**Let’s Put More [State] Kids on the Best Possible Path**

By [Name] and [Name]

As school bells ring around the state this afternoon, kids will head off on different paths. Some will leave school with a parent or caregiver. Some will head home alone to hang out until parents return from work. And some will walk into a world of new learning opportunities in afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs inspire children to learn by giving them engaging, hands-on, and fun projects, opportunities to express themselves creatively, and mentors who guide them along the way. They teach children foundational skills, like communication, teamwork, and problem solving, and help prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow. Afterschool programs offer the added benefit of keeping kids safe and giving working parents peace of mind. In [state], x in x parents say afterschool programs help them keep their jobs. [To fill in the right figures, jump to the Support Stats for your state at [www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM) for your parent data]

Take xxx afterschool program in xxx. *[The next section should contain a story to help illustrate the value of afterschool and the need to improve access. The story could emphasize a key theme that’s salient in the state or suits the author of your piece: keeping kids safe; protecting them from the effects of substance use; supporting learning; giving kids opportunities to explore their passions and possible career paths; helping working parents. It could be a profile of a student who did better in school because of her/his afterschool program, or it could highlight a local afterschool program that is doing something interesting to support student engagement and achievement. The story should take up no more than two to three short paragraphs. Look at our message guides and profiles under Learn & Grow, Supporting Parents, and Keeping Kids Safe at* [*www.afterschool.nptoolkit.org*](http://www.afterschool.nptoolkit.org) *for inspiration and language. For example, you might weave in a concluding statement from one of message guides that fits your focus, such as, “*Teachers report that students in afterschool programs show more interest in learning, behave better, and complete their homework assignments” or “Afterschool programs spark passion and fuel imagination. Kids discover who they are and what they love to do.”*]*

A national poll released by the Afterschool Alliance in October finds that the public understands these benefits. Nearly nine in ten adults – including majorities of both Democrats and Republicans – say they believe afterschool programs are important to their communities. Two in three say they want their federal, state and local leaders to provide funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.

Most of those leaders aren’t doing so now. Sadly, afterschool opportunities are not the norm in [state]. For every child in an afterschool program in our state, [two/three] are waiting to get in.

But with the election behind us, this is a moment to reset priorities and reconsider how we allocate resources. Our state policymakers in [capital] and our representatives in Congress have the power to decide what paths are open to our children by designating more funds for afterschool programs. Unless they act, more students will be at risk in the afternoons.

Afterschool programs help kids learn, grow and reach their full potential. They have broad, deep public support. So let’s call on our leaders to expand this critical part of our kids learning day. *[We encourage you to add a few sentences describing a state-specific call to action here. Who do you want to prompt, and what do you want them to do?]*