

April 8, 2025

Testimony of Erin Frati, Maine Afterschool Network

Neither for Nor Against

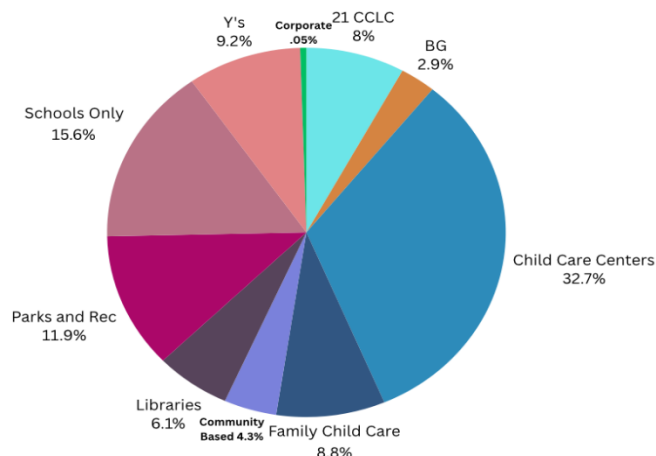
LD 1389 - BOOST Bill: Building Opportunities through Out of School Time.

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Erin Frati and I am with the Maine Afterschool Network (MASN). I am testifying neither for nor against LD 1389 - BOOST Bill: Building Opportunities through Out of School Time, but would like to provide some information on the landscape of Out of School Time (OST) programs in Maine.

When MASN watches youth program development in the state we use the following categories to track where youth are in the out of school hours:

- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Federally Funded Programs
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Child Care Centers
- Family Child Care
- Community Based Non-Profit Youth Development Programs
- Libraries
- Municipal Programs
- School Based Programs
- Y's
- Corporate for profit programs

Below you will see, from our sample of 730 Maine OST programs the breakdown of program type serving school age youth. 54% of these programs are licensed child care



Sample size: 730 Programs

For Maine students who do participate in afterschool programs they are:

- Getting homework help (69%)
- Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (70%)
- Working on their reading and writing skills (52%)
- Interacting with their peers and building social skills (92%)
- Taking part in physical activities (89%)
- Building confidence (82%)

93% of Maine parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program and findings indicate that OST programs accelerate students' academic growth and support their well-being. (*Afterschool Alliance: Afterschool in Maine report June 2024*)

However, the 2020 America After 3:00 report from the Afterschool Alliance shows that for every every Maine child in an afterschool program, 5 are waiting to get in. The number of students left without afterschool in Maine is on the rise. There are now 82,579 children (48%) in Maine who would be enrolled in an afterschool program if one were available to them. In the last decade, the number of children unable to access afterschool programs has grown in Maine by 16,276.

A significant percentage of parents in Maine report challenges to enrolling their child in an afterschool program. For example, 1 in 2 parents said that the cost of programs was an important factor in their decision not to enroll their child in a program. 42% of parents do not enroll their children for lack of available programs. 49% of parents surveyed state programs are too expensive and 43% cite no safe way for their child to get to and from programs.

This is just a brief snapshot of our work on behalf of Maine programs, yet it demonstrates that the Maine OST landscape can support more high quality programs for Maine children, youth and families.