

**TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2017-2018
EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES**

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Our thanks to Senator Young, Assemblymember Farrell, 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 today regarding the Executive Budget Proposal.

Every one of New York's students deserves the chance to reach his or her 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 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. 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 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.

We request that the Legislature appropriate \$32.8 million to the Advantage After School Program (AASP). The Governor's Budget Proposal of \$17.2 million is a \$5 million reduction from FY16-17. \$32.8 million would be an increase of \$10.5 million over the FY16-17 funding level, and would increase the total number served by Advantage After School to 20,000 students, the peak number funded in 2007-2008. This increase would also provide the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) with adequate funding to raise the per student allotment

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

rate from \$1,375 to \$1,600. This would align AASP per student allotment rates with the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention Program, and the new Empire State After-School Program, and would allow programs to meet the demands of the rising minimum wage without cutting back on program hours, supplies, or curriculum.

If the final budget maintains the Governor's proposed cut, it will leave OCFS without enough uncommitted funds to release a new competition for awards this year, even as 56 programs serving an estimated 5,000 students are set to expire in 2017. While the Governor's Executive Budget does include important new afterschool funding in the form of \$35 million for the Empire State After-School program, this new program targets 16 Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative areas, and the many rural programs and urban programs located outside of the ESPRI areas will not directly benefit from this \$35 million investment. Over 3,000 students in Advantage After School Programs outside of the 16 ESPRI cities with grants ending this year will not have the opportunity to access a program funded under this new proposal.

Additionally, we request at least \$100 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, 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. **Furthermore, we ask that the Legislature oppose the Governor's proposal to transfer \$27 million from Title XX to child care support.** Local social service districts use Title XX funds for critical programming, and the transfer would result in a net loss for local counties.

Need

Even with increased investments in the Advantage After School Program and proposed new investments in the Empire State After-School program, the demand 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. 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 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. Funding for afterschool remains 27% below pre-recession levels and substantially below the need.

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>

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. A review of recent grant competitions reveals that New York currently has the capacity to run additional programs utilizing at least \$170 million in added funds. In 2013, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) conducted a grant competition for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (federal funding administered by NYSED) to fund afterschool and summer programs. An additional \$122 million would be needed to fund all applications which met the minimum criteria to run a safe, beneficial program. In the 2012 competition for the Advantage After School program, set to expire this year without a new competition if funding is not restored, \$6.8 million was awarded to programs. The total funds requested by all applications that met the minimum criteria to run a safe, beneficial program was \$54.4 million, \$48 million of which went unfunded. Significant additional funding is needed to meet current and future demand and capacity for high-quality programs, and funding for Advantage After School Programs must be restored this year.

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. 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

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

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

- 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 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.
- Kiaran'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 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 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.

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 **provide increased funding for afterschool programs through a total \$32.8 million investment in the Advantage After School Program and an additional \$100 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.

Additional Recommendations

Restore \$1.698 million in funding for the Youth Development Program (YDP) added by the Legislature in the FY16-17 Final Budget. 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 \$5 million increase in the Executive Proposal for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and add an additional \$8.6 million for a total investment of \$44.86 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.