



TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2018-2019 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES

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Our thanks to Senator Young, Assemblymember Weinstein, Senator Avella, Assemblymember Jaffee, and to the other members of the Finance, Ways and Means, Children and Families, and Social Services Committees for the opportunity to present testimony to you. All of New York's students deserve the chance to reach their full potential. Studies demonstrate the impact 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 halt summer learning loss. For students who are fortunate 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. Afterschool and summer opportunities provide enriching activities that spark a love of learning and inspire a future career path. They help New York's youth 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. These programs are 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 necessary role for New York students and families.

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 learning 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.

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 opportunities, including the Advantage After School Program and child care subsidies.

Advantage After School Program

We request that the Legislature restore funding for the Advantage After School Program (AASP) to \$22.3 million. The Governor's Budget Proposal of \$17.3 million is a \$2.5 million reduction from last year's enacted budget, and a \$5 million reduction from the FY16-17 budget. If funding is not restored to the FY16-17 level of \$22.3 million, at least 3,600 students currently enrolled in AASPs across the state will be at risk of losing access to their programs starting in the 2018-19 school year.

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

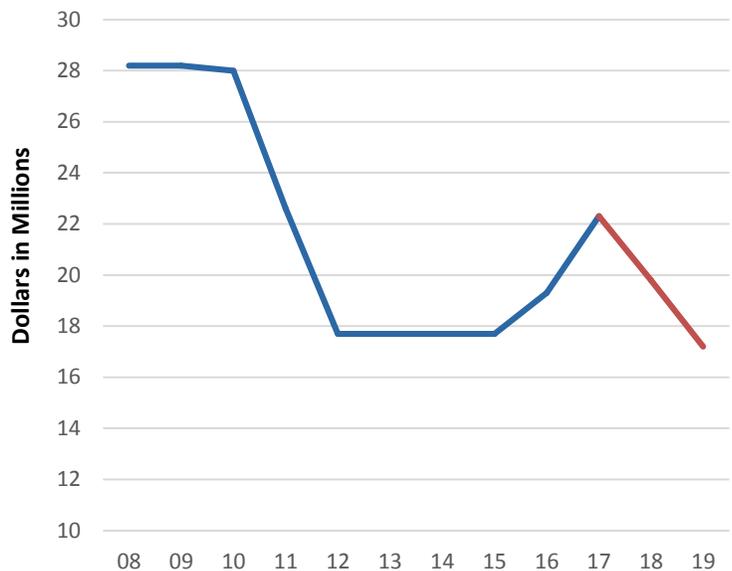
Uncertainty for Round 10 Advantage After School Request for Proposals

Without a restoration to \$22.3 million for AASP, a new RFP from the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) for Round 10 of AASP is not guaranteed, meaning 56 Round 8 grantees expiring June 2018 may not have an opportunity to apply for a new five year grant until 2019. This would cause many programs to close, directly impacting the students and families who have come to rely on their programs for afterschool care and academic support. Additionally, a gap in programming disrupts the continuity for which programs and schools strive.

Limited Geographical Overlap with Empire State After-School

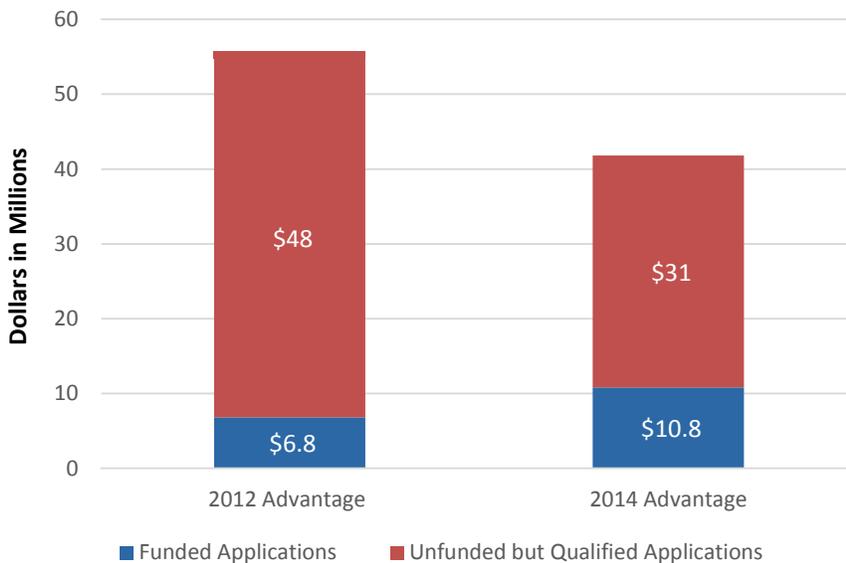
Out of the 177 AASP's operating across the state, 103 of these programs are located in areas not currently served through the Empire State After-School Program (ESAP). The number of students served in the 103 AASP's located outside of ESAP areas is roughly 9,400. While we support additional investments in afterschool programs from the state, we must ensure that existing funding streams that support currently operating afterschool programs are adequately funded as well.

Funding for Advantage After School



The Executive Budget proposes a \$2.5 million reduction to AASP, for a total of \$17.3 million in 2019.
 Source: Network analysis of NYS budget

Demand for Advantage Funding



Demand for Advantage After School Funding

Every recent competition for AASP funding has left three out of four applicants unfunded. Unfunded, but qualified, applications for the 2014 round of Advantage After School funding totaled over \$31 million; the 2012 round totaled almost \$48 million. The demand for afterschool funding far outweighs the need, and despite this clear gap, funding for Advantage was cut in last year's budget, and is proposed to be cut further unless the legislature restores funding.

Unfunded but qualified applications for Advantage After School compared to the funded applications
 Source: Office of Children and Family Services

Child Care Subsidies

We request the state increase funding for child care subsidies by \$31 million. This funding supports low-income, working families by providing subsidies to help parents access child care. An investment of \$31 million in child care subsidies would:

- Restore the child care subsidy program to the funding level established in 2016, adjusting for both the 2017 cut of \$7 million and two years of inflation;
- Assist counties that regularly exhaust their child care funding allocations before meeting the needs of all eligible families, to expand the number of qualified families served.

More than one-third of child care subsidies in New York support child care for school-aged children, including afterschool and summer programs. Investing in child care subsidies helps families ensure that their children are safe after the school day ends. .

Need

Despite last year's creation of the Empire State After-School Program, demand for high-quality afterschool programs still far outweighs the need. The state currently has fewer high-quality afterschool and summer programs than are needed, depriving 1.1 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.

The 2014 *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 Ten.

Even while students and families suffer without access to programs, providers have the current capacity to increase the number of high-quality afterschool and summer programs dramatically, were the funding available.

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 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.

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 New York State Network for Youth Success, *Top 10 Reasons You Should Support Expanded Learning Opportunities*, <http://networkforyouthsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/top-10-reasons-draft-5.6.16.pdf> (2014).

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/Documents/Knowledge-in-Brief-Building-Our-Understanding-of-Summer-Learning.pdf> (2014).

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

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.⁸ 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.

Innovative Practices in New York's Afterschool and Summer Programs

- Off The Street, an Advantage After School program at Hamilton Elementary School in the Mount Vernon City School District, employs local teens from Thornton High School and provides them with the opportunity to give back to their community by mentoring the younger children.
- The 21st Century Community Learning Center/Extended School Day program at Thomas R. Proctor High School in Utica hosts an annual blanket drive that collects over 2,200 blankets, which are distributed to all 12 Utica City District Schools, local hospitals, and the humane society.
- The Advantage After School Program at Boys & Girls Harbor in East Harlem, an arts focused afterschool program, recently performed the hit song, “Rise Up,” with Andra Day on the Billboard Women in Music 2016 Awards and at Colin and Alma Powell’s Americas Promise National Summit 2017.
- 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.
- Children’s Aid 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 heroin and prescription drug addiction among youth, is working with the local police department to provide a positive alternative for youth, through a program that provides a safe, educational place after school.
- The Garden of Fire is a summer program held in Steuben County for at-risk youth that offers campers the opportunity to participate in art activities, learn to drum, and receive counseling, concluding with a glass blowing demonstration linked to one of the region’s major industries.

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

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. The New York State Network for Youth Success recommends that the Legislature:

- **Restore funding for Advantage After School to \$22.3 million, ensuring no loss in the number of students served.**
- **Increase funding for child care subsidies by \$31 million, which includes the Governor's proposed restoration of \$7 million.**

We urge the Legislature to 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.

Additional Recommendations

Restore \$1.698 million in funding for the Youth Development Program (YDP) added by the Legislature in the FY16-17 Final Budget, and eliminate the sunset date for YDP. At minimum, YDP should be extended for an additional three years. The Executive Budget proposes funding at \$14.12 million. YDP leverages the county youth bureaus and local expertise to support afterschool and summer programs across the state.

Maintain the \$4 million increase in the Executive Proposal for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and add an additional \$4.4 million for a total investment of \$44.4 million. 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.