



TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2016-2017 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Our thanks to Senator Young, Assemblymember Farrell, Senator Avella, and Assemblymember Lupardo, and to the other members of the Finance, Ways and Means, and Children and Families Committees for the opportunity to present testimony to you today regarding the Executive Budget Proposal.

All of New York's students deserve the chance to reach their full potential, no matter where they are from. Each year, studies demonstrate the impact and value of afterschool and summer programs in helping youth reach that potential. Evidence shows that afterschool programs play a critical role in improving student outcomes and that summer programs stem summer learning loss. For students that are lucky enough to be enrolled in high-quality afterschool and summer programs, these opportunities contribute to the development of social-emotional skills that employers look for in their future employees. They provide the enriching activities that spark a love of learning and inspire a future career path. They help all of our students, no matter where they live, engage in hands-on learning, avoid risky behaviors and involvement with the juvenile justice system, and stay on track to develop into active citizens, effective employees, and entrepreneurs. They can be crucial for working families, who need to know that their children are safe between the end of the school day and the end of the workday. Afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning opportunities play a crucial role for New York students and families.

To build an innovation-focused economy, ensure our children are graduating high school ready for college and career, and keep them on track for healthy adult lives, New York needs to increase investment in high-quality afterschool and summer learning experiences. Furthermore, as the state turns to the community schools strategy to support school turnaround, a strategy in which 90% of schools include afterschool programming or expanded time,¹ there is increasing interest throughout the state in greater access to these programs. While we strongly support the community schools strategy, we are deeply concerned that schools attempting to add in needed afterschool and summer programs will further stretch the already overextended funding streams. Even without considering potential increased demand, 1.1 million New York students want an afterschool program and do not have access to one according to the 2014 *America After 3 PM* survey. That number remains unchanged from 2009. Similarly, a report based on the same survey revealed that 500,000 New York children are still without access to high-quality summer programming. Fortunately, the state has the opportunity to make a difference.

We request that the Legislature appropriate \$69.2 million to the Advantage After School Program (AASP) to restore \$19.3 million in funding at the FY2015-16 level and increase funding by an additional \$49.9 million for AASP for FY2016-17. Such an increase will allow the program to serve 20,000 students in afterschool, an increase of 5,000 students over current capacity, and expand the funding stream to allow for full-day summer programming for 20,000 youth. Additionally, this funding will align the per student allotment for these programs, currently low at \$1,375, with the \$1,500 allotted by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, an amount consistent with national best-

¹ Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc., (2013). The Growing Convergence of Community Schools and Expanded Learning Opportunities. Retrieved from http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/ELORReport_TheGrowingConvergenceofCommunitySchoolsandExpandedLearningOpportunities.pdf

practices. A portion of this investment will also ensure quality by leveraging statewide knowledge, resources, and supports through technical assistance, allowing for data collection and evaluation to make evidence-based quality improvements, and providing state-level data on afterschool and summer programming.

Additionally, we request at least \$190 million to maintain child care subsidies to low-income, working families as New York State meets the new federally-mandated requirements, including new health and safety standards (estimated at \$90 million), expanded eligibility rules, and the new child care market rates. More than a third of child care subsidies in New York support child care for school-aged children, including afterschool programs. Investing in child care subsidies helps families ensure that their children are safe after the school day ends, and the new requirements mandated in the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) will result in loss of subsidies for many New York families if the state does not make this investment. An investment of at least \$190 million will ensure no children lose subsidies as the state implements these new requirements, with \$90 million supporting mandated health, safety, and quality initiatives, and with \$100 million maintaining slots in the face of expanded eligibility rules and market rate increases due in June 2016.

Need

The state currently has fewer high-quality afterschool and summer programs than are needed, depriving over a million students of support for their intellectual, social, and emotional development and their families of safe, affordable places for their children to continue learning until the work day ends. During the summer months, 500,000 New York children are still in need of access to high-quality summer programs. The lack of funding for afterschool and summer programs puts an additional burden on schools to meet students' needs without additional learning time or community support.

The *America After 3 PM* survey of parents and guardians found that an estimated 1.1 million New York students would attend an afterschool program if one were available.² This is the same number as when the *America After 3 PM* survey was conducted in 2009.³ In 2009, New York was ranked third in the nation on a combined score for afterschool availability and quality. In 2014, New York did not even make the Top 10. Funding for afterschool remains 35% below pre-recession levels and substantially below the need.

The state has the current capacity to dramatically increase the number of high-quality afterschool and summer programs, were the funding available. A review of recent grant competitions reveals that New York currently has the capacity to run additional programs utilizing at least \$170 million in additional funds. In 2012, OCFS conducted a grant competition for Advantage After School. An additional \$48 million would be needed to fund all applications which met the minimum criteria to run a safe, beneficial program. In 2013, NYSED conducted a grant competition for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (federal funding administered by NYSED) to fund afterschool programs. An additional \$122 million would be needed to fund all applications which met the minimum criteria to run a safe, beneficial program. Significant additional funding is needed to meet current and future demand and capacity for high-quality programs.

Potential Impact

The body of research on high-quality afterschool and summer programs has grown substantially in the last few years, and shows clear evidence that high-quality programs have significant effects.⁴ Regular attendance at a high-quality afterschool program over several years can close the achievement gap in

² Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3 PM*, 2014, <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>.

³ Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3 PM*, 2009, <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/AA3PM-2009.cfm>

⁴ AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network, *Top 10 Reasons You Should Support Expanded Learning Opportunities*, <http://www.nysan.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/top-10-reasons.pdf> (2014).

math for low-income students.⁵ High-quality summer programs can help students improve their math achievement by the equivalent of 17-21% of what they would normally learn in a year.⁶ Afterschool and summer programs support the development of critical thinking and social skills needed for long-term success in the workplace and in life. Afterschool programs typically include inquiry-based, applied learning that allows youth to take on worthwhile long-term goals and emphasizes collaboration, investigation, and problem-solving. Researchers have identified these types of activities as key for enabling youth to build the critical thinking and social skills that prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century.⁷

As featured in both *The Economist*⁸ and *The Atlantic*,⁹ researchers are also finding that the challenges of achieving the American Dream are partially due to the opportunity gap. ExpandedED Schools estimates that gap is 6,000 hours before children even leave elementary school.¹⁰ Children from well-off families play sports, learn an instrument, travel to museums and colleges, explore hobbies, and volunteer. Through these types of experiences, children become more likely to be engaged in learning because they can connect it to a real world situation and an opportunity for their future. These experiences often make children from well-off families stronger candidates for colleges and employers—think of all the spaces on college applications for students to present themselves as having interests and experiences outside of school. All our children need such enrichment activities, and afterschool programs are an effective way to close the opportunity gap.

Just a few examples of the innovative afterschool and summer opportunities provided by New York's programs:

- The Comet Design Co. in Carthage is an entrepreneurial program for high school students where participants write a business plan, utilize 3D printers and other high-tech devices to create real products, and then sell the products to support the afterschool program.
- Family Services Afterschool Programs in Poughkeepsie has partnered with the Animal Farm Foundation, providing students an opportunity to engage in a hands-on way with animals in need of care and to learn how to prevent animal cruelty.
- The Children's Aid Society in New York City has been providing youth from high-need neighborhoods the opportunity to intern in the offices of their elected officials, giving these youth the chance to gain valuable experience in a public service.
- The Boys and Girls Club of Massena, a community facing growing heroin and prescription drug addiction among youth, is working in concert with the local police department to provide a positive alternative for youth, through a program that provides a safe, educational place after school.
- Kieran's Kids, a youth mentoring and outreach program at Belmont Park in Nassau County, gives students a behind-the-scenes look into what takes place at a race track, including demonstrations in

⁵ Deborah Lowe Vandell, *The Achievement Gap is Real*, <http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/The%20Achievement%20Gap%20is%20Real.pdf> (2013).

⁶ Wallace Foundation, *Building Our Understanding of Summer Learning* <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-and-extended-learning-time/extended-learning-time/Documents/Knowledge-in-Brief-Building-Our-Understanding-of-Summer-Learning.pdf> (2014).

⁷ Robert Halpern et al., *Realizing the Potential of Learning in Middle Adolescence*, <http://www.erikson.edu/wp-content/uploads/Realizing-the-Potential-of-Learning-in-Middle-Adolescence.pdf> (2013).

⁸ The Economist, *An Hereditary Meritocracy*, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21640316-children-rich-and-powerful-are-increasingly-well-suited-earning-wealth-and-power?fsrc=scn/tw/te/pe/ed/anhereditarymeritocracy> (2015).

⁹ Alia Wong, *The Activity Gap*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/01/the-activity-gap/384961/> (2015).

¹⁰ ExpandedED Schools, *The 6,000-Hour Learning Gap*, <http://expandedschools.org/policy-documents/6000-hour-learning-gap#sthash.DhamOIOW.dpbs> (2013).

horse grooming, blacksmithing, and horse riding, while teaching them about the many different careers available in horse racing.

- Youth Philanthropy Council, a program provided by the Northern New York Community Foundation in four local high schools in the North Country, provides youth the opportunity to learn how the grant making process works and recommend grants to assist non-profits organizations in enhancing the quality of life in their community.
- The Garden of Fire is a summer program held in Steuban County for at-risk youth that offers camp goers the opportunity to participate in art activities, learn to drum, and receive counseling, concluding with a glass blowing demonstration connected to one of the region's major industries.

As New York seeks to ensure that all students graduate high school ready for college and career, it must invest in afterschool and summer programs. ASW:NYSAN recommends that the Legislature **provide increased funding for afterschool and summer programs through a total \$69.2 million investment in the Advantage After School Program and an additional \$190 million to maintain and expand child care subsidies.** We hope that the Legislature and the Governor will take this opportunity to not just meet the immediate need, but to also **create a plan for future investments that will work towards serving the estimated 1.1 million children who need an afterschool program and do not have access** so that the benefits of afterschool and summer programs can be made available to all of the students and families across New York who need them.

Additional Recommendations

Add \$28.33 million to the Youth Development Program (YDP) to expand out-of-school time services, with 30% going to New York City, and 70% to the Rest of the State. YDP leverages the county youth bureaus and local expertise to support afterschool and summer programs across the state. This program should be expanded to \$85 million after an initial investment of \$28.33 million. As critical infrastructure for youth services, YDP is crucial to maintain, and the legislature must reappropriate the \$1.28 million restoration which was included in the FY2015-16 Enacted Budget so that afterschool programs and services are not cut.

Accept the Governor's proposed increase in the Summer Youth Employment Program to \$31 million, and increase by an additional \$17.2 million to add 10,000 new jobs and pay the increased minimum wage. Summer Youth Employment (SYEP) dollars are a double investment in youth by the state. Working as staff for summer programs for younger children is the most common work assignment for SYEP participants, so SYEP allows summer programs to serve more children while supporting older youths in their transition to the workforce.

Accept the Governor's proposal for a continued \$250,000 to increase enrollment in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal entitlement program that, among other aspects, funds healthy snacks and suppers for children participating in afterschool programs that serve low-income communities. Unfortunately, not all programs that qualify for these funds are aware of them or enrolled. We have found that building targeted awareness of the program and providing step-by-step guidance on enrollment increases participation in CACFP. We estimate that enrolling just 50 afterschool programs not currently enrolled would bring \$1 million in federal funds annually to New York.

Support baselining the \$2.1 million legislative add for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) programs bringing total state support to \$4.48 million, and add \$5.5 million to bring total investment to \$10 million. Increased funding for RHYA will create additional beds and services and will allow for planning for a statewide count of youth homelessness in 2017.