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Afterschool Programs Seek State Guidance to Remain Operational Through COVID-19 PAUSE
Assemblywoman Jaffee and NYS Legislators Send Letter to Governor Cuomo Asking for Information

Albany, NY (April 28, 2020) – More than 20 members of the New York State Assembly sent a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo requesting immediate state guidance to enable afterschool programs to remain viable.

The letter asks “the Office of Children and Family Services to release guidance that would allow grantees of the Empire State After-School Program (ESAP) and the Advantage After School Program (AASP) to continue utilizing their afterschool contracts during this difficult time.”

Since New York’s school buildings were closed on March 16, many afterschool programs have adjusted to:

- operate childcare centers to serve the children of essential workers,
- provide virtual programming,
- serve and deliver meals, and
- share diverse resources to help families.

Afterschool programs are in desperate need of guidance from the state in order to retain staff and keep programs running – now, and in anticipation of reopening the state’s economy, when parents will need supervision for their children in order to return to work. Because afterschool providers have received no guarantees that staff can be paid through state contracts, many employees have already been laid off and some programs have closed.

“Afterschool programs are in desperate need of guidance from New York State in order to remain operational through the COVID-19 PAUSE,” said Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Children and Families. “It is essential that these programs have guidance and funding to ensure that when we all return to our normal day to day lives, our youth will continue to thrive in New York State.”

Afterschool programs are essential to re-opening the state’s economy. In his COVID-19 briefings, Governor Cuomo has repeatedly stated that it will be difficult to re-open businesses without having safe places for employees’ children to go while school buildings are closed.

Yet while some programs have received state guidance regarding service provision and payment, the two major state funding streams for afterschool programs - Advantage After School and Empire State After-School - continue to wait. Information is urgently needed for these programs to retain high-quality staff and provide vital services that students and families in underserved communities need during this difficult time.

“Parents will not be able to go back to work if they don’t have care for their children,” said Kelly Sturgis, Executive Director of the New York State Network for Youth Success. “Afterschool programs must remain viable during this time of crisis. State funding guarantees are needed now to keep these essential programs operational.”

“Our children need the great services provided by afterschool programs, and our afterschool programs need the services provided by the state,” said Assemblymember Harry Bronson. “That guidance is vital at these uncertain times.”

“I am hopeful that the Office of Children and Family Services will soon release guidance to give afterschool programs direction on how to proceed during these uncertain times,” said Assemblymember John T. McDonald III.

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About The New York State Network for Youth Success

The New York State Network for Youth Success is dedicated to building a youth-serving system that increases the quality and availability of afterschool and expanded learning programs. The Network for Youth Success supports all programs that promote young people’s intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development outside the traditional school day. These programs include those that serve youth in kindergarten through 12th grade, take place in schools and/or in community-based settings, and occur before and after school, during weekends, holidays, and summer breaks, or during the school day through partnerships with community organizations.

The Network for Youth Success convenes partners and coordinates them around a common agenda focused on partnership development, policy development, and capacity building. The network connects practice with policy across a broad range of state, regional, and local partners that represent the afterschool, expanded learning, community schools, and youth development fields broadly.