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Legislators and Community Leaders Discuss the Crucial Role of Afterschool Programs

Albany, NY – January 14, 2014 – With a growing body of research showing that afterschool programs can reduce juvenile crime and help low-income students close the achievement gap, the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) held *Inspiring, Preparing, Supporting: A Summit on Afterschool, Summer, and Expanded Learning Opportunities for New York's Students* on Tuesday to educate legislators on the importance of afterschool and other expanded learning opportunities.

The summit, which took place in the Empire State Concourse, was attended by more than a hundred legislators, afterschool and summer leaders, educators, funders, regulators, and community stakeholders. Panelists discussing the importance of afterschool, summer and other expanded learning opportunities in New York included the Syracuse police chief, a school superintendent and the head of the United Federation of Teachers. The event was sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures and many other organizations.

Speakers celebrated the state's investment in these kinds of high-quality programs. They also highlighted the need for many more such programs, with more than a million New York students still in need of a safe, educational, and supportive place to be outside school hours.

"The opportunities provided by afterschool programs across the state make a difference in thousands of children's lives every day," said **Senator Patrick Gallivan** (59th District, Chair, Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections). "From enhancing the traditional education experience, to providing a constructive and positive environment for at-risk youths to study and socialize, the community benefits of afterschool programs are unquestionable. For those reasons and so many more, I am proud to take part in today's summit and even prouder to have been a long-time supporter of New York afterschool programs and the children they serve."

"It is very important that the state continue to provide resources for after school and summer programs" said **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan** (37th District, Chair, Education). "We must continue to advance policies like after school funding to help close the achievement gap."

Afterschool and summer programs allow parents to work without anxiety about their children's safety and learning after school lets out. They help students stay on track to graduate and out of trouble, and assist them in developing the social and emotional skills they need to be healthy, employed adults.

Assemblymember Donna Lupardo (123rd District, Chair, Children and Families) said, "As the Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families and an active supporter of afterschool programs in my own community, I know what an impact afterschool and summer

programs can have on children's lives. Afterschool programs can make the difference for families facing the challenge of paying for high-quality child care, for children needing some extra mentoring, and for communities looking to raise healthier, more engaged children. I'm happy to participate in this summit as a way to continue and grow the conversation about expanding learning opportunities for all New York's communities."

Speakers included United Federation of Teachers President **Michael Mulgrew** and Syracuse Police Chief **Frank Fowler** and legislative leaders such as Senator **Patrick Gallivan** and Assemblymembers **Catherine Nolan**, **Donna Lupardo**, **Karim Camara**, and **Shelley Mayer**.

Speaking on the crucial role afterschool and summer programs play in the lives of New York's students and families were **Lucy Friedman**, President of The After-School Corporation (TASC); **Maggie Martinez Malito**, Executive Director of the Nassau County Office of Youth Services; **Patricia Leo**, Director of Community Investment at United Way of Greater Rochester; and **Superintendent Tom Phillips**, of Watkins Glen School District.

As part of the summit, afterschool students from the Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program performed Takai, a popular game in Ghana, West Africa and program participants from Troy Middle School's 21st Century After-school Program demonstrated Tae Kwon Do.

Many of New York's afterschool and summer programs are national leaders in quality and innovation. High-quality afterschool and summer programs have been shown to close the achievement gap for low-income students, reduce juvenile crime, and increase positive behaviors and attitudes linked to long-term life success. New York State has historically made strong investments in out-of-school time programs through funding streams such as Advantage After School, Extended School Day/ School Violence Prevention, and the Youth Development Program.

New York has also become a leader in incorporating expanded learning opportunities into other models of rethinking the traditional school model. The community schools model, where the school is seen as a hub for vital services for children and their families, incorporates afterschool and summer programs more than 90% of the time. The tremendous value of this approach for New York families has been demonstrated by the Children's Aid Society and the United Federation of Teachers, and 30 grants for new community schools were recently announced under an initiative put forth by Governor Andrew A. Cuomo last year. Similarly, New York is also piloting Expanded Learning Time in New York City and Rochester, where strong school-community partnerships, such as those fostered by TASC, create a longer learning day and/or year in a way that creates more opportunities for enrichment and deeper learning.

Participants left *Inspiring, Preparing, Supporting: A Summit on Afterschool, Summer, and Expanded Learning Opportunities for New York's Students* with an understanding of the strength of New York's afterschool community and of the opportunity to do more for New York's students and families.

Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, Executive Director of NYSAN said, "New York's leaders have set ambitious goals for college and career readiness for all New York's students, and afterschool and summer programs are an important part of achieving those goals. High-quality expanded learning opportunities, which take place in a variety of settings with a variety of approaches, share a belief in supporting each student in taking on new challenges, learning new skills, and developing healthy relationships. This support translates over time to better attendance, better

behavior, better grades, and better social-emotional skills—the core components of preparing our students to succeed as adults.”

Lucy Friedman, President of TASC said, “With New York State school and community leaders in the forefront of the movement to expand learning time and opportunities, we’ve got a lot to learn from each other about the most effective strategies and practices at this summit.”

Tom Phillips, Superintendent of Watkins Glen Central School District said, “Schools can no longer work in isolation, particularly if we want our youth to be able to compete in the global economy. Community partnerships are the key to establishing a strong surround and support network for our children. We need more school-community partnerships to expand learning opportunities and intervene with youth before their struggles reach a crisis point.”

Eddie Fergus, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development at New York University said, “My research and that of others in the field has found that high-quality out-of-school-time programs can make a profound difference in the lives of our students, particularly those from vulnerable populations. As we seek to improve outcomes for boys—and girls—of color, afterschool and summer programs are an important part of the solution to the challenges they face.”

Maggie Martinez Malito, Executive Director, Nassau County Office of Youth Services said, “Nassau County and the Long Island Region are pleased to be invited to participate in this important New York State and national dialogue regarding policies and practices that will ensure the safety and success of our children today and for generations to come.”

Bonnie Glazer, President, Child & Adolescent Treatment Services, said, “As many as one in four of our children will struggle with an emotional disorder at some time, and all our students can use support in developing the social and emotional skills they need to be healthy, thriving adults. Afterschool programs are an effective opportunity to help students build resilience, develop healthy relationships, and participate in enrichment activities that inspire life-long passions—all key parts of healthy development. Investing early in children’s social and emotional health through afterschool programs has long-term benefits for children, their families, and our community.”

Kyle Stewart, Executive Director, Alliance of New York State YMCAs said, “Approximately one-third of New York State’s children are overweight or obese and this generation may be the first to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Afterschool and summer programs represent a major opportunity to encourage kids to engage in healthy eating and physical activity, while improving their health, well-being, and social and emotional development.”

Drema Brown, Vice President of the School-Age Division at The Children’s Aid Society said, “Today’s summit is an exciting opportunity for meaningful dialogue with legislators, their staff and other providers about how quality expanded learning opportunities support progress in the classroom. At Children’s Aid, through our community schools strategy, we fully integrate after-school and summer programs, as well as early childhood education, into the school setting. We look forward to continuing to partner with New York State to ensure that significantly more children gain access to these high-quality programs, particularly those from New York City’s neediest communities.”

Patricia Leo, Director of Community Investment at United Way of Greater Rochester said, “According to an independent evaluation, participants in United Way of Great Rochester’s after-

school programs last year attended an average of four more days of school than their peers and their GPAs were .87 points higher than their classmates. Our investment in high-quality programs—and the data analysis to help them keep improving—is paying off for Rochester’s kids. Similar high-quality programs, especially with support for ongoing quality improvement, can have this kind of impact on students across New York, making a meaningful difference in students’ academic success.”

Jim Bostic, Executive Director of the Nepperhan Community Center said, “While current research demonstrates the short and long-term financial and human benefits of high-quality afterschool programs to children, families, and communities, government funding for such programs has decreased over the past few years. We know that afterschool programming is a solid investment of tax dollars and important to the children, families, older adults, teachers and school leaders, public safety officers, and many others who benefit from all our children having the supports they need to thrive as independent, productive, and fulfilled members of our community, and I’m pleased to help draw attention to the value of these programs today.”

Timothy Davis, Co-Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County said, “4-H After School Programs have been highly effective in increasing school test scores for youth in elementary schools, reducing disciplinary incidents with participating youth, and increasing school attendance. Participating youth have been eager to reinforce concepts learned in schools, as well as learning new concepts, through engaging, experiential activities provided through 4-H curriculum. Effective collaborations with schools, teachers, community organizations and other resource people allows After School Programs to support a child’s educational and developmental needs, allowing them to thrive in school and in their community.”

SPONSORS: National Conference of State Legislatures, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Brofenbrenner Foundation, Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H, TASC, Say Yes to Education, The Children's Aid Society, Alliance of New York State YMCAs, Good Shepherd Services, Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus, and the New York State Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs.