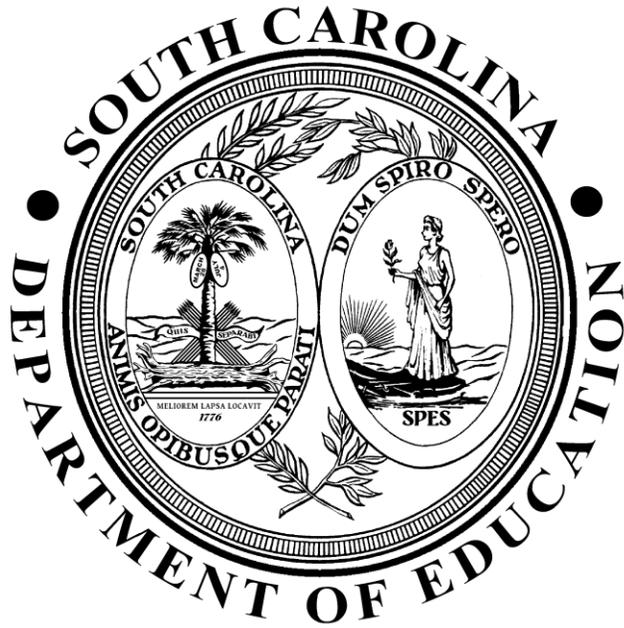


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



South Carolina Afterschool Quality Standards

June 1, 2018

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Contents

I. Overview.....	1
II. Participatory Quality Standards	1
1. Safe Environment.....	1
2. Equity, Access, and Diversity	1
3. Health and Wellness	2
4. 21st Century Skill Building	2
5. Student/Staff Engagement and Youth Leadership.....	2
6. Enrichment Opportunities.....	3
III. Programmatic Quality Standards	3
7. Clearly Defined Mission, Vision, and Purpose.....	3
8. Quality Staff.....	3
9. Family, School, and Community Engagement	4
10. Measurable Outcomes	4
11. Sustainability.....	4
Resources: Research, Reports and Articles Supporting Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs.....	5
Appendix A: Definitions.....	5
Appendix B: Acknowledgements	7

I. Overview

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), with assistance from valuable stakeholders, compiled the quality standards found in this document for afterschool programs (see Appendix B for a list of stakeholders). The intent of the language found in this document is to foster guidance of what quality at a minimum should occur in non-licensed afterschool programs. The SCDE recognizes additional indicators may also address quality, but feel those represented in this document prepare the foundation for a quality afterschool and/or expanded learning program.

II. Participatory Quality Standards

1. Safe Environment

The program provides a safe environment which nurtures and supports the development of all students.

- 1.1 The program is held in a well-maintained, safe, and clean environment.
- 1.2 The program staff is adequately trained, attentive, caring, and nurturing.
- 1.3 Students are age-appropriately grouped for program activities.
- 1.4 The program facility is secured for student activities both indoors and outdoors.
- 1.5 The student/staff ratio is appropriate for maintaining adequate supervision and visibility of all students.
- 1.6 The program maintains clear and concise documentation of all student incidents.
- 1.7 The program maintains up-to-date emergency contact information for all students on file.

2. Equity, Access, and Diversity

An environment exists within the program that values diversity, upholds equity, and is accessible to all learners regardless of race, color, sex, religion, age, income level, national origin, physical ability, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression.

- 2.1 The program offers a welcoming climate to be inclusive of all cultures and learners thus providing a safe environment for expression.
- 2.2 The program allows for inclusion and engagement of all students regardless of student ability or skills.
- 2.3 The program fosters an environment that has positive and inclusive interactions among the program staff and students.
- 2.4 The program exemplifies a mutual respect for all cultures and learners.
- 2.5 The activities of the program highlight an appreciation for all cultures.

3. *Health and Wellness*

The program promotes healthy activities that provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy habits.

- 3.1 The program promotes healthy habits, behaviors, and lifestyles to students and families.
- 3.2 The program routinely serves snacks or meals meeting U.S. Department of Agriculture nutritional standards.
- 3.3 The program incorporates physical fitness into its activities.
- 3.4 The program offers a variety of physical activities in which students may choose to participate.
- 3.5 The program collects and maintains up-to-date health information from parents/guardians regarding students and their individual health needs.

4. *21st Century Skill Building*

The program fosters opportunities for students to improve and practice skills that are essential for college and career readiness.

- 4.1 The program advocates for and offers activities to develop and enhance world-class skills and life characteristics.
- 4.2 The program provides opportunities for students to engage in team building exercises which foster collaboration and effective communication skills.
- 4.3 The program offers an atmosphere that fosters self-direction, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- 4.4 The program routinely coordinates activities that support the *Profile of a South Carolina Graduate*.

5. *Student/Staff Engagement and Youth Leadership*

The program upholds positive relationships among staff and students, which interactions are encouraging, respectful, and supportive. The program routinely engages youth in meaningful opportunities to promote leadership.

- 5.1 The program fosters an environment where staff interactions with students are positive, frequent, engaging, and nurturing.
- 5.2 The program encourages peer to peer positive resolutions and relationship building.
- 5.3 Students are frequently given opportunities to complete age-appropriate assigned jobs/tasks that are instrumental to the program to foster ownership and responsibility.
- 5.4 Students are included in the development of the Code of Conduct guidelines for the program.

- 5.5 Staff and students are often engaged in positive dialogue that promotes learning, growth, acceptance, and appreciation.

6. *Enrichment Opportunities*

The program promotes engaging activities that provide opportunities for students to broaden horizons, experience hands-on learning, and inspire creativity.

- 6.1 The program provides age-appropriate opportunities for students to be creative and innovative.
- 6.2 The program routinely hosts creative activities that engage and inspire imaginations while providing meaningful context.
- 6.3 The program frequently displays visual examples of student-centered and created artwork, graphics, projects, etc. throughout the environment.
- 6.4 The program provides opportunities for students to engage in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) activities.

III. Programmatic Quality Standards

7. *Clearly Defined Mission, Vision, and Purpose*

The program straightforwardly expresses why it exists and the short/long term goals of the program.

- 7.1 The program is able to plainly articulate why it exists and the overall goals of the program.
- 7.2 The program provides a clear, written document to families outlining expectations and objectives of the program.
- 7.3 The program has a deliberate program design that easily allows others to understand the focus of the program and the services offered.

8. *Quality Staff*

The program actively seeks to hire dependable staff with experience and interest in working with students and families.

- 8.1 The program routinely allocates planning time for staff to prepare activities for students.
- 8.2 The program ensures appropriate staff/student ratios are maintained.
- 8.3 The program conducts adequate background checks on all staff and volunteers prior to hiring.
- 8.4 The program ensures staff is certified and trained in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
- 8.5 The program appropriately equips staff to use various strategies for engaging all students in the program.

- 8.6 The program provides adequate and regular professional development opportunities for staff.
- 8.7 The program staff is diverse and mirrors program participants.
- 8.8 The program regularly observes and evaluates the performance of staff with expectations of performance clearly defined and explained prior to evaluation.

9. *Family, School, and Community Engagement*

The program continually seeks to build supportive relationships with parents, schools, and community members.

- 9.1 The program exemplifies a welcoming environment to all cultures and learners.
- 9.2 The program invites school staff and teachers to periodically visit the program in efforts of building a link between school day and afterschool.
- 9.3 The program routinely pursues partnerships with local businesses in efforts of exposing career opportunities to students.
- 9.4 The program regularly communicates with parents using various methods to ensure all parents are informed and connected to the program.

10. *Measurable Outcomes*

The program has a mechanism established for assessing performance.

- 10.1 The program has identified an evaluation instrument that readily identifies areas of proficiency and opportunity in the areas of service delivery.
- 10.2 The program has identified internal goals, objectives and success criteria to measure effectiveness.
- 10.3 The program regularly assesses services and makes adjustments as needed.

11. *Sustainability*

The program is able to effectively continue to offer services to students by creatively seeking and securing various funding streams.

- 11.1 The program is able to develop and maintain partnerships that support the viability of the services offered.
- 11.2 The program exercises ethical and efficient fiscal practices.
- 11.3 The program has created a long-term plan that also incorporates short term goals.
- 11.4 The program regularly assesses implementation and improvement strategies and adjusts as needed.

Resources: Research, Reports and Articles Supporting Afterschool, Summer and Expanded Learning Programs

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Appendix A: Definitions

Access refers to a student/family's ability to receive services regardless of any external variable.

Afterschool programs are commonly offered beyond the traditional school hours.

Diversity is the inclusion of all types of people.

Enrichment Opportunities provide a more meaningful, substantial, or rewarding experience.

Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial.

Family Engagement occurs when families are actively involved in the learning and development of all students to become college and career-ready.

Goals are desired results.

Programs are planned activities or events conducted to obtain a specific result.

Quality Staff are individuals who can communicate and interact well with people, and have a genuine interest in the well-being of others.

Standards are levels of quality.

Success Criteria are outcomes by which a program will be judged to determine accomplishments.

Vision is a road map which indicates what a program wants to become or achieve.

Appendix B: Acknowledgements

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