

MetroWest Daily News - *Posted Aug 31, 2008*

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State Senate, Norfolk, Bristol & Middlesex

Includes Natick, Wayland, Sherborn, Wellesley, Millis and Franklin

Sara Orozco, Democrat

This week, my twin sons will return to public school along with millions of other American children. I am one of the lucky parents whose kids also have access to a high quality after-school program.

Make no mistake: Qualified after-school programs are not babysitting services for working parents.

The Harvard University Family Research Project has found ample evidence that children who participate in after-school programs enjoy improved academic achievement and social and developmental outcomes; are more likely to avoid risky behaviors; and, are more likely to adopt healthy life styles.

Yet, some of these public extended day programs can run a family \$450/month per child and many towns have waiting lists. Every parent wants to give their kids the tools for success. Our state should initiate and reward partnerships between schools, parents and the private sector to make quality after-school programs accessible to all children and affordable for all families.