



**TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2019-2020
EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES
JANUARY 24, 2019**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Kelly Sturgis, Executive Director of the New York State Network for Youth Success and I am here to talk to you about afterschool, expanded learning, and summer programs.

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. They also provide Protective Factors such as access to and relationships with nurturing adults that we know result in healthier children who make better decisions and are able to build skills that last a lifetime.

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.

While we are pleased that the State has shown an interest in afterschool by supporting the Governor's Empire State After-School Program (ESAP), we caution this committee that these are new programs funded through the education budget. New York still needs to increase investment in the Advantage After School Program (AASP), which serves 16,000 children and youth statewide. Of the 177 AASP's operating across the State, 52 are located in areas not currently served through the ESAPs and serve roughly 4,000. 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.

Advantage After School Program

We urge the Legislature to restore funding for the AASP. The Governor's Budget Proposal of \$17.2 million is a reduction from last year's enacted budget. We thank the Legislature for restoring the \$5 million cut last year and ask you to do so again. If funding is not restored to

\$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 2019-20 school year.

We thank the Executive for including a \$10.7 million increase for the afterschool workforce and ask you to maintain this much-needed cost of living adjustment and extend it for at least five years to FY23-24. This would bring the base funding for AASP to \$32.9 million if the Legislature restores the \$5 million cut.

We urge the Legislature to increase funding for the AASP in order to increase the per pupil rate. Yet, even with the increases noted above, programs are underfunded and struggle to provide the highest quality services to children and youth. Our research shows that funding is spent predominantly on salaries, with little left over for materials or activities. While the true cost of providing a high-quality experience is just under \$3,000 in Buffalo and an estimated \$6,000 in New York City, AASP subsist on \$1,375 per pupil. Even the ESAP, with a \$1,600 per pupil rate, does not reflect the true cost.

This year **we are requesting that the per pupil rate increase to \$2,320 to at least accommodate the increase in the minimum wage.** When the rate was set at \$1,375 in 2009, the minimum wage was \$7.25. This \$2,320 rate would allow for the same level of services originally provided under this program, while accounting for the minimum wage increase. At the same time, we must continue to serve the same number of children.

Empire State After-School Program

We request that the State maintain the Executive's proposal to increase funding for the ESAP by \$10 million. This would raise the total funding to \$55 million and allow the program to expand across the State. (Funding is in the Education Budget.)

Child Care Subsidies

We urge the State to increase funding for child care subsidies by \$51 million. This funding supports low-income, working families by providing subsidies to help parents access child care. An investment of \$51 million in child care subsidies would restore the program to the funding level established in 2016. **We also support the Executive's proposal to require the Regional Economic Development Councils to include child care in their 2019 Strategic Plans.**

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.

Youth Development Program

We urge the State to restore \$1.698 million in funding for the Youth Development Program that was included in the FY16-17 budget. This funding supports afterschool and summer programs, in addition to other crucial youth services, as distributed by local youth bureaus throughout the state.

Summer Youth Employment Program

We ask the State to increase investment by \$4 million. This funding will allow summer programs to employ 3,000 additional staff, increasing the number of youth they can serve. Furthermore, the young adults employed through this program gain valuable work experiences to help them develop skills needed for future careers, and may spark interest in further youth development work.

Regulated Adult Use Marijuana Revenue

Finally, we request that the State invest 25% of any revenue secured through the legalization of adult use marijuana in afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs enhance social-emotional development by focusing on responsible decision-making and self-management. They also strengthen Protective Factors—those characteristics that build resiliency and help kids cope with whatever is happening at home, at school, and in their neighborhoods.

In Alaska, which recently allocated 12.5% of revenue from the legalization of recreational marijuana to afterschool, data shows that youth who participated in programs just twice a week were 40% less likely to use marijuana.

In New York State, if we regulate adult use of marijuana, we can still keep children and youth safe, educate them on responsible choices, and provide them with the relationships that will help support them to success.

We know that drug use among youth increases in the unsupervised afterschool hours. According to the RAND Corporation, "The likelihood of youth exposure to drug use and other

criminal behavior increases dramatically in the hours after school ends.”¹The National Crime and Prevention Council provides that “Latchkey children are particularly vulnerable to alcohol or other drug use because they are unsupervised by their parents or other responsible adults before and after school.”² This is confirmed by research and student surveys. One study found that being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that an eighth grader will smoke, drink, or abuse drugs.³ A YMCA survey found that teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs.⁴

Research shows that afterschool program participation decreases drug use. The Rand Corporation found that the availability of quality afterschool activities can reduce participation in, and victimization as a result of, illicit activities and boost academic performance.⁵ For example, a study of Boys & Girls Clubs found that housing projects without clubs had 30% more drug activity than those with new clubs.⁶ Another study of afterschool programs focused on positive youth development found that program participants exhibited significantly lower increases in alcohol, marijuana, other drug use, and any drug use one year after beginning the program, compared to a control group.⁷ And a meta-analysis reviewing dozens of studies found that students who participated in high-quality afterschool programs exhibited significant reductions in drug use and other problem behaviors.⁸ Lowering the risk of substance abuse among at-risk youth can save an estimated \$840,000 to \$1.1 million that the average substance abuser imposes on society.⁹

Afterschool programs help prevent substance abuse by not only keeping kids supervised, but also building Protective Factors that make them less likely to use drugs. The more Protective Factors present in a young person’s life, the more likely it is that they will engage in healthy behaviors. Afterschool programs reduce substance abuse through the development of protective or resiliency factors such as school connectedness, self-control, self-confidence, and quality peer relationships.¹⁰ Protective Factors also include increasing academic skills and positive school behaviors; research on high-quality afterschool has been shown to improve school attendance and academic success.

We have discussed our revenue investment proposal with the Governor’s Office and hope that you will support us as we move forward.

In closing, I want to note that I am on the Steering Committee of *Winning Beginning NY* and the Network supports the Coalition’s agenda. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

¹ <http://www.rand.org/topics/after-school-programs.html>

² <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/school-safety/strategies/strategy-before-and-after-school-programs>

³ <https://ccjs.umd.edu/sites/ccjs.umd.edu/files/pubs/GottfredsonWeismanSoule.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/fs200114.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.rand.org/topics/after-school-programs.html>

⁶ Schinke, S.P., Orlandi, M.A., Cole, K.C., Boys & Girls Clubs in Public Housing Developments: Prevention Services for Youth at Risk, *Journal of Community Psychology*, OSAP Special Issue, 1992.

⁷ [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(07\)00104-8/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(07)00104-8/fulltext)

⁸ http://www.flume.com.br/pdf/Durlak_A_meta-analysisof_after_school.pdf

⁹ Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). *New Evidence on The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth*. Springer.

¹⁰ http://www.viriya.net/jabref/the_protective_function_of_after-school_programming_and_parent_education_and_support_for_students_at_risk_for_substance_abuse.pdf