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We need new strategies for attracting and keeping good teachers in our neediest schools.
--U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy (D. Mass.), January 8, 2007

Afterschool programs provide future teachers with essential classroom experience and valuable opportunities to try out different ways of teaching and learning. These programs give them the know-how to begin their careers prepared to educate and inspire our nation's young people.
--U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, (R-Wyo.), July, 2007

Afterschool: A Powerful Path to Teacher Recruitment and Retention

America's schools are facing a critical shortage of teachers just as student enrollments are rising and more rigorous assessments of student achievement are being implemented. The shortage is especially acute in hard-to-staff schools in urban and rural areas, as well as in high-demand subjects such as math, science, and bilingual and special education.

- More than one million teachers are nearing retirement age.¹
- One quarter of teachers say it is likely they will leave the profession in the next five years.²
- Twenty-eight percent of elementary school principals and 39 percent of secondary school principals expect shortages of qualified teachers to be a very serious problem in the near future.³
- Over the next decade, experts predict that we will need to hire more than two million new teachers.⁴

The issue is two-fold: teacher recruitment and teacher retention. There is a great deal of discussion about the need to recruit more young people into the teaching profession, but not enough focus on retaining quality teachers already in the classrooms. Turnover among new teachers is significant. Twenty percent of new hires leave the classroom within three years. In urban districts, close to 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession during their first five years.⁵

Each teacher who is recruited, trained, and lost costs districts up to \$50,000. Disruptions in teaching and learning and negative effects on morale are among other costs that can be even more devastating.⁶

Teaching credentials and coursework by themselves cannot prepare our teachers for today's classroom or ensure students' lifetime achievement. Afterschool programs offer future teachers hands-on experience that coursework doesn't provide. As a result, they enter the field with greater enthusiasm, greater value for the context in which good teachers and good teaching happens, and greater value for connecting children to schools, family and community.

Carla Sanger
President and CEO
LA's BEST

Afterschool programs are a valuable resource for teacher recruitment.

Afterschool can serve as a pipeline for new teachers in a variety of ways -- from introducing prospective educators to the teaching profession, to supporting and encouraging those already interested in the field.

- Afterschool teacher cadet programs offer qualified middle and high school students an introduction to the teaching profession. The programs identify and nurture students to be future teachers. The curriculum includes simulations and other hands-on activities designed to excite students about teaching. Michigan, North Carolina and South Carolina have successfully implemented afterschool teacher cadet programs and report increased student achievement and teacher recruitment.⁷
- Teaching Fellows is an academic assistance and enrichment program that recruits local college students already on a teaching career path and places them in area

It is so wonderful to see them mature and become highly trained professionals because of their work in afterschool. They have all said that they felt better prepared and less intimidated, because of the experience gained in working in our afterschool programs. I am quite sure there will be many more.

John Ervin, III
Director, Community Affairs
Modesto City Schools, CA

afterschool and enrichment programs. The program, which began in Fresno, California in 1996, has more than 200 teaching fellows in 40 schools. Participants partner with teachers and provide experiential standards-based education and enrichment for K-12 students. In return, they receive a stipend, ongoing training, and course credits. The program offers future teachers support, hands-on experience, and learning opportunities.⁸

- LA's BEST is a nationally recognized afterschool program that serves 26,000 children in 168 elementary schools across Los Angeles. Because of its size, scope and quality, LA's BEST serves as a powerful resource for teacher recruitment. Out of the 1,800 field staff, 42 percent plan to become teachers, and 34 percent are in college pursuing a degree in education and plan to teach. LA's BEST actively recruits staff from the local

community and more than 50 percent live in the neighborhood. As a result, children in the program are mentored and supported by a staff that is culturally and geographically close to them. Many of these children return as young adults to staff the programs: nine percent of staff are former LA's BEST students. In addition, each site has two part-time high school positions. LA's BEST students are offered a path to a teaching career that otherwise might not be visible to them. In an informal survey of 3rd through 6th graders, when asked what they wanted to be when they grow up, the most common answer was "teacher".^{9,10}

- According to Dan Diehl, an educational program consultant in Indiana, observations and involvement in afterschool programs are now a requirement at the University of Southern Indiana Teacher Education Department. "This will give future educators an opportunity to have more hands-on experience – thus helping them be better prepared to enter the classroom. We do know that we have hired a lot of our [afterschool program] site coordinators as teachers."

Other recruitment streams include:

- Afterschool programs where middle and high school students tutor younger students, serving as an early training ground for a career in teaching.

- Universities and colleges of education. Students can staff afterschool programs, allowing future teachers to learn innovative teaching methods, classroom management skills, and content enrichment. Using afterschool as a teaching laboratory can train teachers to deal with their students in smaller, less formal settings, giving them insight into building student-teacher relationships. Student teachers can be given the latitude to deliver content in fun and interesting ways, which is often difficult to do during the regular school day.¹¹
- Professional development opportunities tied to a career ladder for afterschool staff. Several states including California, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey are pursuing this recruitment tool.¹²

Afterschool programs support teacher retention.

Retaining existing teachers is more challenging than training new ones. Since the early 1990s, the annual outflow of teachers has surpassed the annual influx by increasingly larger margins. Retirees account for only about 15 percent of those who leave the profession – either temporarily or permanently – each year.¹³ New teachers tend to leave the field because they feel overwhelmed by the expectations and scope of the job. Many say they feel isolated and unsupported in their classrooms, or that expectations are unclear.¹⁴ Afterschool programs can help prepare teachers for the realities of the profession, as well as support them once they enter the field.

- Afterschool programs can introduce prospective teachers to diverse student populations and at-risk students. Gaining experience with these students and their families can make future teachers aware of the challenges they will face in regular classrooms, and give them skills to effectively address those challenges.
- Afterschool programs offer important support to teachers by encouraging them to collaborate with their peers, and providing mentoring and professional development opportunities. Teachers report that the flexibility and creativity that they bring to an afterschool program directly transfers to their teaching during the regular school day.¹⁵
- The Winooski School District (WSD) in Vermont has implemented a successful afterschool program, AfterZone. Forty-six percent of the K-12 students and 35 percent of the teaching faculty participate. Teachers report that they are working together in new ways and building multidimensional relationships with the students and each other. Students have greater involvement in extracurricular learning, which translates into greater success during the regular school day. Through their involvement in the afterschool program, teachers perceive WSD schools as a place where they will be supported in developing innovative curricula and where opportunities for learning go beyond the regular school day.¹⁶

The principal and superintendent state that they use the [afterschool] program as a proving ground. I've had staff members at another site say that this was the best preparation they could possibly have had for their teaching careers. They saw a side of student life that teachers rarely see, as they had far more involvement with low income families than those in the regular day have.

Bricca Sweet, Alleghany County, SC

Using afterschool to train and recruit teachers can strengthen and enhance the link between school and afterschool.

Using afterschool as a platform for teacher recruitment and retention benefits the teaching profession, the afterschool field and most importantly, the students. Teachers who have come up

through afterschool, or who currently participate in afterschool, are keenly aware of its value and strive hard to solidify the bridge between the regular school day and afterschool. They support afterschool by sharing their classrooms and materials, and maintaining communication between the programs, which benefits students.

Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Richard Burr (R-NC), John Kerry (D-MA) and Bernie Sanders (I-VT), have introduced a bi-partisan bill as part of the reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. The Teaching Fellows for Extended Learning and After-School Act of 2007 (T-FELAS) proposes a federal investment of \$600 million to establish a national service corps of 20,000 recent college graduates to teach in extended day and afterschool programs. For two years, teaching fellows would work during the regular school day with teachers in classrooms, and lead afterschool programs in the afternoon. The schools will coordinate with institutions of higher education to provide the fellows a baccalaureate or masters degree program in education.

Conclusion

The teacher shortage is serious and real, and comes at a time when the nation's educational system is at a crossroads. With the current emphasis on students' academic performance and job-readiness, it is imperative that schools find and retain dedicated, high-quality teachers. These teachers must be able to teach to the highest standards while navigating complex challenges previously unknown in the profession. Examples from the field show that afterschool programs can provide current and aspiring educators with hands-on experience that is invaluable in the classroom and critical to teacher and student success. Teachers who feel prepared and supported enter the classroom excited and encouraged, ready to inspire students and teach them the tools they need to succeed academically, socially and professionally. Through innovative programming and an eye towards professional support and development, afterschool is an ideal platform through which to recruit, retain, and support America's teachers.

¹ NEA: National Education Association. *Attracting and Keeping Quality Teachers*. <http://www.nea.org/teachershortage/index.html> Retrieved April 5, 2007.

² Ibid.

³ MetLife (2005). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*. Harris Interactive.

⁴ NEA: National Education Association. *Attracting and Keeping Quality Teachers*. <http://www.nea.org/teachershortage/index.html> Retrieved April 5, 2007.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Portner, H. (2005). Success for new teachers. *American School Board Journal*. <http://www.asbj.com/2005/10/1005ASBJportner.pdf>. Retrieved May 10, 2007.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ <http://teach.csufresno.edu/B%20%20Programs/programssubtf.html> Retrieved April 12, 2007.

⁹ *Caught in the Act of Success*. LA's BEST Afterschool Enrichment Program Annual Report 2005-2006.

¹⁰ Mike Theodore, Jim Sussman, LA's BEST, personal communication, May 14, 2007.

¹¹ US Department of Education (1999) *Teacher Recruitment and Training in After-School Programs*. http://www.ed.gov/pubs/After_School_Programs/Teacher_Programs.html Retrieved April 5, 2007.

¹² National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2001), Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College. www.niost.org/publications/cross_cities_brief5.pdf Retrieved on April 12, 2007.

¹³ "Wanted: A National Teacher Supply Policy for Education" <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n33/v11n33.pdf>

¹⁴ NEA: National Education Association. *Attracting and Keeping Quality Teachers*. <http://www.nea.org/teachershortage/index.html> Retrieved April 5, 2007.

¹⁵ US Department of Education (1999) *Teacher Recruitment and Training in After-School Programs*. http://www.ed.gov/pubs/After_School_Programs/Teacher_Programs.html Retrieved April 5, 2007.

¹⁶ Morehouse, H. *Evaluations to Watch. Measuring Change: Out-of-School Time Programs and School Culture*. HFRP, The Evaluation Exchange, XII (1&2), Fall 2006.