

Draft: Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards

I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards were developed through a seven-month process involving key stakeholders from seven sectors - afterschool, child care, philanthropy, education, research, mental health, and state agencies - with a vested interest in the afterschool field in Illinois.

The sectors and stakeholders came together to develop the Standards in three phases:

- Writing - The Writing Committee reviewed existing Illinois standards and research on afterschool standards nationwide to develop best-practice, research-based quality guidelines for the state of Illinois. All members of the Writing Committee utilized their relevant content knowledge and experience in the field to contribute to the creation of Illinois' quality standards for afterschool.
- Review - The Review Committee consulted with the Writing Committee throughout the writing process to provide guidance on content, structure, and ease of understanding by various audiences. The Review Committee provided ongoing feedback by reviewing individual sections upon their initial completion, as well as a review of the entire completed draft. All members of the Review Committee utilized their relevant content knowledge, experience with standards development, and familiarity with diverse programs to provide expert guidance of the quality standards being developed. Together, the work of the Writing and Review Committees, in coordination with the larger ACT Now Quality and Outcomes Committee, provided documents suitable for public distribution and feedback from afterschool providers statewide.
- Roadshow - The Roadshow Committee developed a concrete engagement plan for stakeholders statewide. The Committee helped plan a strategy for taking the standards "on the road" to get feedback and buy-in from afterschool providers and stakeholders from around the state. The Roadshow Committee will begin by identifying key participants that needed to be reached and engaged - including providers, community- and faith-based organizations, policymakers, funders, educators, businesses, and youth and parents for involvement and backing. The Roadshow Committee helped plan and execute meetings and events across the state to engage and inform stakeholders.

II. THE ROLE OF STANDARDS

Standards may be used by programs and local communities to stimulate conversation about quality, what it looks like, and why it matters. They also serve to assure funders, policymakers, and families that a given program is committed to quality and on-going improvement.

The Standards will complement professional development and evaluation systems already in place and are based on research.

Quality standards provide afterschool programs with a common language for describing quality, as well as a "high bar" for individual programs to hold themselves accountable to. The development of the Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards for afterschool programs result in a comprehensive, systematic approach to support programs in improving program quality.

III. STANDARDS AND CORE AREAS

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards are intentionally broad and inclusive applying to a wide variety of afterschool and youth programs serving youth ages five through young adult, regardless of program content or location. This document offers a voluntary set of benchmarks that are not intended to be a regulatory

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checklist but rather a definition of quality that programs can use to pursue continuous improvement. The Standards are broken into seven overarching categories or core areas that represent the key areas of quality for programs. Each core area is framed with a guiding principle that introduces the category and then is followed by a series of standards and quality indicators that describe best practice for that particular core area. While most standards will apply to all programs, some are specific to particular program settings and service delivery models.

The seven core areas are:

- Indoor and Outdoor Environments
- Safety, Health, and Nutrition
- Administration
- Professional Development and Qualifications
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Youth Development, Programming, and Activities
- Partnerships with Schools

IV. USE OF THE STANDARDS FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois Afterschool Quality Standards are recommended, voluntary guidelines for afterschool providers. It is important to remember that while quality standards provide a shared framework for community collaborations and encourage programs to involve young people in meaningful ways, standards alone cannot change the quality of programs or the skills of program staff and volunteers. The Standards provide a research-based framework for providers to understand and measure program quality and to plan for improvement.

Building capacity to use the Standards in programs across Illinois will take time. Critical first steps for program leaders include sharing the Standards with staff to ensure understanding, and identifying an individual or team to lead the process of creating a comprehensive plan to achieve the Standards. A program plan should incorporate realistic and achievable goals so that programs can work toward meeting the Standards gradually and systematically through tangible steps. Providers should consider integrating existing quality measures like the Youth Program Quality Assessment as well as available professional development opportunities.

Beyond program leaders, other afterschool and youth development stakeholders may find the standards useful in the following ways:

- Parents and families - To understand the key elements of a high-quality program and to be able to advocate for quality programs in their own communities.
- Funders and policymakers - To link funding to research-based practices that lead to measurable outcomes.
- K-12 educators - To understand the key elements of high-quality programs and provide a common language for partnership.

In addition, the ACT Now Coalition and its partners anticipate developing additional supports and resources over time, as stakeholders share their feedback on the type of support that would be most useful.

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V. **Core Area:**

Indoor and Outdoor Environments

The physical environment in which a program operates is a foundation for the youth's experience in a program. Indoor and outdoor environments should be physically safe, free of hazards, and able to adequately accommodate all program activities.

Program Standard 1:

The program's indoor environment meets the needs of all youth and staff.

Quality Indicators:

- 1.1 The environment can safely and comfortably accommodate the various activities offered and/or can be re-arranged to meet the various needs of the program (e.g. spaces for physical games, creative arts, individual/quiet work, and eating/socializing).
- 1.2 The program provides adequate and convenient storage space for equipment, materials, and personal possessions of youth and staff.
- 1.3 The building(s) adheres to ADA standards for accessibility.
- 1.4 The program includes a designated area for staff to hold private or sensitive conversations with youth and parents without interruptions.
- 1.5 The environment is designed to reflect youth work and interests allowing youth to take initiative and ownership of their activities and provides a welcoming and inviting environment for youth and families.

Program Standard 2:

**The program's outdoor environment is safe and meets the needs of all youth.
(If applicable, as some facilities may not have access to outdoor space.)**

Quality Indicators:

- 2.1 Outdoor environment is suitable for a wide variety of activities, including physical activity, group games, and individual play.
- 2.2 The program has clearly outlined procedures and adequate staffing to ensure only authorized youth and adults are utilizing the outdoor environment during program hours.
- 2.3 The program has an alternative plan if access to outdoor environment is inaccessible due to inclement weather or other external factors.
- 2.4 Outdoor equipment (both permanent and temporary) is safe and well-maintained. There is a procedure in place for regularly documenting the safety and maintenance of equipment.
- 2.5 Outdoor spaces are designed to engage youth in physical activity and to broaden youth exposure to play experiences.

VI. **Core Area:**

Safety, Health, and Nutrition

Ensuring the physical safety and security of youth and staff is a necessary foundation for all programs. The standards in this section outline the minimum requirements for safe physical environments and adequate staff supervision, as well as standards for promoting healthy environments.

Program Standard 3:

The program protects the health and safety of all youth.

Quality indicators:

- 3.1 Indoor and outdoor facilities are clean and there are no observable safety or health hazards.
- 3.2 The environment meets or exceeds Illinois health and safety codes.

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- 3.3 Heat, ventilation, noise level, and light in the indoor environment are kept at comfortable levels and can be adjusted.
- 3.4 The program has a written policy in place for regularly checking the safety and maintenance of the indoor and outdoor program environment and equipment.
- 3.5 The program provides adequate supplies and facilities for hand washing.
- 3.6 First aid kits are stocked and available at all times.
- 3.7 The program is located in a safe place and a process is in place regarding how youth enter and exit the program.

Program Standard 4:

Youth are carefully supervised to maintain safety and there are clear protocols for responding to emergency situations.

Quality Indicators:

- 4.1 The program has clearly outlined procedures for emergencies including, but not limited to fire, natural disasters, and lockdowns. Staff and youth are trained in emergency procedures.
- 4.2 The program has clearly outlined procedures for staff if youth are injured or become ill during a program, including notification of parents/guardians as appropriate.
- 4.3 Systems are in place to protect youth from harm. Staff provide appropriate supervision for youth according to youth ages, abilities, needs, and the level of risk involved in activities.
- 4.4 Staff have a system for knowing where youth are at all times, especially when they move from one place to another or use the rest room.
- 4.5 Staff note when youth arrive, when they leave, and with whom they leave. There is a system in place to keep unauthorized people from taking children from the program.
- 4.6 Staff notifies families regarding urgent issues that could impact the health and safety of the youth in the program.

Program Standard 5:

Staff work to protect the health of all youth.

Quality Indicators:

- 5.1 Staff protect youth from potential hazards including but not limited to the following: caustic or toxic art materials and cleaning agents; medications; hot liquids; and overexposure to heat or cold.
- 5.2 Staff are trained in CPR and first aid.
- 5.3 Staff model, teach, and promote health and hygiene practices, including hand washing, especially after using the toilet or before preparing food.
- 5.4 Staff are aware of the individual health needs of youth (e.g. allergies or chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes) and modify activities or meals to accommodate health needs.
- 5.5 The process of administering medication to youth is clearly outlined and rigorously followed.
- Medications are secured in locked cabinets out of the reach of youth.
 - Medication dispensation is recorded daily as to dose, time, and by whom administered.
 - Records are kept current and easily accessible to staff.
 - Directions for dispensing medication are current and on file.
 - Consent forms are on file permitting staff to administer medications.

Program Standard 6:

The program serves foods and drinks that meet the needs of all youth.

Quality Indicators

- 6.1 The program serves healthy and nutritious foods.
- 6.2 Drinking water is readily available at all times.

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- 6.3 The amount, type of food, and schedule of snacks/meals is appropriate for the ages and sizes of youth.
- 6.4 Food preparation and storage adheres to Illinois state regulations for food safety. All food is kept in sealed containers and stored in closed cabinets or storage closets.
- 6.5 Food allergy information is posted and readily available to staff along with action steps to address food allergy reactions.

VII. ***Core Area:***

Administration

The program has sound administrative practices supported by well-defined and documented policies and procedures that meet the needs of staff and youth.

Program Standard 7:

Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of all youth and families in the community.

Quality Indicators:

- 7.1 A written mission statement sets forth the program's philosophy and goals and is available to all stakeholders.
- 7.2 The program makes itself affordable to all families by using all possible community resources and sources of subsidy.
- 7.3 The programs hours of operation are based on families' needs and the agency's capacity.

Program Standard 8:

The administration provides sound management of the program.

Quality Indicators:

- 8.1 Financial management of the program supports the program's goals.
- 8.2 Financial management of the program supports professional development opportunities for staff.
- 8.3 Administration oversees the recruitment and retention of program staff.
- 8.4 Systems are in place for the director to involve the staff and board in long term planning.
- 8.5 Systems are in place for the director to involve staff, youth and families in daily decision making.
- 8.6 Administrators include staff, youth and families in ongoing evaluation activities, aiming for continuous improvement in all areas of the program.

Program Standard 9:

The program develops and implements a system for promoting continuous quality improvement.

Quality Indicators:

- 9.1 The program creates and maintains a culture that promotes excellence and continual improvement, and focuses on achieving positive program outcomes.
- 9.2 The program has goals and outcomes that are aligned with its mission and conducts ongoing monitoring.
- 9.3 The program works with key stakeholders, including staff, youth, families, and the community, to collect and analyze data relevant to desired goals and outcomes.
- 9.4 The program communicates goals and outcomes to key audiences and stakeholders, and works to make any needed improvements.

Program Standard 10:

Program policies and procedures are in place to protect the safety of all youth.

Quality Indicators:

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- 10.1 Staff, youth, and families know what to do in case of emergencies.
- 10.2 Program has established procedures to prevent accidents and manage emergencies.
- 10.3 Program has established policies to transport youth safely; program complies with all legal requirements for vehicles and drivers.
- 10.4 A system is in place to ensure youth are supervised and accounted for at all times.
- 10.5 Staff plan for different levels of supervision according to the level of risk involved in an activity.
- 10.6 Written policies exist and regular drills are scheduled and implemented to prepare for potential accidents and emergencies.

Program Standard 11:

Program policies exist to protect and enhance the health of all youth.

Quality Indicators:

- 11.1 The program provides current documentation showing that the program has met the state and/or local health and safety guidelines and/or regulations.
- 11.2 The program provides written policies and procedures to ensure the health and safety of youth.
- 11.3 No smoking is allowed in the program.
- 11.4 The staff are always prepared to respond to accidents and emergencies.
- 11.5 The program provides written policies and procedures to address the health issues of youth.

Program Standard 12:

Staff receive appropriate support to make their work experience positive.

Quality Indicators:

- 12.1 Program has a plan in place to offer the best possible wages and working conditions in an effort to retain quality staff.
- 12.2 Full-time staff receive benefits, including health insurance and benefits as required by state law or other human resource benefits.
- 12.3 Staff are given ample time to discuss their concerns regarding the program with the appropriate supervisor(s).
- 12.4 Staff receive continuous supervision and feedback that promote personal development and positive outcomes, including written performance reviews on a regular basis.

Program Standard 13:

The program maintains personnel records of all staff.

Quality Indicators:

- 13.1 Personnel records are kept up to date and contain hiring documents, emergency contact information, job description, records of training and certification(s), performance evaluations, and health information, when applicable.
- 13.2 Access to personnel records is limited to authorized staff on a need-to-know basis, and personnel records remain confidential.
- 13.3 Staff may review, add, and correct information contained in their records, in accordance with applicable law.
- 13.4 Personnel files are maintained and disposed of in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Program Standard 14:

Files of youth contain accurate and sufficient information and are properly maintained.

Quality Indicators:

- 14.1 Authorized program staff maintains files for all youth in the program.

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14.2 Files of youth comply with all legal requirements and contain essential information, including registration forms; emergency contact information; information about special needs, including medical needs: copies of all signed permission or consent forms, including medication permission forms, authorizations for pick up, and accident report forms.

14.3 Files of youth are maintained and disposed of in a manner that protects privacy and confidentiality.

14.4 Access to confidential files meets legal requirements in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Program Standard 15:

Staff/youth ratios and group sizes permit the staff to meet the needs of youth.

Quality Indicators:

15.1 Staff/youth ratios vary according to the ages and abilities of youth. The ratio is between 1:10 and 1:15 for groups of children age six and older. The ratio is between 1:8 and 1:12 for groups that include children under the age of six.

15.2 The program provides a plan to provide adequate staff coverage in case of emergencies.

15.3 Substitute staff are used to maintain ratios when regular staff are absent.

15.4 Volunteers must complete the appropriate training and orientation to be considered in the staff to student ratio.

VIII. Core Area:

Professional Development and Qualifications

The program recruits and retains high quality staff and volunteers who are focused on creating a positive learning environment, and provides ongoing professional development based on assessed staff needs.

Program Standard 16:

Staff are professionally qualified to work with all youth.

Quality Indicators:

16.1 All staff, subcontractors and volunteers have passed the criminal background checks

16.2 Staff have the appropriate education and experience to work with school-age youth.

16.3 Educational attainment, training and experience of key program staff is appropriate to the level of responsibility assigned.

16.4 Staff are trained to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

Program Standard 17:

Staff are given an orientation to the job before working with youth.

Quality Indicators:

17.1 A written job description that outlines responsibility to youth, families, and the program is reviewed with each staff member.

17.2 Written program policies and procedures including emergency procedures and confidentiality policies are reviewed with staff.

17.3 New staff are given a comprehensive orientation to the program philosophy, routines and practices. They are personally introduced to the people with whom they will be working.

Program Standard 18:

The training needs of the staff are assessed and training is relevant to assigned responsibilities.

Quality Indicators:

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- 18.1 Agency provides ongoing training and professional development.
- 18.2 Agency conducts an informal assessment of staff training needs.
- 18.3 Staff receive training appropriate to their position and responsibilities regarding working with families and relating to youth in ways that promote positive development.
- 18.4 Administrators receive training in program management and staff supervision.
- 18.5 Staff receive training in arranging the program environment and designing activities to support program goals.
- 18.6 Staff receive training in the promotion of safety, health, and nutrition to youth.
- 18.7 Administrators and staff receive training in cultural competency.
- 18.8 Staff receive training and certifications required by all funding sources.

IX. Core Area:

Family and Community Partnerships

Meaningful family and community engagement is based on the premise that families, program staff, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family and community engagement occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership. Family and community partnerships are fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the program and beyond.

Standard 19:

Program has a systemic approach and structure for family and community engagement

Quality Indicators:

Source: ISBE FE Framework

- 19.1 A jointly developed vision for family and community engagement is shared and integrated into the program policies and practices.
- 19.2 The program develops and implements an effective family and community engagement system on an ongoing basis that is mindful of diverse school-communities and responsive to youth and family needs and assets.
- 19.3 The program monitors, evaluates, and shares community and family engagement outcomes through an on-going data collection system.
- 19.4 Program partners and families build their capacity to support youth learning and healthy development.
 - a. Leverage partnerships with families to improve youth outcomes.
 - b. Engage with parent organizations.
 - c. Regard families as valuable sources of knowledge and information to enhance curriculum and instruction.

Source: Connecticut AS Standards

19.6 The program develops partnerships and professional relationships with agencies, consultants, and organizations in the community that further the program's capacity to meet the needs and interests of the youth and families they serve.

Source: Utah AS Standards

- 19.7 The program connects families with specific community resources to assist in meeting the needs of youth and families.
 - a. The program establishes relationships with community organizations.
 - b. The program provides families with information about community resources to meet their needs, including contact information, services offered, and fees, if applicable.

Standard 20:

The program builds a welcoming environment that is responsive to youth and family needs.

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Quality Indicators:

Source: ISBE Family Engagement Framework

- 20.1 Program staff have developed trusting relationships with families and community members.
- Staff listen to family and community members and respect their opinions.
 - Staff show personal regard for youth, their families, and the community.
 - Staff have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to follow through on their commitments.
 - Staff demonstrate integrity by being transparent, acting in an ethical manner, and following through on commitments.

- 20.2 Program staff share student accomplishments with his/her family.

Source: Connecticut AS Standards as well as Indiana AS Standards

Standard 21:

Engage in ongoing and meaningful two-way-exchanges of information with families to support youth learning and healthy development.

Quality Indicators:

Source: ISBE FE Framework

- 21.1 The program ensures that communication is clear, constructive, and ongoing.
- Makes certain that communication is accessible to all and in the languages of the families served.
 - Uses a variety of ways to communicate with families.
- 21.2 The program communicates relevant policies and practices to families in clear and understandable formats.

Standard 22:

A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains strong relationships with community organizations to fully support youth.

Quality Indicators:

Source: Connecticut AS Standards:

- 22.1 The program serves as liaison among schools, families, and community stakeholders.
- 22.2 Program staff maintain an ongoing relationship with school staff and community stakeholders.
- 22.3 Program staff participate on community advisory boards.
- 22.4 The program works to increase family, staff, and youth knowledge of community resources.
- 22.5 The program promotes civic engagement opportunities for families and youth in the community.
- Collaborates with community organizations in order to develop and offer community service and/or service learning opportunities.
- 22.6 The program staff increase communication with schools and other community organizations.
- 22.7 Relationships with arts, cultural, and other community institutions expand and enhance program offerings.

NYSAN: Element 8: Parent/Family/Community Partnerships

X. Core area:

Youth Development, Programming, and Activities

The program staff acts in partnership with youth to create a high-quality learning environment, and implements age-appropriate curricula and program activities that adhere to the typical benchmarks of growth and development and meets the multiple developmental needs of children and youth.

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Program Standard 23:

Staff encourages all youth to make thoughtful and responsible decisions (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Human Relationships #3).

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard, Human Relationships #3):

- 23.1 Staff offers assistance in a way that supports youth initiative.
- 23.2 Staff assists youth without taking control, and encourages them to take leadership roles.
- 23.3 Staff encourages youth to think through their options, weighing the pros and cons, before arriving at a decision.
- 23.4 Staff empowers youth to exercise their voice.
- 23.5 Youth have structured opportunities to influence the format or content of the program based on their interest, preference, and or satisfaction.
- 23.6 Staff requests feedback and participation from families regarding program planning.

Program Standard 24:

Programs create a positive afterschool climate that is emotionally and physically safe, as well as provides flexible and supportive activities for all youth (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Programming and Activities #17).

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Programming and Activities #17):

- 24.1 The daily schedule is flexible and provides structure without being rigid.
- 24.2 The program allows enough time to complete activities to ensure smooth transitions.
- 24.3 The program allows opportunities for youth to engage in a combination of individual and group tasks, usually at their own pace.
- 24.4 The program provides the right amount of support and challenge to meet the cognitive, physical, and emotional needs of the youth.

Program Standard 25:

Programs are intentional about supporting and accelerating student academic, social and emotional learning (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Programming and Activities #13).

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard #13 and Missouri Standard):

- 25.1 Programs make connections to school day learning and are aligned with relevant standards to promote academic, social and emotional learning.
- 25.2 Programs establish connections with schools and families about youth academic, social and emotional needs and learning goals.
- 25.3 Programs make connections between learning activities and real life applications that are relevant and clear to the participants, families, and staff.
- 25.4 Programs provide tools and resources for families to reinforce and/or expand on the academic, social and emotional learning opportunities provided by the program.
- 25.5 Programs communicate with families about any academic, physical, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns in a timely manner.
- 25.6 Programs have scheduled times and provide quiet places for academic support and homework assistance.
- 25.7 Program encourages youth input and involvement in the activity planning and implementation.
- 25.8 Consistent with SAFE procedures, programs use active, meaningful, and engaging learning methods (including, for example, service learning) that promote collaboration.
- 25.9 Programs expand youth horizons in authentic ways, meaning they build on interests, talents, and skills that are unique to each youth.
- 25.10 Programs help inspire and prepare youth for success in school, higher education, careers, and life.
- 25.11 Programs maintain high expectations for all youth.

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25.12 Programs goals are linked to 21st Century learning skills.

Program Standard 26:

Staff relate to all youth in positive ways (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Human Relationships #1).

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard #1):

- 26.1 Staff treat youth with respect and listen to what they have to say.
- 26.2 Staff create a welcoming and comfortable environment for youth.
- 26.3 Staff respond to youth with respect and without bias.
- 26.4 Staff engage with all youth.
- 25.5 Staff encourage youth to establish rules for maintaining an environment that is free from bias and is respectful.

Program Standard 27:

There are sufficient materials to support program activities (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standards, Programming and Activities #18).

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard #18):

- 27.1 Materials are complete and in good condition.
- 27.2 There are enough materials for the number of youth in the program.
- 27.3 Materials are developmentally appropriate for the age range of the youth in the program.

Program Standard 28:

Program activities and curriculum integrate a variety of areas (e.g., recreation and fitness, fine arts, academic support, life skills, STEM, personal growth and development), ensuring that the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and creative domains are addressed in a comprehensive manner and there are sufficient materials to support program activities (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard #14 and Missouri Standard):

Quality Indicators (inspired by Indiana Afterschool Standard #14 and Missouri Standard):

- 28.1 Activities and the curriculum are in line with the authentic and individual learning styles, abilities, and interests of youth in the program.
- 28.2 Activities and the curriculum are well suited to the age range of youth in the program.
- 28.3 Activities and the curriculum serve diverse youth and their families with cultural competence.
- 28.4 Activities and the curriculum reflect best practices in the field of youth development, 21st Century skills, and are research-based.

XI. Core area:

Partnerships with Schools

Quality afterschool programs create structures for formal and on-going communication, collaboration, and information sharing with school staff to strengthen continuity around student learning. A program has its staff work closely with school staff to ensure academic components and activities are aligned with and complement school standards, curricula, and the continuous school improvement planning process.

Source: NYSAN

Program Standard 29:

Program maintains two-way/reciprocal communication with school-day staff to monitor academic and behavioral progress of youth.

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29.1 Program staff maintain communication with school principal and administration to identify youth needs and progress.

29.2 Program staff build linkages with school staff.

Program Standard 30:

School-day and afterschool programs collaborate on curriculum planning and development to strengthen continuity around student learning.

30.1 Program staff serve on the school's curriculum planning committee.

30.2 Program staff collaborate regularly with school-day staff regarding use of facilities and resources.

30.3 Program staff incorporate programming that integrates and complements school day activities.

30.4 The program allocates sufficient time for homework and homework help.

30.5 The program staff understand school-day curriculum and what youth are doing during regular school day hours.

Program Standard 31:

The program staff coordinates effective use of services and programs.

31.1 The program staff maintain communication with the school principal and administration to align youth/school goals with program goals.

31.2 The program staff secures and maintains ongoing commitment of resources (e.g., classroom environment, bulletin boards, storage space, computer facilities, and site coordinator's office) from school principal and classroom teachers, when possible.

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XII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Family Engagement:

Meaningful family engagement is based on the premise that parents/families, educators, and community members share responsibility for the academic, physical, social, emotional, and behavioral development of youth. Family engagement is fostered through a deliberate process that is embraced throughout the school. It empowers adults to jointly support student growth, addresses any barriers to learning, and ensures college and career readiness. Foremost, effective family engagement systems, policies and practices are mindful of diverse school-communities that are rich in language, culture, and school experiences. They are responsive to student and family needs.

Source: ISBE Draft Family Engagement Guide, PTA Family Engagement National Standards for Family Engagement

Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development is an intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing multiple opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build their skills, sense of mastery, and leadership strengths. Positive youth development programs promote a number of outcomes in youth, including social skills, emotional competence, positive relationships with peers and adults, and civic and school engagement. "Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs Develops Common Language on Positive Youth Development | FindYouthInfo." Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs Develops Common Language on Positive Youth Development | FindYouthInfo. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.

Engagement

Youth engagement is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself. The kind of activity in which the youth is engaged can be almost anything - sports, the arts, music, volunteer work, politics, social activism - and it can occur in almost any kind of setting. www.tgmag.ca/aorg/pdf/Whatis_WEB_e.pdf "What is Youth Engagement"

Illinois Learning Standards

The state of Illinois has standards to guide the academic, social and emotional, career, and arts of our youth. Those standards can be found at www.isbe.net. These standards define what students in Illinois Schools should know and be able to do at each age level.

Social and Emotional Learning-

When referring to social and emotional skills and development of those skills, please refer to the SEL standards adapted by the state of Illinois.

Social/Emotional Learning is a process for acquiring skills to:

- Recognize and manage emotions
- Demonstrate caring and concern for others
- Establish positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Handle challenging situations effectively

(Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2005)

The state of Illinois adapted the Social and Emotional Learning Standards in 2004. These standards are available at the Illinois State Board of Education website located at www.isbe.net. There are three goals:

- Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success

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- Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
- Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts

Common Core Standards

Illinois joined more than 40 states in a collaborative effort to raise learning standards and improve college and career readiness for all students, regardless of where they live. The new Common Core State Standards establish clear expectations for what students should learn in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level. The standards are high, clear, and uniform to ensure that students are prepared for success in college and the workforce. You can access these standards at www.isbe.net

STEM

STEM is an acronym referring to the fields of study, including: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.¹ The term is typically used in addressing education policy and curriculum choices in schools from kindergarten through college to improve competitiveness in technology development. It has implications for workforce development, national security concerns and immigration policy.

21st Century Skills

21st century skills are those skills that are needed to successfully negotiate the world of school, work and home. They are sometimes called the “soft skills” as they are more abstract than other skills such as reading or welding. Twenty-first century skills are the indispensable currency for participation, achievement, and competitiveness in the global economy. Beyond the assessment of reading, mathematics and science, the United States does not assess other essential skills that are in demand in the 21st century. All Americans, not just an elite few, need 21st century skills that will increase their marketability, employability and readiness for citizenship, such as:

- Thinking critically and making judgments
- Solving complex, multidisciplinary, open-ended problems
- Creativity and entrepreneurial thinking—
- Communicating and collaborating
- Making innovative use of knowledge, information and opportunities
- Taking charge of financial, health and civic responsibilities

Partnership for 21st Century Skills

40 Developmental Assets

The Developmental Assets[®] are 40 research-based, positive qualities that influence young people’s development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults. Based in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research, the Developmental Assets framework has proven to be effective and has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States and, increasingly, around the world. The framework has been adapted to be developmentally relevant from early childhood through adolescence.

Search Institute www.search-institute.org/

Youth

For the purpose of this document the term “youth” refers to anyone involved in the afterschool program as a recipient of services. This term replaces child, teen, student, or adolescent.

Staff

For the purpose of this document the term “staff” refers to all frontline, program directors, and anyone charged with the execution of delivering program services. The term “staff” does not include organization administrators or boards of directors.