policies in the past in a support role, usually with one of our partner organizations serving as the lead on the policy. For instance, we have supported MCEA's policy request to increase Youth Enrichment Funds for Community Education, and have also supported MnAEYC-MnSACA's policy proposals to increase the Childcare reimbursement rate.

Q: Does Ignite have a formalized process for endorsing other policy priorities?

A: Network partners have signed-off on Ignite staff selecting policy support based on alignment with the platform criteria (reverse side). To show types of support Ignite could provide to a policy, here are some examples of specific actions we have taken to support in the past:

- Letter of support or Expressing our support for the policy in 1-on-1 meetings with legislators or in committee testimony
- Featuring partners who advocate for a policy issue as speakers or panelists at the Youth Policy Forum and other policy-focused events hosted by Ignite
- Communicating important info or action alerts about policy priorities through our social media and email communications
- Coordinating talking points and issue education strategy or tactics with policy lead organizations
- Coordinating shared events or regional meetings that engage stakeholders from policy lead organizations