



Michigan State Board of Education  
September 8, 2021



# MOST

## Standards of Quality

Michigan  
Out-of-School  
Time

**4th**  
EDITION





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## INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Out of School Time (MOST) Standards of Quality are designed to assist schools and other organizations in developing high quality, comprehensive out of school (OST) programs for all children and youth in grades K 12. The standards are based on research concerning quality programs for school age children and youth.

## STRUCTURE

A set of critical components for OST programs is presented in this document as seven distinct areas for which quality standards have been established.

These areas are considered critical components for OST programs and are the following:

- **Health and Physical Safety;**
- **Positive Climate and Emotional Safety;**
- **Program Staffing;**
- **Program Environment;**
- **Program and Activities;**
- **Administration; and**
- **Single Purpose Programs.**

The critical components are further defined by the standards, which are then illustrated by indicators of OST program quality.

The content to follow in this document is referenced by the following notation:  
I. (Critical Component) A. (Standard) 1. (Indicator)

## HISTORY

The Michigan State Board of Education (SBE) and its agency and organizational partners have nearly two decades of guided support for OST programs and their providers.

On June 13, 2002, the Michigan State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the first set of recommendations of a task force on Integrating Communities and Schools. One of the task force's recommendations was to develop and disseminate model standards for programs offered during out of school time.

On February 27, 2003, the Michigan SBE adopted the first edition of the Model Standards for Out of School Time Programs in Michigan.

Also, in 2003, House Resolution No. 26 requested that the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the then Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) convene a task force forming the Michigan After School Initiative (MASI). The MASI focused on actions that would strengthen the state's ability to support high quality, affordable out of school time programs and recommended policy changes in the areas of funding, interagency collaboration, capacity building, community collaboration, and evaluation. The result was the creation of the Michigan After School Partnership (MASP), co chaired by MDE and DHS, established by Public Act 344 of 2004 (September 29, 2004) and Public Act 351 of 2004 (September 30, 2004).

The MDE charged MASP with reviewing and updating the first edition of the Model Standards for Out of School Time Programs in Michigan to reflect current research in the field. A diverse committee of stakeholders and community partners recommended revisions to the original document, and a revised set of OST standards were approved by the Michigan SBE in 2008.

In the fall of 2012, MDE once again conducted a periodic review/revision process of the Model Standards for Out of School Time Programs in Michigan. It was at this time the title of the standards was changed to reflect current national trends in standards naming. The committee also agreed that the MOST Standards of Quality should reflect quality programming for all school age children and youth from kindergarten entry through high school graduation (K 12). The MOST Standards of Quality were aligned to the Michigan SBE Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Infant and Toddler Programs and Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten to provide a continuum of high quality programming for all Michigan children and youth from birth through grade 12.

It was at this time, also, that indicators were added to align with the National AfterSchool Association Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out of School Time Programs that were nationally adopted in 2011. Standards and indicators were also added and edited to support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math programming as well as inclusive practices. These changes were adopted by the Michigan SBE in March 2013.

Beginning in the fall of 2019, MASP and MDE convened a stakeholder committee consisting of individuals from state, regional, and local agencies to review the MOST Standards of Quality. Standards from 21 states/organizations were reviewed and compared against the 2013 standards by the committee. The work of the committee was paused in March 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Work on the MOST Standards of Quality review resumed in spring 2021, and the committee finished drafting its recommendations in April 2021. Recommendations not only reorganized content for clarity but also includes additions in the areas of health, safety, and cultural competency to stay current with the field and research.

## DEFINITIONS

This document uses the term “out of school time” (OST) to fully describe before school, after school, times, and days when there is no school due to teacher training, snow days, school breaks, and summer. Comprehensive OST programs ideally include both extended learning opportunities (ELO) to support the school day and school age care (SAC) to support working families.

Comprehensive programs provide safe places for students when their families are not available, as well as academic enrichment activities and child and youth development opportunities.

Some single purpose programs may serve children and youth who do not need comprehensive services. However, many of the same guidelines and safeguards should be available for children and youth at any time they are served by programs outside of school hours and not accompanied by their families.

## ALIGNMENT WITH RELATED PROGRAM STANDARDS

Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers — Since the MOST Standards of Quality make the presumption that OST programs are already in compliance with the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers, these minimum regulations have not been duplicated in the MOST Standards of Quality. The critical components, standards, and indicators found in MOST Standards of Quality are intended to be layered upon the basic health and safety rules outlined in the child care center regulations. Users should also reference the definitions in the licensing rules to supplement the glossary in this document.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The MOST Standards of Quality may be used as a guide for developing and evaluating OST programs for all children and youth in grades K 12. These standards indicate very high quality, age appropriate practices. The MOST standards are voluntary for OST programs. Programs specifically mandated by their funding source/law/rule/regulation must follow these standards to the extent practicable.

The MDE and Michigan SBE recommend the use of this publication for ongoing program monitoring and self assessment, along with other research based assessment tools (e.g., Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA), Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS), Quality Assurance System (QAS)). High quality programs strive to meet all the standards and indicators included in this document.

Special Note: The standards and indicators will be relevant to all high quality OST programs; however, some single purpose programs may not find all components applicable to their programs but should minimally apply all relevant standards in addition to the critical component *VII. Single Purpose Programs* standards.



# I. Health & Physical Safety

## A

**The safety and security of all children and youth are protected.**

1. Children and youth are supervised at all times, including during arrival, transitions, and departure.
2. A system is in place to track attendance throughout the program, including before and after transitions.
3. A system is in place to prevent unauthorized individuals from taking children and youth from the program.
4. Different levels of supervision are provided according to the level of risk to children and youth involved in an activity.
5. Equipment and facilities are checked daily and maintained safely.



## B

**The health of all children, youth, and staff is protected.**

1. The environment is clean and appropriate sanitation, disinfecting, and maintenance procedures are followed.
2. Children, youth, and adults with contagious illnesses do not attend the program.
3. The spread of illness is contained by proper hand washing procedures and appropriate hygiene practices.
4. Proper procedures for the administration and handling of medication and individual medical procedures are implemented, posted, and distributed in program handbooks to families.

# I. Health & Physical Safety

C

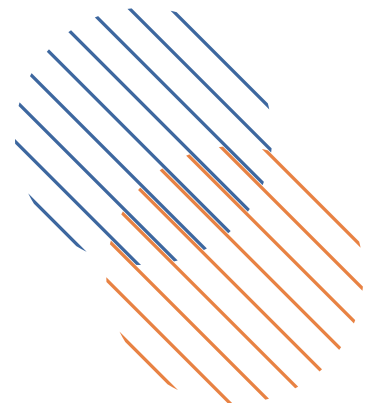
**Written policies and a training system are in place for emergencies.**

1. In school buildings, school day emergency procedures are continued in the OST program.
2. Staff members are trained in accident prevention and emergency plans. Plans are posted prominently and reviewed regularly.
3. Policies and training explicitly cover people with disabilities and reasonable (customizable) accommodations in emergencies.
4. Contingency plans for emergencies, including closings, are communicated to families upon enrollment.
5. A procedure for emergency communication with families (e.g., phone trees, text messages, e-mail, web postings, and cell phone usage) is established and communicated.
6. A working phone is available at all times.
7. Emergency family and medical contact information are maintained in the program and available to program staff at all times.
8. Each program staff member shall hold valid and current certification in CPR and basic first aid as issued by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a comparable organization. New staff must be trained within three months.

D

**Appropriate transportation rules are followed.**

1. All transportation, including emergency situations and use of public transportation, provided to students follows regulations in the [Revised School Code Act 451 of 1976](#) or the [most recent Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers](#).
2. Staff personal vehicles should not be used for the transportation of children or youth. In emergency situations, the most recent child care licensing standards are met.
3. Children and youth with disabilities are transported in a safe, comfortable, and appropriate manner.
4. Field trip transportation is arranged with the knowledge and consent of parents/guardians.





# I. Health & Physical Safety

## E

**Programs serving foods and drinks meet the needs of all children and youth.**

1. Programs follow the [National AfterSchool Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity \(HEPA\) Standards for Out-of-School Time 2.0](#):
  - a. Self-serve water is always accessible and available to children and youth.
  - b. Provide only water and unflavored low-fat (1%), nonfat milk, or dairy alternative.
  - c. Provide fruits or vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in their own juice) at every meal and snack.
  - d. Do not provide any fried foods. Fried foods include items like potato and corn chips, in addition to foods that are pre-fried and reheated (e.g., pre-fried French fries that are then baked, chicken patties, chicken tenders, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, Tater Tots®).
  - e. Offer whole grains, as determined by confirming that the first item listed in the ingredients contains the word whole (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole-grain flour, whole brown rice).
  - f. Provide foods that don't list sugar (e.g., sugar, invert sugar, brown sugar, words ending in -ose, and syrups like high fructose corn syrup, honey) as one of the first three ingredients or that contain no more than 8 grams of added sugar per serving.
2. Staff model healthy eating behaviors by avoiding the consumption of foods or beverages that are inconsistent with the healthy eating standards during program time.
3. Food choices accommodate dietary restrictions related to allergies, food intolerance, religion, and culture.
4. Individual nutritional needs are documented, and all staff are made aware of accommodations.
5. Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
6. If celebrated, holidays and birthdays are observed with healthy food or non-food items.
7. Fundraisers and social events, including family and community engagement activities, emphasize healthy foods or rely on non-food items.

## II. Positive Climate and Emotional Safety

### A

**Adults cultivate authentic and consistent relationships with children and youth.**

1. Adults treat all children and youth respectfully, positively, and warmly.
2. Adults greet children and youth by name upon their arrival.
3. Adults are attentive to children and youth and their individual needs, temperaments, special interests, and abilities.
4. Adults provide opportunities for children and youth to engage with positive role models individually and in small groups.



### B

**The program creates a positive social environment where all children, youth, and families feel safe.**

1. Expectations are established and maintained cooperatively with children, youth, and families.
2. Adults model and encourage positive communication, cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork.
3. Adults use age-appropriate approaches to reframe conflict.
4. Adults encourage children, youth, and families and attribute success to effort, attention, practice, and persistence.
5. Adults provide an emotionally safe, welcoming, and supportive environment free of violence, intimidation, aggression, or bullying for all participants.



# III. Program Staffing

## A

**Group sizes and ratios are designed to ensure that authentic, helpful, and caring relationships can be established and maintained between participants and adults.**

1. Children and youth to adult ratios are consistently maintained and do not exceed:
  - a. Grades K to 3: 10 children or youth to one adult.
  - b. Grades 4 to 12: 15 children or youth to one adult.
  - c. Mixed-age groups must follow the ratio requirement for the youngest child or youth in the group.
  - d. Ratios are reduced to reflect best practices relevant to program goals and activities.
2. At least two staff members are in the program at all times when children and youth are present.
3. Sufficient staffing is available to meet ratios in all locations, especially when groups are split between indoor, outdoor, or separate activity areas.
4. Staff is responsible for students assigned to their group and for overall program supervision of any students in their line of sight.
5. Additional adults are present when children and youth with diverse abilities require more supervision.



## B

**Program staff foster open and supportive team relationships.**

1. Staff consistently communicate and cooperate with each other.
2. Staff support each other through shared planning, coordination, and flexibility.
3. Staff interact with each other in a professional manner that supports program goals and outcomes.
4. Staff acknowledge human diversity among co-workers.

# III. Program Staffing

## C

### Staff are qualified and adhere to best practices.

1. Program staff working directly with children and youth are well trained with appropriate experience to work in the OST field.
2. Qualified staff possess the [Michigan Youth Development Associate Certificate and/or Credential](#) or have equivalent or greater qualifications and experience.
3. Staff qualifications align with the program goals and objectives and are based on the [National AfterSchool Association Core Knowledge and Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals](#).
4. Program staff act ethically, are committed to continuous learning, and advocate for the best practices and policies for children and youth.
5. Staff members seek to understand, acknowledge, and be responsive to the culture, religion, home language, traditions and beliefs of children, youth, and families.
6. Staff members demonstrate awareness of the daily needs, abilities and learning preferences of children and youth and accommodate them in daily programs and activities.
7. Staff recognize stereotyped expectations and can support children and youth to navigate stereotypes, especially in areas of race, gender, academic achievement, and career preparation.
8. Staff promote gender and racial equity.
9. Staff strive to be sensitive to the diverse needs of individual children and youth.



## III. Program Staffing

### D

#### **Staff participate in effective orientation, training, and professional development.**

1. New staff participate in eight or more hours of pre-service orientation activities that include elements of child and youth development.
2. Staff is oriented to the organizational policies and procedures that align with the mission and goals of the program.
3. Staff participate in training and professional development, which builds knowledge, skills, and abilities to help meet program goals and objectives.
4. Staff participate in diversity and inclusion training that includes meeting the needs of children and youth with diverse abilities.
5. Staff members build a professional development plan that reflects individual goals and is reviewed annually.
6. Staff participate in a continuous evaluation process to support ongoing professional development.



## IV. Program Environment



A

**The environment is established to provide a safe, clean, comfortable, and developmentally appropriate setting for all children and youth.**

1. The environment is arranged and furnished for a variety of activities that allow for individual, small group, and whole group options.
2. The physical environment can be modified to meet the needs of the program offerings, children and youth, and staff.
3. There are identified spaces that include areas for active and quiet activities.
4. There are identified spaces for the storage of equipment, materials, and personal possessions.
5. Enough materials, equipment, and resources are available and accessible for the number of children and youth participating.
6. The program works cooperatively with other programs in shared spaces.
7. The program is barrier-free and complies with all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

B

**The outdoor environment is established to offer safe and age/ability appropriate areas.**

1. There is adequate outdoor space available for daily structured and unstructured physical activity.
2. A wide variety of outdoor equipment and games are available to youth and children for active and quiet play.
3. Use of the [Public Playground Safety Handbook](#) is recommended when applicable.

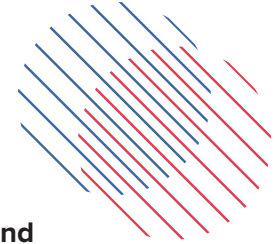
C

**The environment introduces and reflects the diversity represented in the program participants, families, and community through a global lens.**

1. The environment reflects the human diversity represented in the population of the community.
2. Décor, posters, pictures, books, and other materials represent a variety of cultural identities, populations, beliefs, and interests.
3. The environment showcases student work, accomplishments, and interests.



# V. Program and Activities



## A

**Activities are planned and supported through resources that reflect the interests and abilities of the children and youth enrolled, especially supplementing the areas of development not regularly provided during the school day.**

1. Interactions with children and youth use various approaches to help participants learn to think for themselves, develop problem solving skills, and improve language skills.
2. Opportunities are utilized to help children and youth develop positive/appropriate responses or social skills.
3. The program offers developmentally appropriate activities that reflect the mission and goals of the program.
4. The program offers a variety of active and quiet activities that are appropriate for the age, skill level, and abilities of all children and youth.
5. Activities challenge children and youth intellectually, creatively, and/or physically and require building, learning, and applying a progression of new skills.
6. The program offers enrichment opportunities in core academic areas as well as in cultural arts, technology, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.
7. Curriculum and activity planning regularly include:
  - a. youth leadership;
  - b. service learning or community-oriented projects;
  - c. restorative justice practices;
  - d. character education;
  - e. mentoring opportunities;
  - f. conflict-resolution; and
  - g. decision-making skills for healthy choices.
8. Computer and technology opportunities are consistent with Michigan Integrated Technology Competencies for Students (MITECS) found at [techplan.org](http://techplan.org).
9. Staff help children and youth understand that success in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) activities will require attention to detail, effort, and persistence utilizing scientific inquiry and the design thinking process.
10. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skill development opportunities are consistent with the [MDE Early Childhood to Grade 12 Social and Emotional Learning \(SEL\) Competencies and Indicators](#).

## V. Program and Activities

### B

**Physical health and well-being are supported by program activities.**

1. The program facilitates a variety of physical and nutritional activities that meet the needs and abilities of all children and youth.
2. The program provides regularly planned activities with an emphasis on nutrition education.
3. The program provides planned daily recreation, sports, or fitness activities that are at least 20% of daily program time.
4. During a planned physical activity, children and youth are moderately to vigorously active for at least half of the physical activity time.
5. When the weather does not permit outdoor participation, active indoor movement and games are offered.

### C

**Program development and implementation is carried out in such a way to include choice, planning, and leadership opportunities.**

1. Children and youth have many opportunities to plan, carry out and evaluate their own activities.
2. Children and youth are included in the planning and design of the program and activities offered.
3. Children and youth are actively involved in decision making and leadership roles.
4. Children and youth are encouraged to offer ideas, take the initiative, make suggestions, and lead program activities.
5. There are opportunities for children and youth to participate and develop connections with their larger community.
6. Children and youth share leadership and control of program activities with staff.
7. Children and youth are given multiple opportunities to be involved in decision making and the planning, management, evaluation, implementation, and improvement of the program.
8. Children and youth are supported in building new skills.
9. Children and youth are encouraged to exercise creativity, curiosity, and their imagination.





## V. Program and Activities

D

**Families are given multiple opportunities to be involved in decision-making, planning, management, evaluation, implementation, and improvement of the program.**

1. Multiple systems are in place for families to be involved and provide input regarding policies, procedures, and curriculum.
2. Multiple systems are in place for maintaining communication with families.
3. Families and community members are invited to collaborate with staff and participate in the program.
4. Expectations for adult participation in the program are clearly communicated.

E

**School-day and OST curricula and activities are linked in ways that support academic and non-academic development to meet the needs of the individual youth and program group.**

1. Programming includes developmentally appropriate academic support and enrichment activities that complement the school curriculum.
2. Staff members work with individual teachers and parents to support homework, behavior, and academic needs of children and youth.
3. Staff members participate in school-wide, organization, and/or community activities and goals.
4. Formal processes or structures are in place linking the program to the school day.
5. Programming is based on best practices for identifying and removing barriers to learning and promoting positive development.



## V. Program and Activities

F

**Program collaborates with community stakeholders that include youth organizations, community resource agencies, and schools to meet the needs of all participating youth.**

1. Program staff establishes mechanisms for regular communication to coordinate with children and youth serving agencies.
2. Program staff collaborates with school counselors, coaches, teachers, and community members to determine needs and provide support for children and youth in the community.



## VI. Administration

A

**Data are collected and used intentionally to continuously improve program quality and meet the needs of the community.**

1. A needs assessment is administered to prospective participants, families, and stakeholders to identify the needs of the community and organization and determine goals.
2. Evaluation and data collection are conducted at least annually to measure outcomes and to ensure continuous quality improvement.

B

**Stakeholders (including children and youth, families, school personnel, businesses, vendors, and community partners) are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.**

1. Staff, stakeholders, children and youth, and members of the community conduct regular meetings to gather and share information regarding programming, curriculum, and goals.
2. Stakeholders represent diverse populations and perspectives, including but not limited to education entities, municipalities, local businesses, community leaders, children and youth, and families.
3. Children and youth have opportunities to shape the program through:
  - a. shared responsibility on governing bodies (e.g., boards, advisory panels, standing committees, task forces);
  - b. formal and informal evaluation; and
  - c. improvement plans.

C

**The budget adequately supports and aligns with the program goals and objectives.**

1. The budget development process reflects input from appropriate stakeholders.
2. Internal audits monitor that funds are being spent appropriately.



## VI. Administration

D

**Fund development, revenue, and fiscal management systems are planned and implemented to provide a high-quality, sustainable program.**

1. A wide variety of revenue sources is considered, including grant funds, child-care subsidies, scholarships, donations, and fees to support program goals.
2. Revenues and expenses are reported and monitored effectively.
3. A written, board-approved compensation plan is consistently implemented with short-term and long-term fiscal sustainability.

E

**Policies and procedures are created for children and youth, families, staff, and stakeholders.**

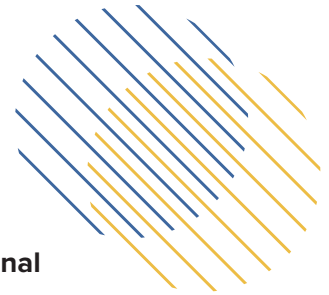
1. Policies and procedures are developed and reviewed annually with input from key stakeholders.
2. Expectations of desired behaviors are communicated at the beginning of the program.
3. Community partners, vendors, and other entities will:
  - a. comply with licensing requirements;
  - b. demonstrate the capacity of running high-quality programs;
  - c. receive an orientation to program policies, procedures, and expectations; and
  - d. participate in the evaluation of program activities.
4. Handbooks containing policies and procedures are created and provided to all staff, families, and stakeholders.
5. Information is transmitted to families with limited English proficiency in modes that are easily understood.

F

**Administrative staff, including directors and supervisors, participate in ongoing continuous professional development.**

1. Professional development is aligned to program staff standards (see above III.D.1-6).
2. Administrative staff mentor and support all program staff in ongoing continuous professional development.

## VI. Administration



### G

**A plan is established for recruitment, orientation, retention of staff, staff evaluations, and individual professional development.**

1. A written plan for recruitment supports the hiring of staff who reflect the languages, cultures, and genders of the children and youth served.
2. A written job description is developed and available for each staff position which includes the title and qualifications needed, job duties, and salary/benefit range.
3. A written compensation plan that is clearly related to the local market and reflects staff qualifications is developed to retain staff and maintain the quality of programs.
4. Staff development is incorporated into the overall school or agency professional development plan.
5. Annual professional development training attended by all staff includes at least three hours focused on cultural competence or inclusive practices related to serving and teaching diverse children and youth and their families.
6. A written plan for ongoing staff development must include:
  - a. typical and atypical child and youth development;
  - b. age-appropriate curriculum;
  - c. behavior management;
  - d. human diversity and inclusion;
  - e. health/safety;
  - f. mental health/social emotional learning;
  - g. healthy eating/nutrition;
  - h. youth leadership and community service;
  - i. physical activity;
  - j. partnering with families;
  - k. child/adult CPR/first aid/emergency procedures;
  - l. child abuse and neglect prevention and reporting;
  - m. record keeping;
  - n. appropriate activities; and
  - o. [Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers](#).
7. Semi-annual evaluations and ongoing feedback opportunities of each staff member are used to guide the planning and implementation of professional development activities in coordination with program goals and objectives.



## VII. Single-Purpose Programs

*A single-purpose OST program is supervised and focused on one specific subject or activity for children and youth. Single-purpose programs may include but are not limited to, group athletics, social activity/youth clubs, dance, drama, music, religion, remedial academics, scouting, and recreational programs.*

A

**Programs adhere to relevant MOST Standards of Quality.**

B

**Programs are appropriate for the students enrolled.**

1. Activities are age and ability appropriate.
2. Activities meet the learning preferences and interests of the enrolled children and youth.
3. Accommodations are provided for students with individual disabilities.

C

**Appropriate staff members are present at all times.**

1. At least two adults are present at all times.
2. Staff members have specialty expertise relevant to the content/skill of the program being offered.
3. Staff members have knowledge of children and youth development and age/ability appropriate expectations.





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## GLOSSARY

<b>Activity</b>	A planned interaction led by staff or students.
<b>Cognitive/Cognition</b>	Both the knowledge possessed and the children's and youth's ability to think, reason, learn, and understand. Younger school-age children usually think in concrete ways. Older school-age youth (adolescents) begin to use more complex ways of thinking.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The program content and how it is delivered.
<b>Out-of-School Time</b>	Before school, after school, times and days when there is no school due to teacher training, snow days, vacations, summer vacation, which ideally includes both extended learning opportunities to support the school day and school-age child care.
<b>Program</b>	Refers to the organization and all of the activities, as a whole, for children and youth during their out-of-school time.
<b>School Age Care</b>	Child Care provided to children eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten, as defined by The Revised School Code, but less than 13 years of age.
<b>Single-Purpose Programs</b>	OST program that is supervised and focused on one specific subject or activity for children and youth. Single-purpose programs may include, but are not limited to, group athletics, social activity/youth clubs, dance, drama, music, religion, remedial academics, scouting, and recreational programs.
<b>Youth</b>	Children and adolescents who are school age in kindergarten through twelfth grade.
<b>Youth Development</b>	The support of the natural unfolding of the potential inherent in children and youth in relation to the challenges of their physical and social environment. Positive child and youth development encourages individuals to actively shape their own development through their choices and perceptions.