



**PRESS RELEASE
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Final State Budget Includes \$3 Million Increase for the Advantage After School Program

This Year's Budget Marks the Largest Increase in State Afterschool Funding Since the Recession

ALBANY, NY – The Final State Budget for FY 16-17 includes the largest increase in statewide afterschool funding since the recession. The additional \$3 million included for the Advantage After School Program (Advantage) is a needed step towards addressing the 1.1 million children still in need of high-quality afterschool programs statewide, according to the *America After 3PM* 2014 survey by Afterschool Alliance. AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network (ASW:NYSAN) would like to thank Assembly Speaker Heastie, Assemblymembers Fahy, Hevesi, Lupardo, and Mayer, the Assembly Women's Caucus, and Senate Independent Democratic Caucus Leader Klein for their leadership in calling for this investment in New York's children and families.

The \$3 million investment increases the total funding level for Advantage to \$22.3 million for FY16-17, which is still \$6 million below pre-recession levels. This investment is a welcomed addition in support of Advantage, which currently provides quality afterschool programs for approximately 15,000 children and youth for three hours per day, five days per week during the school year. Targeted at high-need youth, Advantage focuses on improving social, emotional, academic, and vocational competencies, reducing instances of adolescent pregnancy, preventing juvenile crime and substance abuse, and providing a safe environment after school hours.

Kelly Sturgis, Executive Director, ASW:NYSAN, says, "ASW:NYSAN would like to see all of New York State's youth and families have access to high-quality experiences beyond the traditional classroom. The state's increase of \$3 million for the Advantage After School Program will help make this vision a reality for some of the state's 1.1 million children still in need of an afterschool program. We hope this investment will continue to grow in future budgets as the state works towards providing programming for all in need. We would like to commend the dedicated champions that helped ensure this funding was included in the Final Budget, and we applaud their commitment to our youth and families."

Research shows that high-quality afterschool programs create positive outcomes for youth, including reducing the opportunity gap which Expanded Schools (formerly TASC) has estimated at 6,000 hours between children born into poverty and their middle-class peers by the time they reach 6th grade. These programs introduce participants to experiences they may never otherwise have, often sparking interest in future career paths and increasing school attendance and engagement. Furthermore, research from Dr. Deborah Lowe Vandell at the University of California Irvine shows

that long-term participation in high-quality afterschool programs also closes the achievement gap in math by 5th grade.

New York State supports afterschool program quality through requiring the use of the Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool designed to highlight areas of strength and need across ten elements of quality and lead to an action plan used for continuous program quality improvement. All Advantage grantees are required to utilize the QSA Tool.

Total state funding for afterschool programs in the FY16-17 State Budget is \$62 million, and New York State's federal investment through the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program is currently \$84.5 million. While these investments support many high-quality afterschool programs across the state, the demand still far outweighs the availability. Significant future investments are needed to meet the need for those 1.1 million children who still require access to a high-quality program.

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AfterSchool Works! NY: the New York State Afterschool Network (ASW:NYSAN) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening the capacity and commitment of communities, programs, and professionals to increase access to high-quality programs and services beyond the traditional classroom. More information is available at www.nysan.org