

**Meeting of Afterschool Stakeholders: Summary**  
**Jackson, Mississippi**  
**April 10, 2001**  
**8:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.**

***Purpose***

This meeting was an outgrowth of activity by various stakeholders in the state of Mississippi in the diverse field of afterschool programming. Its purpose was two-fold: (a) to bring together different groups working on improving before- and afterschool opportunities for children and youth in hopes of arriving at a common vision for afterschool in Mississippi; and (b) to provide the Afterschool Technical Assistance Collaboration (ATAC) ways it can be of assistance as the state progresses with an afterschool plan.

***Background***

ATAC is an informal collaboration of six national organizations working on afterschool issues. All six organizations have received grants from the C.S. Mott Foundation, at whose encouragement they are coordinating the work they do in states. They include, the National Governors Association (NGA), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), The Finance Project (TFP), the National League of Cities (NLC), and the Afterschool Alliance. The Afterschool Alliance is a coalition of public, private, and nonprofit organizations dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children.

ATAC selected four states to which they would offer to provide customized technical assistance on this issue, Mississippi being one of the four. Prior to this meeting, Governor Ronnie Musgrove sent a team of people to the NGA Regional Forum on Extra Learning Opportunities, held in Seattle, Washington in November 2000. In addition, a different team of people attended the Disney Institute in Orlando, Florida, a conference sponsored by the Mott Foundation and the Afterschool Alliance. Both teams were charged with developing state action plans. This April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting was an effort to bring the teams together as well as to invite other key stakeholders.

***Meeting***

I. The following stakeholders attended the meeting:

Kelly Riley, Governor Musgrove's Office  
Thornell Williams, Governor Musgrove's Office  
Sandra Shelson, Attorney General Mike Moore's Office  
Marsha Meeks Kelly, Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service  
Robert Langford, Operation Shoestring  
John Lyons, Mississippi Department of Public Safety  
Bonita Coleman-Potter, Mississippi Department of Education  
Claudine Middleton, Jefferson County School District  
Nancy New Boyll, Mississippi Center for Community Education  
Karen Quay, Office of Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr.

Missing was Iva McCants, Jackson Public Schools

From ATAC:

Theresa Clarke, NGA

Janelle Cousino, Afterschool Alliance

Jenna Davis, NCSL

II. ATAC opened the meeting with a background of what ATAC is and what the purpose of the meeting is. After this background and brief introductions by Theresa Clarke, Janelle Cousino, and Jenna Davis, each participant introduced himself or herself, identifying his or her work in the area of before and afterschool activities.

- Kelly Riley and Thornell Williams described the Governor's office involvement with the NGA extra learning opportunities (ELO) project. Thornell Williams, as part of a team with two other state officials, attended the NGA ELO forum in November 2000. **The team developed an action plan at the forum, focusing on the three goals of identifying existing programs, funding sources and populations served; establishing a committee to develop a state strategy for ELOs based on needs; and enhancing existing programs and providing technical assistance to develop new programs.** They also described Governor Musgrove's interest around afterschool programming, including .
- John Lyons, from the Department of Public Safety Planning, attended in Chelly Barnes' place. He described the youth programs at DPS, including two annual events, the "Teens on the Move" conference and the "Youth to Youth" conference.
- Sandra Shelson reviewed the programs sponsored and supported by Attorney General Mike Moore's office. These include the support of Boys & Girls Clubs in Mississippi, focused on an effort to double the number of programs; 50 Americorps volunteers working in afterschool settings to address the digital divide; alternative juvenile justice programs; and a partnership with statewide Big Brothers, Big Sisters.
- Marsha Meeks Kelly, Executive Director of the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service, described MCVS and its programs, including Learn and Serve America, Lighthouse Partnerships, and a statewide youth group and annual youth summit. Marsha noted that MCVS directs the activity and work of the 1600 Americorps volunteers in Mississippi and that MCVS is the site for America's Promise.
- Karen Quay of Mayor Johnson's office informed the group of the free afterschool program (focused on recreation) in the seven community centers in Jackson. She also indicated that the Mayor's office has been working with the Jackson schools to make full use of school buildings after regular school hours. The city also has worked with AMOS, an interdenominational organization in Jackson.
- Claudine Middleton, Jefferson County School District, described her work as the project director of the Tri-County Afterschool CLC Project, highlighting what's working as well as

the challenges involved. Among the challenges is the lack of cohesiveness regarding funding streams.

- Bonita Coleman-Potter described the Mississippi Department of Education's relevant programs, including the Reading Excellence grants programs and early education.

III. After the introductions, the group discussed several issues around afterschool activity in Mississippi, under the following themes:

- *Coordination.* All participants expressed a strong need for some type of state-level coordination as well as an overall state policy plan. There is a lot of afterschool program activity, both in state agencies and in community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations. Due to this diversity, there is a lack of understanding on where the state stands as a whole on the provision of high-quality extended learning opportunities or afterschool programs to children and youth who want and need them. If a group of key stakeholders were to collaborate and arrive at a common vision and a common set of goals and actions to achieve these goals, Mississippi could move forward as a state on this issue. Coordination is necessary in order to identify what is being provided and where kids are and to support afterschool providers in the long run.
  - Facilitator/Consultant: Marsha brought up the need for a facilitator, or consultant, who would help guide a group of stakeholders (whether that be a task force, an executive committee of high-level state officials, an alliance of government officials and advocates, or some other entity) with organizing, meeting facilitating, and strategic planning
  - Language: Part of the planning process should include developing common language, i.e., 'afterschool', 'before and afterschool', 'extended learning opportunities', 'out-of-school time', 'school-age care', etc.
  - State/local collaboration: How do the efforts of communities combine with the state activity? How can the state support grassroots community efforts to provide high-quality afterschool programs?
  - Other stakeholders: Since this first meeting was small, time was devoted to identifying what key stakeholders or constituencies need to be at the table in the future. Specifically, First Lady Melanie Musgrove, the Department of Human Services, key legislators (education, human services, appropriations, speaker), the Mississippi Development Authority, the Department of Health, educators, law enforcement, county representatives, Mississippi Economic Council, National Guard, Mississippi Center for Nonprofits, Corporate Volunteer Council, the judicial system (youth courts), and **AMOS** and other faith-based organizations
- *Assessment.* In order to move forward, there was agreement that an assessment of what programs exist in Mississippi, particularly which are effective, is needed. Karen Quay mentioned that **AMOS** was going to study the gap (where is the demand for afterschool?) statewide, then the project was scaled down to studying the Jackson metropolitan area. Due to lack of resources, the project has been abandoned. The group started to brainstorm how such an assessment could be designed—Who will do the work? How do we define what we mean by afterschool? What specific information/data do we want to gather?

- *Resources.* One of the challenges in Mississippi is finding the resources to provide actual programs (to increase supply and/or improve quality). The other significant issue discussed was mapping where the resources are currently going. Coordinating funding at the district/local level was suggested due to duplication of efforts at this level. A map of the federal and state funding streams as well as the private funds going into providing afterschool programs or training and technical assistance to providers is something that the group believes is necessary.

The group mentioned several private foundations and corporations that could be tapped for resources: the Barksdales, Enterprise Funds, community foundations, the Kellogg Foundation (with the America's Promise connection), the Mott Foundation, Albertson's grocery stores, and Win Dixie. Also, there is no coordination foundation body working on education issues, but there is a move in that direction. It will be important to continue to monitor this development. Janelle Cousino mentioned that there is a meeting of national funders in education in Mississippi.

IV. After a lengthy discussion of the above issues, the group discussed next steps as well as specific ways ATAC can assist. The group decided that convening the **relevant** agency heads in late May would be a first step in moving forward. It is important that these individuals (a) are aware that this small group has met to discuss a possible state plan on afterschool, and (b) have a voice in how Mississippi moves forward on this issue. Participants (Kelly Riley, Thornell Williams, Sandra Shelton, Marsha Meeks Kelly) will draft a letter of invitation to the agency heads within the week

ATAC will do the following:

- Write a summary of the April 10 meeting.
- Assist with strategic the planning process. This will likely include assistance from The Finance Project on financing strategies.
- Determine whether Terry Peterson can attend the May meeting.
- Determine whether a staff person from the Council of Chief State School Officers can present at the June 11-12 conference of Mississippi educators sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Education. The initial idea was to have individuals from this group present at the conference in order to raise awareness and gain supporters. The group decided that since it will be important to speak with a unified voice, with common language (i.e., a plan would be developed) and there was not enough time to prepare for this by June, it might be useful to have CCSSO present at the conference.