



The Connector

The Connector is Youth Community Connections' (YCC) communication tool for sharing updates with its partners.

Recent News & Events

Minnesota Governor's Afterschool Summit May 1, 2008

Governor Tim Pawlenty convened the Afterschool Opportunities Summit on May 1st, which served as a statewide "call to action" on the need for high quality afterschool learning opportunities for Minnesota's youth who annually spend more unsupervised time alone (2,000 hours) than they do in school (900 hours). The summit called the public and private sectors together to support quality afterschool learning opportunities. Research has shown that youth who participate in afterschool learning opportunities have better attendance, higher academic performance, and more positive attitudes about school and learning.

More than 150 researchers, economists, business leaders, law enforcement officials, local and statewide elected officials, young people and non profit practitioners assembled at the Wilder Foundation offices in St. Paul for a series of presentations dealing with "understanding the next generation," a "call to action" and a "commitment to action." Co-sponsored by the McKnight Foundation whose board chair, **Erika L. Binger**, hosted the summit which was managed by Youth Community Connections, the summit was also supported by the National Governor's Association (Chaired this year by Pawlenty), the Minnesota Department of Education, the University of Minnesota, Greater Twin Cities United Way and Wilder.

According to Mark Hugo Lopez of the Pew Research Center, who presented at the summit, young people often lack trust in others (75%) but are the most optimistic (66%) of all age groups about the future of the nation.

Among the Summit findings:

- Sustainability, program quality and affordability make a difference
- Students from families with fewer resources do not have access to quality programs
- Parents want programs to address the value of hard work and commitment
- Two thirds of parents in Greater Minnesota feel their communities "do not have enough to do" for teenagers in the summer
- The Center for Youth Development at the U of M proposed the following recommendations; "closing the opportunity gap" between low income and average income families and "an adequate supply of high quality and affordable afterschool opportunities".

For information about the proceedings and plans for ongoing activity, visit the website [<http://www.youthcommunityconnections.org/infoResources.html>].

Legislative Breakfast: Youth Community Connections joins the Youth Policy Alliance to host Legislative Breakfast April 30, 2008

YOUTH POLICY ALLIANCE ISSUED CALL TO ACTION AT LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST TO ENSURE THAT ALL YOUTH ARE "READY FOR LIFE."

Youth services do not exist or work in an exclusive, solitary environment to meet the needs of young people. Communities must be engaged and policies must be enacted which promote a comprehensive approach to youth policy. These are the central messages that a young voices panel emphasized during a legislative breakfast on Wednesday, April 30th at the Kelly Inn in St. Paul.

Five young people who benefited from various youth programs and services spoke at the breakfast to share their experiences and partners of the Youth Policy Alliance issued a **call to action** to ensure that all youth move into adulthood ready for life.

The event was sponsored by the Youth Policy Alliance, a coalition of youth serving organizations, statewide associations and collaboratives working together to ensure sound youth policy in Minnesota.

A comprehensive youth service system would incorporate the following focus areas, providing a continuum of supports and opportunities for children and youth across developmental needs and life circumstances: After school & Out of School Time, Mentoring, Youth Intervention, Work Force Development, and Homelessness Prevention.

The **Youth Policy Alliance** is made up of representatives from the following:

- Lutheran Social Service of MN (LSS)
- Mentoring Partnership of MN
- MN Alliance With Youth
- MN Coalition for the Homeless/MN Youth Advancement Act
- MN Workforce Council Association
- MN Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA)
- Youth Community Connections (YCC)

2008 Legislative Session Update

Looking at the Big Picture

Transportation Bill

The House and Senate produced a Transportation bill for the Governor to sign within the first few weeks of session. As expected, the Governor vetoed the bill because of

the gas tax. A 10-year, \$6.6 billion transportation package, was delivered when the Legislature overrode Gov. Tim Pawlenty's veto in late February.

The legislation will:

- Provide about \$480 million for major county roads, mainly feeder routes for state highways and freeways in the seven-county metro area over the next decade
- return a larger share of state gas tax dollars to metro counties (based on previous formulas)
- slow the tide of transportation costs being shifted to property taxes

Taxpayers will pay more for those benefits with

- gas tax increases of 8 1/2 cents a gallon,
- increases sales tax by 0.25 percent in the metro area for bus and rail transit, and
- increases license tab fees for new cars and trucks

Tax Bill

As a part of the final budget agreement, the Governor and the Legislature agreed on a tax bill that will provide property tax breaks, and a 3.9% cap on property tax increases. Disabled veterans will also receive a tax break. The bill includes \$60 million in local government aids, and will save \$78.5 million in property taxes, while providing \$25 million in direct property tax relief to homeowners.

Final Budget Bill

The legislature successfully balanced the \$935 million budget deficit they faced when they began session. To accomplish this they used \$355 million in spending cuts, state reserve funds, and closed a loophole on businesses that do business overseas. The final budget agreement, between the House, Senate, and Governor, was agreed to on the final weekend. It includes a \$25.7 million increase in Education funding, \$21 million cut in Higher Education, \$229.5 million cut in Health and Human Services, \$21 million cut in Transportation, and \$13.4 million cut in Public Safety.

While the final spending cuts were generally more than the House or Senate had originally proposed they were substantially less than the cuts proposed by the Governor.

The deal solves the budget dilemma for 2008-2009, but there will be additional deficits to overcome in 2009.

The K-12 Education budget increases funding for the following programs:

- One time general education aid - \$43 million (\$51 per AMCPU)
- Principal's Leadership Institute - \$275,000
- Humanities Commission - \$275,000
- Special Education Task Force - \$20,000
- School Lunch Food Program \$402,000
- Health and Development Screening Aid - \$936,000
- Academic Achievement Plan Administration - \$50,000

Bonding Bill

The legislature and governor also agreed to a second bonding bill, which included \$70 million for the Central Corridor Light Rail. These funds ensure that the state will receive \$450 million in Federal funds for the project.

Looking at Afterschool and Youth Programming

Funding for youth programs overall did well this session. There was a lot of concern that cuts may be made to youth programs and services to solve the budget deficit. The Afterschool Community Learning Opportunities Grant program, which was funded for FY 2008-09, was protected this session. This allows grant recipients to complete their two year grant cycle with the MN Dept. of Education.

The final budget bill included a 4% cut for all state agencies. State agency budgets have been consistently cut over the past several years and will likely have unpredictable impacts. YCC will continue to watch these impacts for potential cuts to youth programs.

Mayor Chris Coleman honored by the Afterschool Alliance May 14, 2008

The Afterschool Alliance honored St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman for his support for afterschool programs at the "Breakfast of Champions," a gala event in Washington, D.C. Mayor Coleman was one of 16 individuals and four organizations honored for their tireless work on behalf of afterschool programs. He was nominated by Youth Community Connections, Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance.

Mayor Coleman has made afterschool programming a priority in St. Paul. He is working to ensure that the City helps to meet families' needs by organizing out-of-school programming and partnering with youth programs across St. Paul. Mayor Coleman has also expanded the public transportation system to offer free rides to young people to afterschool programs and other locations that provide learning opportunities.

The "Breakfast of Champions" is part of the seventh annual *Afterschool for All Challenge* which brings together hundreds of parents, educators, children, program directors and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. The 2008 *Challenge* is co-sponsored by the National League of Cities and the Afterschool Alliance.

Looking Ahead

Open House

Please join Youth Community Connections and the Minnesota Alliance With Youth for our open house on July 16th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm

OPEN HOUSE

Youth Community Connections &

Minnesota Alliance With Youth invite you to their open house.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 16 from 4-6 pm

WHERE: 1313 – 5th Street SE, Suite 321, Minneapolis 55414

Youth Community Connections

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