



EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

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SECTION 1

TXPOST + Expanded
Learning Opportunities

WHAT ARE EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES?

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) is a term that encompasses Out of School Time (OST) programs and Extended Learning Time (ELT) programs.

Out of School Time (OST) programs offer a wide range of youth development activities to K-12 students before school, after school and during the summer break. Activities may include academics, STEM education, performing and/or fine arts, physical activity, health and nutrition education, character building and other aspects of positive youth development. OST providers include nationally affiliated programs like YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs; municipal programs led by city parks & recreation departments or county programs; 4-H Youth Development programs led by Cooperative Extension offices; community-based nonprofit organizations; faith-based programs; federally funded Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs and other school-based programs.

Extended Learning Time (ELT) is a school-based model which extends the school day or the school year for all students on a campus.

TXPOST Acronym Alphabet



EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IMPACT

High quality learning opportunities in the hours and days outside the traditional school schedule benefit students, families and communities. Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) programs after school and during the summer provide engaging experiences in a safe environment.

Promote Engaged Learning

Participation in afterschool and summer learning programs supports student growth across developmental domains – **academic, social-emotional** and **physical** – and enhances positive youth development:

- The Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers evaluation of 2015 linked program participation with improvements in grades, test scores, attendance, behavior and grade promotion.
- Research shows that participation in afterschool in elementary years is linked to narrowing the achievement gap in math achievement by grade 5.

(University of California-Irvine, School of Education, *The Achievement Gap is Real*, 2013.)

Support Working Families + Safe Communities

Over 935,000 K-12 students are unsupervised in the hours after school in Texas.

The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days are the peak time for children to commit or be victims of violent crimes and engage in risky behaviors such as experimentation with cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and sexual activity.

(Afterschool Alliance, *Texas After 3pm*, 2014.)

Strengthen the Workforce of Today + Tomorrow

With **68%** of school-aged children living in households with all parents in the workforce, ELO programs provide critical support for working families.

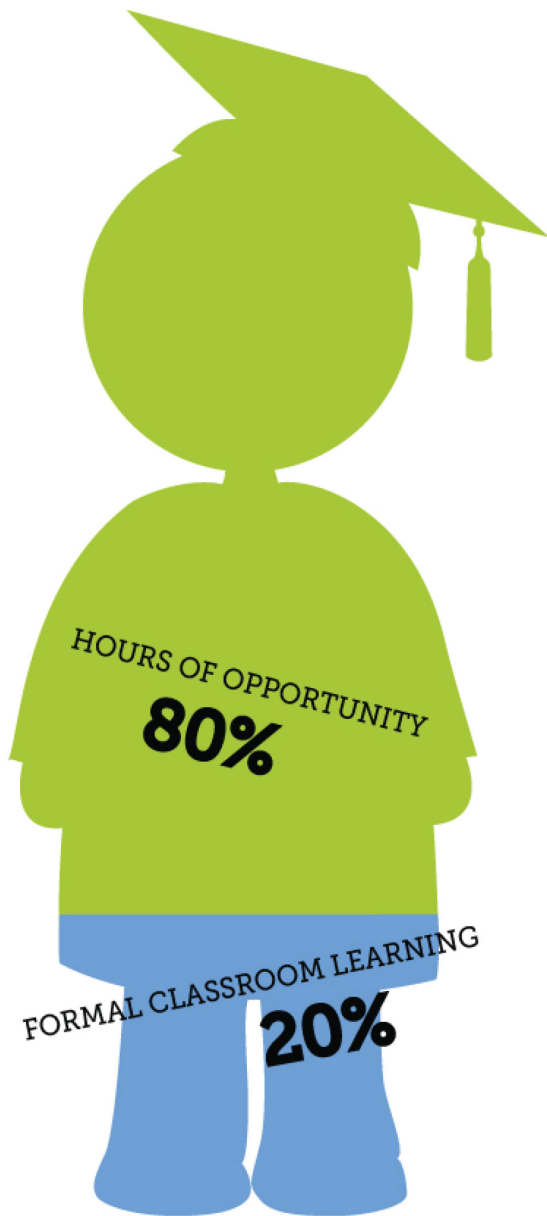
(Census 2010 ACS Estimates.)

Texas will have **715,000 STEM jobs** by 2018. We must have a well-prepared workforce to ensure the continued growth of STEM-related sectors such as energy, technology and telecommunications.

(Georgetown University, *Center on Education and the Workforce*, 2011.)



TIME SPENT LEARNING MATTERS



In Texas, the minimum school year is 180 days.



An average school day is 7 hours.



Only 21.6% of a child's waking hours are spent in school.

Every waking moment is a new opportunity for a child to grow and develop.

An analysis of 73 afterschool studies concluded that afterschool programs using evidence-based approaches were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for youth, including improvements in children's personal, **social** and **academic skills** as well as their **self-esteem**.

(The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007.)



Texas After 3 p.m. Fact Box

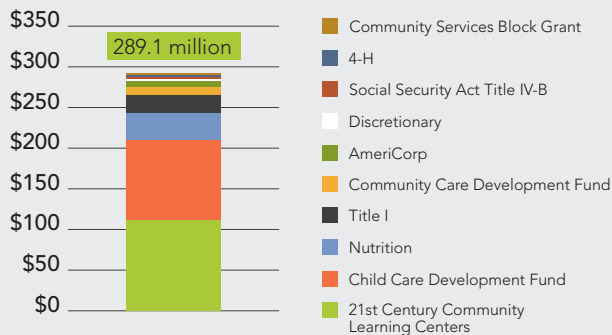
69% of Texas parents agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs.

On average, Texas families who pay for their child's afterschool program spend **\$107** per week.

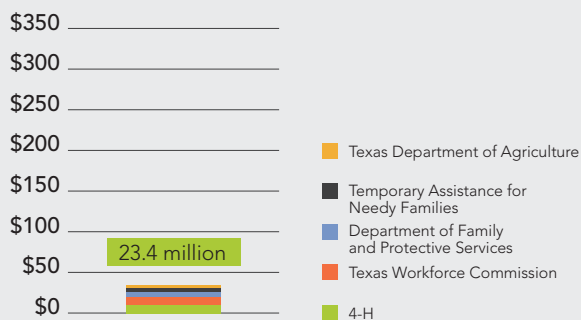
62% of parents agree that afterschool programs can help excite children about learning.

INVESTING IN OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

2014 FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN TEXAS OUT OF SCHOOL TIME



2014 STATE INVESTMENTS IN TEXAS OUT OF SCHOOL TIME



PUBLIC SUPPORT: NATIONAL DATA SUPPORT FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IS STRONG

more than
8 in 10
parents with kids in
afterschool programs agree that
the programs **help working
parents keep their jobs.**

84%
of parents **support public
funding** of these programs.

Total federal investments for OST programs in Texas outmatch state investments by **12:1**.

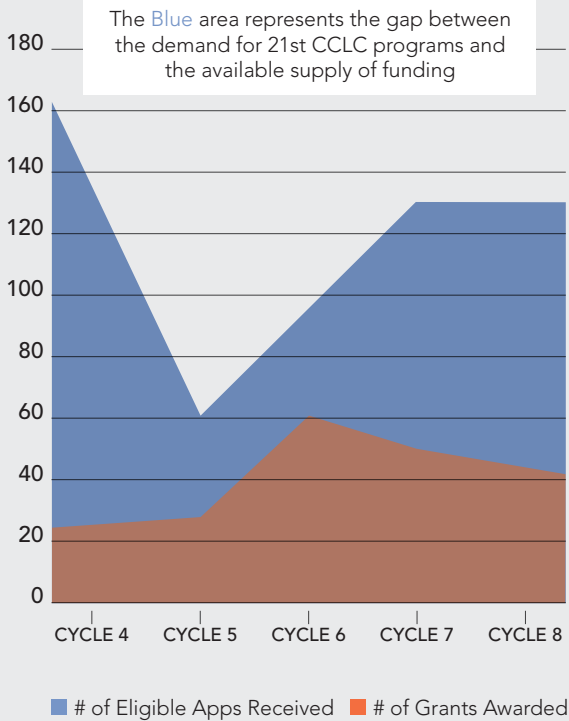
(Analysis of Public Funding Sources for OST in Texas, TXPOST 2013.)

80% of Texas parents **support public funding** for afterschool programs.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/aa3pm
(America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand, 2014.)

UNMET DEMANDS + MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

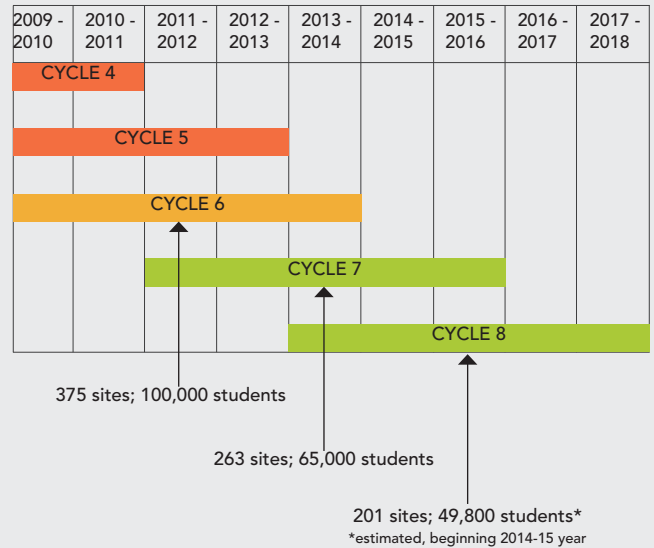
UNMET DEMAND FOR FEDERAL FUNDING



Only 19% of applications were awarded in the latest cycle of Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding.

(Texas Education Agency, November 2014.)

TEXAS ACE 21st CCLC FUNDING CYCLES



Cycle 6 ended in 2013, ending federal funding for programs with 100,000 Texas K-12 students.

1,516,900 Texas children would participate and benefit if an OST program were available in the community.

(Afterschool Alliance, *Texas After 3pm*, 2014.)

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (ELO) COUNCIL

The Texas legislature established the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Council during the 83rd Legislative Session. The council, comprised of 13 representatives of diverse stakeholder groups, is tasked with making recommendations to the Texas legislature and governor to improve access to and quality of afterschool, summer and expanded learning programs in Texas. Over the past three years, TXPOST has played a supporting role to the Council by providing research, contact and other resources to aid Council members in the development of their recommendations.

In 2016, the Expanded Learning Opportunities Council published its second report to the legislature. This report built on the findings of the Council's earlier report, and proposed some additional specific recommendations to support expanded learning opportunities.

Read the full report at www.txpost.org

Summary of Key Findings:

- High quality expanded learning opportunities have the support of Texas families and programs would have a positive impact on academic outcomes for school districts, individual campuses, families, students and communities.
- Texans need access to high quality ELO especially in rural and high poverty areas.
- ELO programs can help maintain investments in pre-K, support pathways created as a part of HB 5 and serve as a preventive measure.

Summary of Recommendations:

The ELO Council has identified several opportunities to increase access to high quality affordable ELO programs for students who are most in need. These recommendations include:

- Contribute to state accountability ratings, for example as a part of Domain IV: Postsecondary Readiness
- Fund Sustainable Competitive Demonstration Programs- specifically focus those in the highest need and grades 3-5 and 6-8.
- Encourage greater partnerships with higher education and workforce.



TXPOST LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Only 880,000 Texas K-12 students currently participate in afterschool programs, while another 1.5 million would participate if a program were available. High quality learning opportunities in the hours and days outside the traditional school calendar benefit Texas students, families and communities.

Engaged Learning

- The Texas ACE 21st Century Communities Learning Centers 2013 evaluation linked program participation with improvements in grades, test scores, attendance, behavior and grade promotion.
- Research shows that participation in afterschool in elementary years is linked to narrowing the achievement gap in math achievement at grade 5.

Safe Communities

- 935,057 K-12 students are unsupervised in the hours after school in Texas.
- The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days are the peak time for children to commit or be victims of violent crimes and engage in risky behaviors, such as experimentation with cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and sexual activity.

Strong Texas Workforce

- With 68% of school-aged children living in households with all parents in the workforce, out of school time programs provide critical support for working families.
- Texas will have 715,000 STEM jobs by 2018. We must have a well-prepared workforce to ensure the continued growth of STEM-related sectors such as energy, technology and telecommunications.

In 2017, TXPOST strives to develop key allies in the community (including municipalities, chambers of commerce, local businesses, local economic development corporations, etc.) to support and champion afterschool and summer programs. The TXPOST board, policy committee and constituents seek to influence policies that reduce barriers for youth to access high-quality afterschool and summer programs. Success in this legislative session will be measured by increased awareness of the importance of afterschool and summer programs in Texas and of the TXPOST network of partners.

2017 LEGISLATIVE AREAS OF FOCUS

Data Collection

Collect data to help define, measure and maintain an afterschool and summer landscape.

- Increase and improve data sharing amongst agencies (for example, Texas Education Agency, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Texas Workforce Commission) and the provider community to track resource allocation and student performance.

Better data collection and collaboration are necessary to discern where afterschool and summer programs exist, and if they are effectively achieving the state's goals.

Accountability

Prioritize high-quality afterschool and summer programs as a strategy in the state's consolidated plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), with a focus on Title I and Title IV.

- Include afterschool and summer program data as an indicator of a school's health, as part of Domain Five of the Accountability system.
- Allow school districts to implement high-quality afterschool and summer programs as a strategy to increase ratings under Domains IV and V and provide state resources for a demonstration grant program to support districts in implementing high-quality programs.

If Texas allowed school districts to implement high-quality afterschool and summer programs

as a strategy to increase accountability ratings, school districts and program providers would be incentivized to supplement school day learning with meaningful, high-quality programs.

Resources

Secure funding for afterschool and summer programs.

- Support leadership initiatives that aim to bring industry, school districts and students together in a collaborative effort to further student achievement.
- Preserve existing funds for current programs and encourage public-private partnerships as a part of a state funding strategy.
- Modify current funding streams to allow support of afterschool and summer programs.
- Secure a dedicated funding stream for comprehensive afterschool programming in Texas.

Investments in afterschool and summer programs equalize opportunities for youth in need by providing access to high-quality programs that would not otherwise be available in their community. Exploring public-private partnerships that would support sustainability and innovation while bolstering pathway programs and high school endorsements would enrich the school day experience for participating students. Current funding streams could also be modified to allow for the support of afterschool and summer programs while still sustaining effective programs that are already operating successfully.

WHAT IS TXPOST?

The Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST) is a statewide network of nonprofit, public and private sector partners dedicated to increasing the quality of out of school time opportunities for Texas youth.

History

Founded in 2011 through a collaboration of public and private organizations, TXPOST is one of 43 statewide networks funded by the C.S. Mott Foundation to develop statewide out of school time (OST) systems that serve youth, families and communities across the state.

Vision

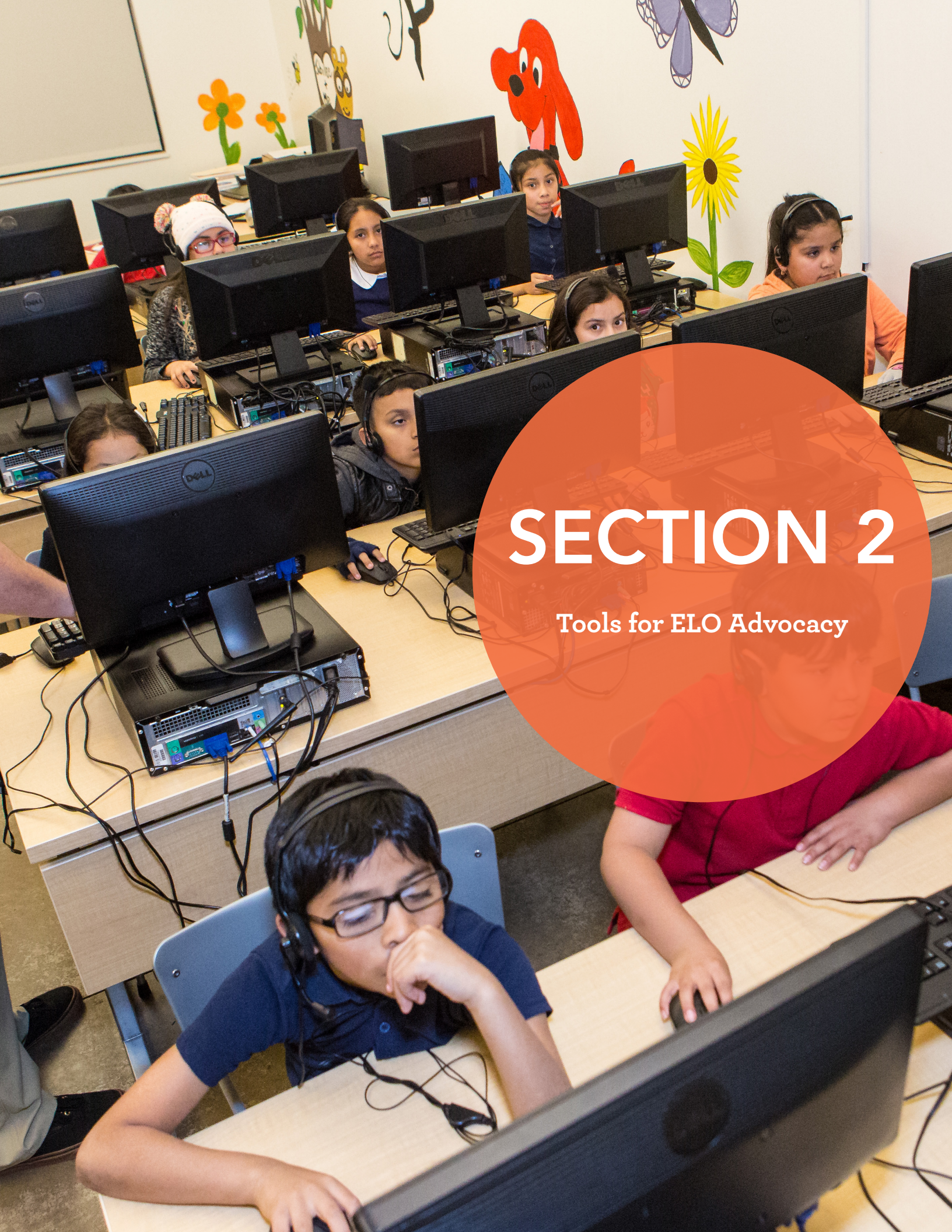
All Texas kids have the opportunity to participate in high-quality afterschool, summer and expanded learning programs.

Strategy

TXPOST aims to serve its mission and achieve its vision by:

- Creating a sustainable structure of statewide, regional and local **partnerships**;
- Supporting the development and growth of statewide policies that will secure the resources that are needed to sustain new and existing out of school time programs through **advocacy**; and
- Supporting statewide systems to ensure programs are of **high quality**.





SECTION 2

Tools for ELO Advocacy

ADVOCACY VS. LOBBYING

Advocacy

Actively educating the general public or legislator about an issue.

Example: “Expanded Learning Opportunities programs provide Texas children and youth with opportunities to learn, build relationships and promote social, emotional and physical development.”

Lobbying

Soliciting or trying to influence the votes of a legislator; mentioning a bill number and requested position during a legislative visit, email or phone call.

Example: “Please vote for House Bill 384/ Senate Bill 503 that establishes an Expanded Learning Opportunities Council to turn idle time into productive time for Texas youth.”

- Anyone can **advocate** by sharing information with the general public or legislators about OST issues. Sharing the impact of an OST program on your life or on the lives of people in your community constitutes an **advocacy** activity.
- Some individuals are restricted from **lobbying** in a professional capacity (i.e. government employees).
- You know what role is best for you. Decide if you will make your case to legislators as a private citizen or as a representative of your organization.*

Activities	Advocacy	Lobbying
Recruit colleagues to participate in ELO advocacy	x	
Attend advocacy events	x	
Talk to a legislator about the importance of ELOs	x	
Promote specific legislation during a legislative visit		x
Send an email, letter or make a phone call to a legislator to promote a specific piece of legislation		x

Additional resources: www.clpi.org; www.tano.org; and socialimpactarchitects.com/wp/

*The guidelines above do not constitute legal advice. TXPOST strongly recommends working with your supervisor, grant administrator and/or HR Department to confirm use of funds before undertaking advocacy and lobbying activities.

10 WAYS TO ADVOCATE

- 1. Join** > Sign up to receive the most up-to-date news, upcoming webinar opportunities and advocacy action alerts at www.txpost.org
- 2. Like** > Texas Partnership for Out of School Time on Facebook
- 3. Follow** > @tx_post on twitter
- 4. Participate** > TXPOST webinars and other events – sign up for our e-news for event notifications
- 5. Lend Your Voice** > Take action on TXPOST action alerts and share your story with elected officials
- 6. Spread The Word** > Forward a message from TXPOST to your friends, family and colleagues
- 7. Partner** > Lead your organization in developing a partnership with TXPOST
- 8. Educate** > Teach others about the impact of high quality Expanded Learning Opportunities
- 9. Recruit** > Identify new ELO stakeholders in your community and make connections to TXPOST
- 10. Sponsor** > Donate to support TXPOST in accomplishing its mission at www.txpost.org

YEAR-ROUND ELO ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Stay Informed

- Sign up for the TXPOST e-newsletter and bookmark txpost.org.
- Follow State + Federal legislation related to education, youth and family services, juvenile justice and health and human services through TXPOST e-updates.
- Attend hearings, school board meetings and city council/town hall meetings and listen for city and state leaders' priorities for education.
- Bookmark afterschoolalliance.org and visit the site regularly to stay updated and informed about national advocacy.

Share Success

- Write letters and emails and/or make calls to your elected officials highlighting major successes in your community's ELO programs.
- Use social media platforms to share the impact of ELOs in your community.
- Research available data in your community and use TXPOST as a resource for state data to use in strengthening your message.
- Share data on the positive outcomes of local programs in annual reports and other publications and through websites and social media.
- Post letters of support and stakeholder testimony on your organization's website.
- Publish an op-ed in local media.

Cultivate Relationships

- Help establish partnerships between entities/initiatives with similar goals or interests. **Think:** Where do ELO priorities intersect with other issues/causes, including health/nutrition, social services, business/workforce, juvenile justice?
- Identify leader(s) in your community who have an interest in making an impact in education. Learn about this person's goals and make connections to your work.
- Introduce yourself to potential ELO stakeholders before you have a specific question to ask, so that you can focus on building a relationship or trust and genuine interest in each other's work.
- Establish relationships with business leaders who are interested in education issues and discover areas where you can support their work as well.
- Connect with other advocates to develop local support and resources.

Host Events

- Register your ELO program(s) to participate in the annual Lights On Afterschool event (afterschoolalliance.org).
- Increase awareness on the importance of summer learning: Share with others what your program(s) or community is doing to promote summer learning, and participate in National Summer Learning Day (summerlearning.org).
- Host student showcases, performances, exhibits, family nights, program tours, or breakfast or luncheon events.
- Connect to citywide events where ELO programs/networks can have a booth, distribute materials or make a brief presentation.

Engage Parents + Family

- Collect letters of support and stories from family members who can speak to the impact that ELO programs had on their family.
- Highlight family stories and statements on your website and in marketing materials.
- Give family members special roles as docents, advocates and speakers in advocacy events.
- Host an “Advocacy 101” for students + families. Contact info@txpost.org to request materials and a sample presentation.
- Cultivate advocacy leadership in families – parents/guardians, older siblings and other relatives, and provide tools to build messages centered around the “family voice.”



STRATEGIC MESSAGING USING DATA

Before you talk to local, state or federal policymakers, it is important to know what issues concern them the most and to develop your message strategically around those issues. Here are some talking points and data to back up your message.

Texas After 3pm

935,057 Texas K-12 children are responsible for taking care of themselves after school.

1,516,900 Texas children who are not in afterschool would be likely to participate if a program were available in the community.

Quality OST Programs Promote Engaged Learning

An evaluation of the Texas ACE 21st CCLC Programs released in March 2013 showed that regular participation in the ACE program resulted in:

- Reduced discipline incidents
- Better test scores
- Better attendance
- Increased chance of grade promotion



Quality OST Programs Promote Safe Communities

The hours between 3 pm and 6 pm are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex.

Researchers at Texas A&M, in an evaluation of the Fort Worth After School (FWAS) program, found that:

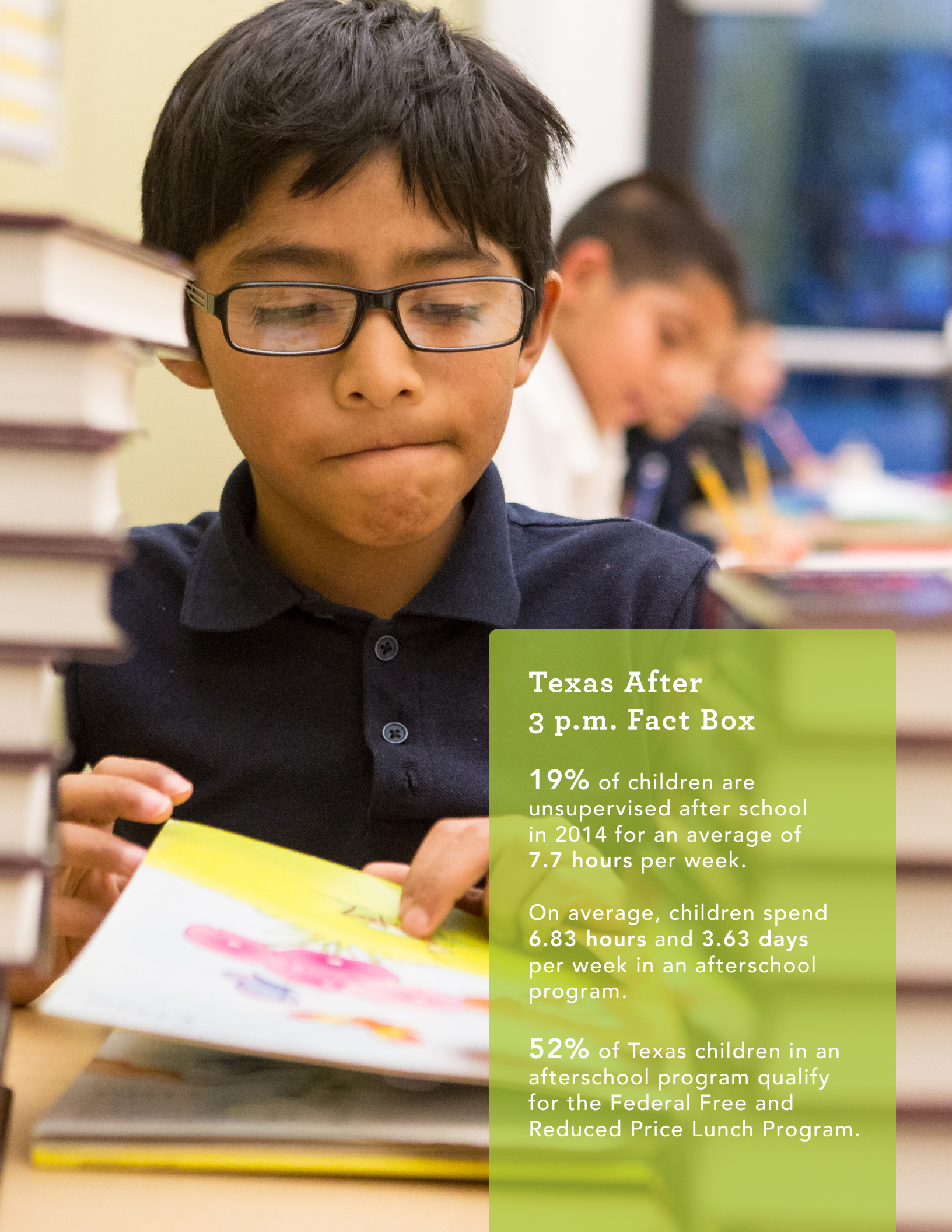
- 94% of parents agreed that FWAS kept their child from getting in trouble.
- 45% also felt that their child would get into trouble if the child were at home.

Quality OST Programs Promote a Strong Texas Workforce

Texas will have 785,000 jobs in STEM fields by 2018.

OST programs help working families:

- Texas Education Grantmakers Advocacy Consortium OST Study: Employer Strategies for Supporting Out of School Time Programming in Texas. Read the full report at www.txpost.org
- Workforce and internship placements
- Bridging the math and science gap



Texas After 3 p.m. Fact Box

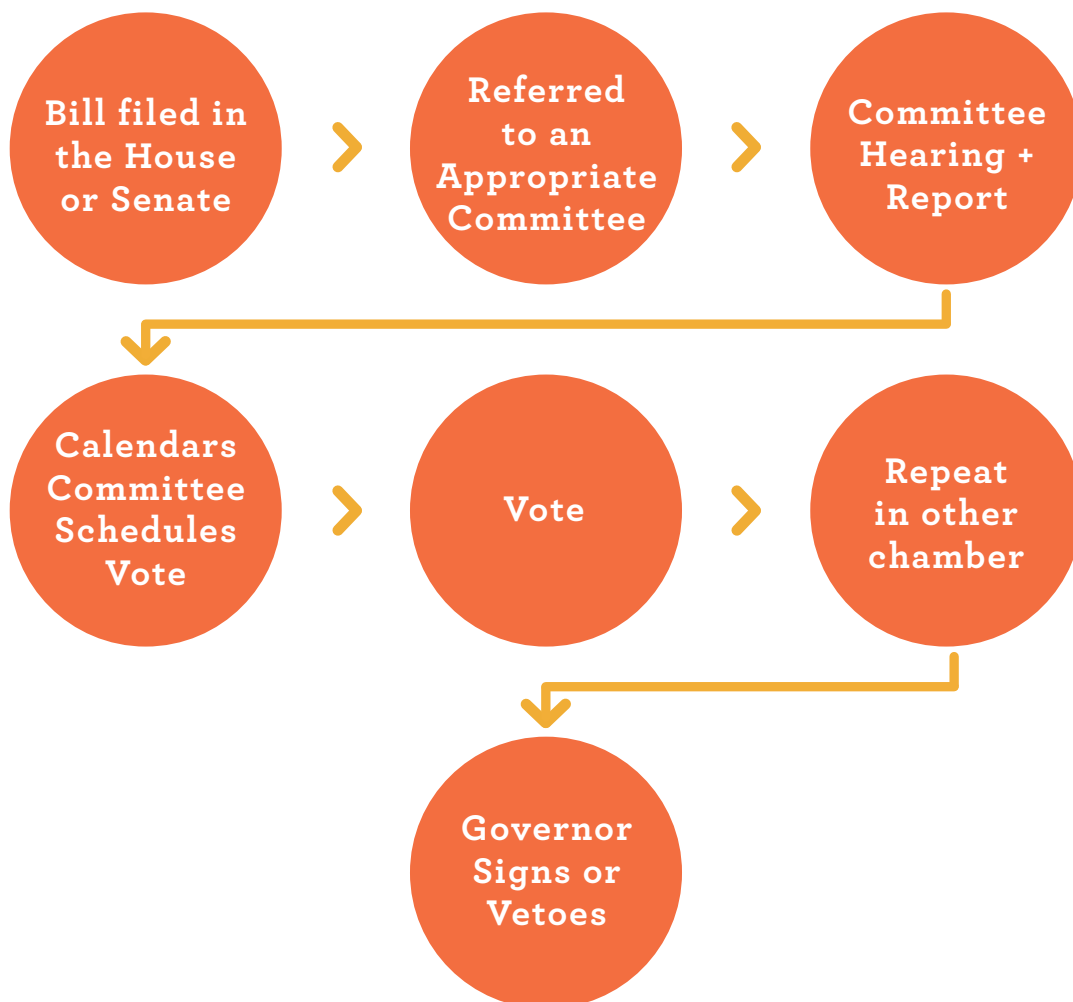
19% of children are unsupervised after school in 2014 for an average of 7.7 hours per week.

On average, children spend 6.83 hours and 3.63 days per week in an afterschool program.

52% of Texas children in an afterschool program qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program.

TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

To get a bill passed in the Texas Legislature, committee action is crucial: the members of the appropriate House/Senate Committee will determine if a bill receives a hearing and whether a favorable report is issued. Many bills are abandoned while pending in committee. Committee members need to hear from communities across Texas speaking in one voice:



LEGISLATIVE VISITS: ELEVATOR PITCHES

Why are Expanded Learning Opportunities Important?



Expanded Learning Opportunities in 30 seconds

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) turns idle time into productive time for Texas children and youth in the hours outside of the traditional school day. Only 20% of a Texas child's waking hours are spent in school; in the other 80% of their time, there are numerous opportunities to learn a new skill, discover a new talent or build a positive relationship.

ELO encompass traditional OST programs and extended learning time models, thereby offering Texas communities a range of models to draw from in developing high-quality OST learning systems that meets local needs.



Why we need additional resources for Expanded Learning Opportunities in 30 seconds

TXPOST supports additional resources to support afterschool and summer programming. In addition to supporting the ELO Council and their recommendations, TXPOST encourages the legislature to explore supporting ELO through further exploring opportunities in accountability, including the potential to include afterschool and summer programs as a part of Domain 5 of the Accountability system. Additionally, TXPOST encourages additional collaboration to increase and improve data sharing, and to increase financial resources to support high quality programming.



TXPOST in 30 seconds

The Texas Partnership for Out of School Time, also known as TXPOST, is a statewide network of private and public partners dedicated to increasing the quality of out of school time (OST) opportunities for Texas youth.

Find out who represents you at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/>

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICY MAKERS

The Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind when you plan to call or meet with policy makers. (Source: Adapted from the Afterschool Alliance)



Do:

Your homework. Before making contact, learn key background information. Visit a Senator's or Representative's website. States and many local municipalities also have websites where you can find information on state and local elected officials. Be sure to note: Political Party of Member; Committee assignments; Biography; Key positions on your issue.

Identify constituent connections. When you send an email or contact an office, it is important to establish that the elected official represents you. If you know him or her personally, a member of the staff, or even family members or children, be ready to mention this information.

Be specific. When you call, email or meet in person, tell the official why you are there and what you want. Your interaction might only last a few minutes.

Establish yourself as an expert information source. Elected officials have limited time, staff and many competing issues to deal with every day. If they sit on a committee that covers afterschool as part of its work, they might be quite familiar with the facts, but many are not. That's why advocacy is so important. You can fill their information gap and become their "expert."

Bring materials to leave behind. Leave your elected official with a profile of your program and any other materials that describe your program's benefits for kids and families in your community.

Follow up after a meeting. Send a personal thank you note to the official and staff for their time. If you promised information, be sure to get back in touch quickly. If the elected official offered to do something, follow up that offer after a reasonable time and be sure to thank them for any action they took.

Don't:

Think you have to know everything. It's ok to admit you don't know something. It gives you a reason to follow up with the official or staff after you have researched an answer.

"Burn bridges." It is easy to get emotional about issues, especially if you are at opposite ends. Work to find some sort of consensus and always leave your dealings with elected officials on positive terms.

Forget. Elected officials work for you! You should be courteous but not intimidated.

SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE FOR MEETING

Note: The **[bold type, bracketed]** areas indicate the critical components of your letter. Use them as a guideline for inserting your own thoughts and words, but be sure not to include them in your final version. The address on the outside of your envelope should read "The Honorable **[first name] [last name]**."

123 Advocacy Lane **[Your Address]**
Austin, TX 12345

[Date]

John Doe
Texas House of Representatives
State Capitol
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Representative Doe,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me last week to talk about the importance of supporting afterschool programs. As we discussed, and as I have witnessed firsthand, afterschool programs keep kids safe, increase academic achievement and help working families.

I look forward to meeting with you again to further discuss the ways in which we can work together to secure funding for afterschool programs throughout our state.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Contact Info.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Strategies for a Successful Visit with an Elected Official (Local, State or Federal):

1. Know Your Materials.



Be familiar with the materials you are sharing.

2. Assign Roles.



Each member of your advocacy team should have a different role: spokesperson, timekeeper, or social media postings. Consider switching roles after 3-4 visits.

3. Be Clear and Make Your Case.



Elected Officials want to know the basics of the issue and what they can do to help. Be specific and to the point: "This issue is important to me for the following reasons, and therefore I would like for you to..."

4. Stay On Message



Elected Officials want to hear consistent messages from OST advocates.

5. Follow Up Matters.



Thank the Elected Officials or staff for taking time out of their busy schedule to meet with you. Don't be afraid to say "We'll get back to you" if you need to gather additional information or check a fact. Remind the Elected Officials or staff that you are eager to serve as a resource.

6. Revise If Needed.



In between visits, reflect on the process and your talking points. Make revisions as needed.

7. Make It Count.



Do all of the follow up you can- send promised materials, a thank you note, an invitation for a site visits, etc.

ADVOCACY TOOLS

Sustainability Plan

Strategic Sustainability Planning can help determine:

- What does your community need?
- What services will help meet that need?
- How will those services be sustained over time?
- What are potential funding sources?

Advocacy is a great tool for sustainability as well!

Program/Community Profile

Include the following information:

- Program name + location.
- Quote from student, parent or administrator.
- Picture of students engaged in learning.
- Key facts + figures about program.
- Program description, ideally with outcome data.
- Contact information.

Advocacy Events/Activities

Plan to participate in national celebrations:

- Summer Learning Day (summerlearning.org).
- Lights on Afterschool (afterschoolalliance.org).

Invite community leaders to speak at your event:

- Breakfast or luncheon with community leaders.
- Showcases, open houses, program tours.
- Performances, exhibits, family nights.

Site Visits:

- Invite elected officials to see your program + meet students.
- Resources available at:
afterschoolalliance.org/reachPolicySiteVisit.cfm.

Media

Traditional Media:

- Local newspaper and local TV stations are great partners to raise awareness.
- Submit an op-ed. Ask key leaders to co-author the op-ed.
- Invite local media to cover your events.
- Sample: Media Outreach Plan for Lights on Afterschool (afterschoolalliance.org/loaMediaMain.cfm).

Social Media:

- Social media is a great tool to increase awareness and reach potential OST advocates.
- Sample Facebook + Twitter posting: We served # kids and help their social, emotional, physical and academic development. Tell your legislators that you support state investments in OST programs!



TXPOST

TEXAS PARTNERSHIP
FOR OUT OF SCHOOL TIME



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512-710-4893 | info@txpost.org | www.txpost.org



www.facebook.com/TexasPartnershipForOutOfSchoolTime



twitter.com/tx_post