



**TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2022-2023 EXECUTIVE  
BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES  
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*Trudy Morgan*

*Policy Director, New York State Network for Youth Success*

[trudy@networkforyouthsuccess.org](mailto:trudy@networkforyouthsuccess.org) / 518-270-1275

Thank you to Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Weinstein, Senator Brisport, Assemblymember Hevesi, Senator Persaud, and Assemblymember Rosenthal, 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.

The New York State Network for Youth Success is a non-profit organization with the goal to transform afterschool and summer learning across New York. We envision New York as a place where all K-12 youth have access to high-quality learning experiences beyond the traditional school day that prepare them for success in school, college, careers, and life. The programs we represent impact thousands of youth across the state. Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs inspire students to learn, keep kids safe, and give parents and caregivers peace of mind.

### **IMPACT OF AFTERSCHOOL**

Decades of research shows that afterschool programs play a critical role in improving student outcomes. Research spanning several states shows that every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least \$3.<sup>1</sup> Children and youth who participate in afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning programs:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Afterschool Programs: A Wise Public Investment (2005). Afterschool Alliance.  
<https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/printPage.cfm?idPage=BC05E8A3-1E0B-E803-CADCD9D1B482AD0B>

<sup>2</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2017). What Does the Research Say About Afterschool?  
[http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What\\_Does\\_the\\_Research\\_Say\\_About\\_Afterschool.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/What_Does_the_Research_Say_About_Afterschool.pdf); Afterschool Alliance. (2020). 21st Century Community Learning Centers: The evidence base. <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/21stCCLCResearch-02202020.pdf2>; Afterschool Alliance. (2019). Issue Brief 75: Afterschool: Fostering Protective Factors that Can Last a Lifetime. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_protective\\_factors\\_75.pdf3](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_protective_factors_75.pdf3); Afterschool Alliance. (2018). Issue Brief 72: A Big-Picture Approach to Wellness: Afterschool Supporting Strong Bodies and Minds. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_hepa\\_sel\\_72.pdf4](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_hepa_sel_72.pdf4). Afterschool Alliance. (2017). Issue Brief 70: Building Workforce Skills in Afterschool. [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue\\_briefs/issue\\_workforce\\_readiness\\_70.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/issue_briefs/issue_workforce_readiness_70.pdf)

- Develop strong social skills
- Get excited about learning
- Attend school more often
- Make gains in reading and math
- Improve work habits and grades
- Gain workforce skills: communications, teamwork, critical thinking
- Are less likely to use alcohol, drugs and engage in other risky behaviors
- Have higher graduation rates

### **In New York, afterschool works.**

Afterschool provides the support caregivers want for children’s well-being and healthy development, including safe opportunities to connect with peers, build positive relationships, learn life skills, enjoy healthy meals, and be physically active. An overwhelming majority of New York parents and caregivers are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program (94%) and summer program (95%) experience. Furthermore, among New York caregivers:

- 82% say afterschool programs give them peace of mind.
- 80% agree afterschool programs help them keep their jobs.
- 76% believe afterschool reduces the likelihood that kids will engage in risky behaviors.
- 88% support public funding for afterschool programs.
- 89% support public funding for summer learning opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

**Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs are an essential part of New York’s education system.** New York’s students need a robust learning environment where they are empowered to realize their full potential. Afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning programs complement what students learn at school: These programs provide more time for deeper learning, creative spaces for hands-on projects, and opportunities to explore careers. Through their expertise, resources, and relationships, community-based afterschool programs help to strengthen the infrastructure for integrated supports, including the incorporation of high-quality informal instructional programming and project-based learning, and social emotional support. Amid the pandemic, students faced unprecedented obstacles to their learning, health, and overall well-being. Today, school districts are provided with game-changing investments through the phased funding of Foundation Aid and significant American Rescue Plan education dollars, and there has never been as opportune a time as we have now to reimagine every New York student’s learning experience in a high-quality, well-rounded education. Strong collaboration with community-based, afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning programs can set the stage for building a transformative and sustainable education system that ensures every student succeeds.

**Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs are an essential part of New York’s child care system.** For every ten New York families receiving child care subsidies,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. The Afterschool Alliance. *Afterschool After 3PM, Summer 2020*. <http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/geo/New%20York/summer>

about half receive this assistance to provide care for their school-age child[ren] between 5-12 years. Approximately 40,897 school-age children are served at an average subsidy of \$471 each month, with a majority of these funds going to those served in family child care.<sup>4</sup> Pre-COVID-19 statistics revealed that parents and caregivers miss an average of eight days of work per year due to a lack of afterschool care for their school-age children. Decreased worker productivity related to caregivers' concerns about afterschool care are estimated to cost businesses up to \$300 billion per year.<sup>5</sup> Access to child care assistance for families with school-age children, and afterschool services through high-quality school-age child care programs promote stability for families who rely on these supports to balance work and life. The 2,764 school-age child care programs providing before school, afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning supports are an integral part of New York's child care system, helping to ensure continuum-of-care for New York's children under 13 years old. It is imperative that any efforts to improve the child care system include support for school-age child care to maximize support for ALL children, including those that are school-age and families seeking care.

**Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs are an essential part of New York's youth development system.** A 2019 report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, [The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth](#)<sup>6</sup> revealed that the adolescent years are a critical time for positive growth and a period of resilience to recover from past childhood traumas. In afterschool, children and youth are surrounded by caring adults and mentors that help create a safe space for participants to express themselves, develop a sense of belonging, and discover their passions, while fostering an environment that supports healthy development. Afterschool programs foster healthy social networks for participants through the development of protective or resiliency factors such as school connectedness, self-management, self-awareness, and quality peer relationships. Afterschool programs are a critical component of the infrastructure in place that promotes the positive experiences, environment, and relationships that ensure positive youth development for young people.<sup>7</sup>

## **AFTERSCHOOL, SUMMER, AND EXPANDED LEARNING PROGRAMS NEED SUPPORT TO MITIGATE CHALLENGES THAT UNDERMINE THEIR ROLE AND IMPACT**

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<sup>4</sup> National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment. Federal Supports for Afterschool and Summer Child Care. 2021. Retrieved from <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/ncase-ny-saccdatabprofile-2021.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Afterschool Alliance. Addressing Common Misconceptions. N.D. Retrieved from: <https://www.afterschoolalliance.org/electionkit/CommonMisconceptions.cfm#:~:text=Research%20has%20found%20that%20parents,to%20%24300%20billion%20per%20year.>

<sup>6</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25388>.

<sup>7</sup> McDowell Group: McDowell Group. 2018.. *Protective Factors for Youth Substance Abuse and Delinquency: The Role of Afterschool Programs*. Retrieved from <https://www.mcdowellgroup.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/act-protective-factors-and-afterschool-programs-1-30-2018-final.pdf>

Over the last three years, New York’s afterschool programs have experienced many crises, including severe staff under-compensation, low per-student reimbursement rates, contract modifications to state-funded programs, and lack of direct stimulus funding support.

Staff shortages remain a top concern for afterschool programs in New York. Afterschool programs face daunting and well-documented challenges in recruiting, hiring, and retaining staff, and this was true even before the pandemic. Challenges include low wages, lack of child care for staff, and lack of advancement opportunities. This challenge has exacerbated greatly amid the pandemic as many providers struggle with staff shortages due to increased and accumulated burdens on the afterschool system further outlined later in this testimony. Sustained efforts toward competitive compensation and benefits to adequately support the afterschool workforce do not only help promote job quality (positive and productive work environment) and stability needed to ensure high quality programs, but also help to reinforce this important work afterschool professional do as a viable, sustainable, and rewarding career path.

Inadequate per-student rate: Many afterschool professionals, who are part of the resilient child care workforce, are often underpaid due to low reimbursement and per-student rates. The highest per-student rate yet for a state afterschool funding stream at \$2,000 still falls short of what the rate should be in 2021 (\$2,320) if it accounted for minimum wage adjustments while holding everything else constant and did not take into account post-pandemic inflation. It is also woefully inadequate when considering the true costs of delivering high-quality programming, which can be as high as \$7,000 per student.

Structural and administrative challenges: Shortly after the pandemic began, afterschool programs were notified of a shift in reimbursement process toward an attendance-based model. This shift, amid a crisis, greatly shortchanged programs and put them in untenable positions. A survey conducted by [the NYS Network for Youth Success](#)<sup>8</sup> showed that this change resulted in significant operational, structural, administrative, and financial challenges for running these programs, thus reducing program quality and availability.

## **FY 23-24 AFTERSCHOOL BUDGET PRIORITIES**

New York has made important afterschool investments, but they still fall short of what is needed to ensure that the 1.6 million students who would participate in an afterschool program, if one were available to them, are able to do so. New York is strongly positioned to build on the national momentum to “[engage every student](#)” in high-quality afterschool,

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<sup>8</sup> Afterschool Reimbursement Survey. March 2022. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CcmIjtL-14imZJMSfsaA60IkVPBh1Cq\\_/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CcmIjtL-14imZJMSfsaA60IkVPBh1Cq_/view?usp=sharing)

summer, and expanded learning programs by sustaining and increasing afterschool access; expanding dedicated technical support; and investing in the afterschool workforce. Our budget recommendations this year present a roadmap for a strong afterschool system by restructuring current afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning opportunities; and increasing support for professional development, coordination, and quality standards for these programs. We are asking New York State to:

**Invest 219 million to reorganize current afterschool programs at a higher per-student rate of \$4,300:** This is a critical year to align the two largest New York afterschool programs, the Empire State After-School Program (ESAP) and Advantage After School Program (AASP) as the timelines for both AASP and ESAP are converging toward the same program end date. Moreover, these two programs follow very similar objectives and benchmarks (with few notable distinctions) and efforts to streamline regulations, compliance, and RFP and contracting processes would mitigate the many barriers providers face when accessing afterschool funding. The Executive Budget takes a promising step to “consolidate” by moving ESAP funding to the Office of Children and Families (OCFS), the agency that has administered the program since its inception in 2017, but falls short of increasing afterschool investments needed to keep programs afloat. With the current highest per-student rate yet for a state afterschool funding stream at \$2,000 being woefully inadequate, New York must do more and do things differently to ensure that programs have increased support by adopting crucial fundamental principles.<sup>9</sup> It is imperative that the FY23-24 budget:

- Establishes a higher per student rate of \$4,300 and ensures continued assessment and modification of per student rates in future rounds consistent with minimum wage increases and cost-of-living adjustments in statute:<sup>10</sup>

*Empire State After-School Program and Advantage After School Program grants awarded on or after August first, two thousand twenty-three shall be provided at a rate of no less than four thousand and three hundred dollars per approved student. The commissioner, in conjunction with the director of the budget, shall, upon the completion of the full term of the Empire State After-School Program and Advantage After School Program, modify the amount of money per approved student to be awarded to grant*

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<sup>9</sup> Any new initiative to set the course for a new, improved, high-quality afterschool program initiative must prioritize these principles:

- Ensures equitable access to high-quality programs by adopting the base, true cost, per student rate of \$4,300 and/or an established level funding of \$219 million at the onset of the program.
- Guarantees afterschool access to at least 50,000 students, the current capacity served by ESAP and AASP programs
- Prioritizes competitive workforce compensation and professional development
- Maximizes outcomes for students, families, and providers impacted by the afterschool programs
- Prioritizes eligibility for BOTH school districts and CBOs as lead applicants, and their collaboration
- Prioritizes technical assistance, research, and evaluation to sustain quality supports
- Actively engages the statewide afterschool network, New York State Network for Youth Success, in the development, implementation, and provision of quality supports and capacity building
- Streamlines regulations, compliances, and RFP and contracting processes

<sup>10</sup> 2022 Bill A7881 (Hevesi) and S6750 (Brisport), provides similar bill language to increase the per student rate. We hope to see amendments to the bill to align with proposed budget language and current needs of afterschool.

*applicants. Such modification shall account for any minimum wage adjustments. The commissioner shall promulgate any rules or regulations necessary to ensure grantees shall serve at least the same number of students in any year that the rate per approved student increases.*

- Creates an afterschool taskforce to facilitate efforts toward a strong, aligned, and coordinated afterschool system. The afterschool system is complex and complicated. Understanding the barriers faced by families and afterschool providers and ways to improve the system is imperative to increasing afterschool access. It is critical to engage the experience, expertise, and feedback of diverse afterschool stakeholders. The taskforce shall examine the following:
  - Access to and availability of afterschool programs in New York, including identification and assessment of barriers faced by families and providers.
  - Whether regulatory or statutory changes are needed to promote access to afterschool programming.
  - How the “traditional” child care and afterschool systems align to reinforce seamless continuum of care, including in administration of funds to support afterschool; and benchmarks and standards.
  - How school-community partnerships, including the role of community-based partners and strategic coordination between schools and community partners, help increase access to afterschool.

**Restore the \$5 million cut to the Advantage After School Program and baseline funding throughout the award term (2019-2025).** The Executive Budget persists in cutting Advantage funds by \$5 million, thus threatening afterschool access to 2,500 students and families who depend on the program to find healthy and safe spaces to foster positive development.

**Direct line-item funding of \$500,000 to the statewide afterschool network, NYS Network for Youth Success, to provide technical assistance and quality support for afterschool programs statewide.** Currently, no funds are dedicated to support technical assistance under the minimum Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality set-aside required for child care programs, or for afterschool providers receiving ESAP and AASP grants. The Network is the only organization in New York that coordinates statewide expertise, resources, and technical assistance specifically focused on afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs. With no base funding however, the Network is not adequately positioned to provide this wide scope of quality support. A \$500,000 investment is only about 1.2% of the required minimum CCDF quality set-aside (~\$41 million in 2021). In addition to the capacity building and technical assistance the Network provides (see Addendum 1), these funds would allow the Network to:

- Facilitate landscape analysis of afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs in New York, which is currently lacking.
- Support efforts to expand QUALITYstarsNY to school-age child care programs statewide (The Network currently serves as a lead collaborator in a pilot of QUALITYstarsNY to six school-age child care programs in fall 2022).
- Enhance capacity to coordinate further COVID-19 pandemic recovery support, including technical assistance around school-community partnerships and sustainability planning for programs.
- Support localized capacity building and professional development efforts at the regional level.
- Continue to manage and sustain the Afterschool Pathfinder, a free, comprehensive career resource for New York's afterschool professionals that maintains a comprehensive list of jobs available to the dedicated people who work in afterschool, expanded learning, and other youth programs in New York State.

**Establish an Office of Expanded Learning and/or a dedicated afterschool fund or "lockbox".** Currently, state afterschool programs, i.e. Advantage After School, Empire State After-School, and Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention Programs have varied funding sources and requirements that increase the administrative and structural burdens for afterschool grantees. This is especially true for afterschool providers with multiple afterschool grants. A fully-funded, single agency and/or division dedicated to afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs would be critical to leading and aligning these processes, systems, and benchmarks needed to successfully implement a more robust afterschool program in the state. The creation of a single afterschool fund would help leverage allocations from multiple funding sources, while greatly improving the operational and functional capacity needed to administer the afterschool program.

**Invest an additional \$3 million to expand the Educational Incentive Program (EIP).** The Educational Incentive Program (EIP) provides scholarships for credentialing activities, college credit-bearing coursework, and non-credit bearing training to help child care workers, including afterschool staff, develop professionally. Currently, the State provides up to \$17.4 million for “services and expenses of child care scholarships, education and ongoing professional development.” This allocation has not increased to accommodate the current demand and need to professionalize the child care workforce: EIP funds have been depleted by September of the calendar year in the last few years— a testament of the need to professionalize and build capacity for the afterschool field— leading to a waitlist of applications that would have been eligible to receive a scholarship if funds were available.

**Develop a common policy and implementation framework between schools and afterschool programs to promote effective coordination and limit duplicative**

**administrative burdens.** To ensure this, the state must reassess and align school-age child care regulations with school regulations to promote the following outcomes:

- Reciprocity and alignment of resources for schools and community partners. This can look like increased access to school buildings and leveraging professional development opportunities and certification for school and afterschool staff
- Flexibility to maximize use of school space
- Mutual accountability and collaboration between school and community partners
- Increased ability to blend funding to maximize staff capacity during school and after school

**Reinforce school-community partnerships in efforts to support student's learning through high-impact learning:** School districts cannot help students recover alone. We urge the state to include budget language that reinforce and incentivize school districts to collaborate and leverage the expertise, experience, and resources community-based, afterschool, and other youth serving organizations bring.

Afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs work in New York to empower youth success. And we are counting on our state legislators and Governor to not make dedicated afterschool funding an afterthought in this year's budget.

Also, in collaboration with the Association of New York State Youth Bureaus, New York State Community Schools Network, Campaign for Summer Jobs, and Winning Beginning NY, the Network supports the following budget asks:

**Community Schools:** Increase funding for the Community Schools Technical Assistance Centers by \$1 million; provide \$100 million in dedicated funding to Community Schools; and maintain proposed \$250M in Community Schools Set-Aside and minimum allocation of \$100K.

**Youth Development Program (YDP):** Invest \$6M to bring funding back to FY2011 level at \$20.6M.

**Summer Youth Employment Program:** Maintain proposed \$47.1M. **Childcare:** We support the requests of the Empire State Campaign for Child Care to take large steps toward transforming the child care workforce and removing barriers towards access for families.

Thank you for your time.



Addendum 1.

## LINE-ITEM FUNDING REQUEST

### **\$500,000 in Quality Support to Coordinate High-Quality School-Age Child Care Programs in New York**

**What is the Network?** The New York State Network for Youth Success (NYSNYS or “the Network”) is dedicated to building a youth-serving system that increases the quality and availability of afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs, and supports all programs that promote young people’s intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development outside the traditional school day.

The Network is the:

- statewide afterschool network in New York working with 49 other state afterschool networks and the national Afterschool Alliance
- state affiliate for the National AfterSchool Association
- New York State lead for the National Girls Collaborative Project
- backbone agency for the New York State Community Schools Network
- state advisor to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, the only direct federal source of funding for afterschool

The Network is also recognized as a critical partner on plan development, stakeholder feedback, dissemination of resources, and providing technical assistance, training of staff in New York’s state Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) plan.

**How are we transforming afterschool in New York?** As the only organization in New York that coordinates statewide expertise, resources, and technical assistance specifically focused on school-age child care (SACC), the Network is meeting the critical needs identified by the afterschool field:

### **PROFESSIONALIZING THE AFTERSCHOOL FIELD**

- Serves as the credentialing agency for the School-Age Care Credential in-person and also through our Distance Learning course online.
- Offers a full professional development catalog based on the needs raised by the field including the:
  - Site Leader Institute to prepare new afterschool program grantees and new site directors to operate high-quality programs;
  - Coaching Circles, which brings together providers together to collaborate and solve the issues they face in their programs with a sustainable design.
  - Justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) trainings, which are 20 free training sessions featuring topics at the core of JEDI, including racism and bias; supporting LGBTQIA2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and/or agender, two-spirit) youth and families; Native American cultural competency; and ageism and youth empowerment.

- Offers high-quality training opportunities for afterschool professionals through our two-day School's Out, Make it Count annual conference.
- Leads the New York State Afterschool Program Accreditation, providing afterschool professionals with performance indicators and quality benchmarks to guide program planning, implementation and evaluation.

### PROVIDING QUALITY SUPPORTS

- Serves as the lead collaborator in school-age child care programs pilot of QUALITYstarsNY.
- Developed the [Quality Self-Assessment \(QSA\) Tool](#), a free, accessible tool for programs to self-assess across 11 elements of quality, reviewing best-practices from administration and sustainability to programming and family engagement, and create and implement improvement plans supported by aligned resources. The QSA Tool is **available in 10 languages** and is **recommended for use for all state and federally funding programs in New York**.
- Provides live assistance to individuals and organizations looking to start new programs, many of whom are unfamiliar with or have questions regarding school-age child care regulations.
- Led New York State's team for multiple peer learning communities run by the National Center of Afterschool and Summer Enrichment to help advance efforts around workforce, social-emotional learning, and quality systems for afterschool.

### STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF THE AFTERSCHOOL FIELD

- Developed and manages AfterschoolPathfinder.org, a free, statewide job and training posting site designed exclusively for the afterschool field.
- Leads efforts to promote school-community partnerships to accelerate students' success.
- Connects the afterschool field to national experts, best-practices, and resources through frequent newsletters, listservs, and social media postings.
- Serves as a liaison between existing afterschool providers and administering/regulatory state agency to promote seamless communication, collaboration, and improvement.
- Convenes local partners (school districts, funders, city/county leadership, colleges/universities, local providers, etc.) with support of our 15 regional afterschool networks across the state.
- Mobilizing the afterschool community to solicit and gather feedback, recommendations, questions and comments regarding legislation, policies, and Request for Proposals (RFPs) affecting the afterschool field.

**Why should you prioritize funding support for the Network?** Without sustainable, line-item funding to build capacity, dedicated technical assistance for more than 2,800 school-age child care providers will greatly diminish. The Network will no longer be able to offer the quality support services to the field outlined above, which it has provided consistently over its rich 25-year history. These supports are integral to building high-quality, sustainable infrastructure for school-age child care. New York families need reliable, quality afterschool programming to care for their children, and the supports outlined above ensure that the afterschool field is prepared to provide this critical support. In addition to the supports the Network provides above, this line-item funding would allow the Network to:

- Explore and develop blueprints for data collection on school-age child care, which is currently lacking.
- Support efforts to expand QUALITYstarsNY to school-age child care programs statewide.
- Enhance capacity to coordinate further COVID-19 pandemic recovery support for afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning programs.