

**TESTIMONY OF  
COALITION FOR AFTER-SCHOOL FUNDING**

**HEARING  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MARCH 5, 2008**

Delivered by:  
Kendra Guild, New York City Organizer

Prepared by:  
Bob Cohen, Esq., Director  
Coalition for After-School Funding  
94 Central Avenue  
Albany, NY 12206  
(518) 465-4600 (ext. 104)  
bcohen@citizenactionny.org  
www.casf-nys.org

Members of the New York City Council Youth Services Committee: my name is Kendra Guild. I am a New York City organizer for the Coalition for After-School Funding (CASF), a statewide coalition with over 300 member groups -- consisting of parents, students, after-school providers, law enforcement officials, childcare advocates, faith-based organizations and community groups -- that believe that every child in New York State should have access to a quality after-school program.<sup>1</sup> CASF has an active affiliate in New York City.

Our message today is simple: even in a time of difficult finances for the City, we must ensure that the most critical programs that serve youth and working families are maintained, including after-school programs. As I will detail further below, state and federal funding for after-school in recent years has been stagnant at best, and has never fully met the need. Therefore, City programs depend on the maintenance of a substantial City contribution to maintain their service levels.

The research cannot be clearer concerning the benefits of after-school programs to children, from kindergarten all the way to high school. After-school programs benefit students in the following ways:

- ✓ First, after-school programs help students succeed in school. Research has shown that students who attend after-school programs get better grades, have higher school attendance rates, behave better, and do better on standardized tests.
- ✓ Secondly, after-school programs give students access to art, music and sports. After-school programs provide the access to enrichment programs that many kids don't have during the regular school day.
- ✓ Thirdly, quality after-school programs prevent crime and reduce other risky behaviors and keep kids safe after regular school hours. Violent juvenile crime triples during the after-school hours. After-school programs provide constructive, supervised time, which protects students from becoming crime victims. A survey conducted for Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York found that teens

---

<sup>1</sup> CASF is coordinated by Citizen Action of New York, a statewide membership organization that works for social, racial, economic and environmental justice.

unsupervised after school were 4 times as likely to have smoked cigarettes, 3 times as likely to have had sex, and 4 times as likely to have used drugs.

- ✓ Finally, after-school programs support working families at all income levels. With nearly 8 in 10 mothers of school-age children working, after-school programs are a big help to working families, providing a safe, supervised constructive environment for children during the after-school hours. In addition, after-school programs increase parental involvement and attendance at parent-teacher conferences and school events, and provide support to parents transitioning from welfare to work.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the demonstrated benefits of after-school, state funding for this critical program has not kept pace with the need.<sup>3</sup> On a statewide level, it has been estimated that there are 600,000 needed after-school slots in New York State. According to the Citizens Committee for Children, 450,000 students are not served of the roughly one million New York City schoolchildren. To provide just one example of the unmet need, in 2007, the last request for proposal for the Advantage After-School Program (“Advantage”), one of the major after-school funding streams in New York State, only 36 new contracts were awarded from a pool of 247 applicants.

We are of course aware that the City’s and State’s projected multi-billion deficits for the coming fiscal year make expansions of programs extraordinarily difficult. Instead, both levels of government are faced with providing increases to address only the highest priorities. Therefore, on the state level, we are asking the Governor and Legislature to provide the minimum amount necessary to enable after-school programs to have the *capacity* to maintain their current service levels -- not a penny more. Specifically, we have informed the State that after-school programs must receive at least \$30 million in State funding in the Fiscal Year 2008-09 budget just to have a chance of maintaining the current number of children that are served today.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The benefits to children and society alike of after-school are summarized in “*The Value of After-School Programs*” published by CASF, which is available at [www.casf-nys.org](http://www.casf-nys.org).

<sup>3</sup> A summary of the major state funding streams for after-school and the funding levels for these programs for Fiscal Year 2005-06 through 2007-08 appears as Attachment 1 to this testimony.

<sup>4</sup> After-school is funded through several existing State programs, including Advantage, administered through the Office of Children and Family Services, and the Extended School Day/School Violence

It is not an exaggeration to say that after-school funding is approaching crisis proportions in New York State -- and this threat comes from the combined impact of state and federal funding policies. Last winter, after previously telling programs to soon expect a new competitive round of funding for the 2007-08 school year, the New York State Education Department (SED) announced that programs whose funding under the federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers program was expiring on June 30th, 2007 would not be able to apply for renewed funding, threatening 207 after-school programs serving over 30,000 children throughout the state with closure. The threatened programs were located throughout the state and in all five boroughs. The significant majority of programs and children served were in New York City.

While \$7.5 million was provided by the Legislature last minute in the 2007-08 state budget deal on a one-time basis, this only provided programs with one-quarter of the funding they needed. We've received absolutely no indication that this money will be added by the Legislature this year. As a result, there is the danger that 30,000 fewer kids will be served; roughly 20,000 here in New York City. While we appreciate that the Governor has proposed a \$10 million increase in after-school funding to be targeted to 21<sup>st</sup> Century, this represents only one-third of the \$30 million in state funding we estimate is necessary to maintain services.<sup>5</sup>

And even if we receive the full \$30 million requested -- which is obviously in question in light of the state's economic difficulties -- significant city funding is necessary to make up the gap for the 20,000 New York City children. Statewide, at \$1000 a slot, \$30 million would give after-school programs the ability to serve the 30,000 affected children. It's clear that \$1000 a child from the state is not enough to ensure those children can be served. The New York City Out of School Time (OST) program

---

Prevention Program, administered through the State Education Department. CASF's 2008 Advocacy Agenda for the statewide budget, which outlines our requests for each specific state funding stream, is available at [www.casf-nys.org](http://www.casf-nys.org).

<sup>5</sup> And the long-term prospect of 21<sup>st</sup> Century funding is uncertain, as President Bush has proposed a \$300 million cut to the program in his 2009 budget proposal.

provides funded programs with an average of \$2,400 per elementary school child and \$1,700 for each middle school child, while the state Advantage After-School program provides a funding level of \$1,250 for each child. So even if we receive the full amount we are requesting from the state this year, we'll need the City to provide a significant contribution just to provide the existing level of services.

Although my primary concern here is making the general case for adequate support for after-school, there are several programs that we I'd like identify as priority funding concerns for the Council. First, we join with the New York City Youth Alliance's call for the restoration of \$6.3 million for the award-winning Beacon Programs. The Beacons are school-based multi-service community centers that serve over 180,000 children and adults annually at 80 sites throughout the City – at least one in each City Council district. The programs provide a wide range of services tailored to the needs of kids in the local community, including homework and tutoring, literacy programs, computer courses, and cultural activities.

Second, we ask that the Council restore \$3.8 million to the City Council's After-Three Program. This initiative, administered by The After-School Corporation (TASC), has helped to operate more than 100 after-school programs in the City, serving more than 22,000 kids. TASC engaged the Washington-based Policy Studies Association, a well-respected education policy research organization, which found that the TASC programs have a positive role in improving academic achievement, encouraging positive behavior in youth, and increasing school attendance.

Finally, we need to continue develop a long term capacity-building strategy for the City's successful Out of School Time (OST) program. The OST initiative is the largest municipally-funded after-school system in the nation, with over 600 programs serving more than 80,000 youth throughout the City during the 2007-08 school year. The Wallace Foundation's second year evaluation of OST, released in January, found that the initiative served 34% more participants than the previous year, and improved its ability to recruit qualified staff. In addition, the youth served by the program reported

that they were highly motivated, and parents reported that OST made it easier to keep their job, to work more hours or to attend school.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate that the increases we're seeking are a wise investment for state and city government alike. Most important, after-school is a cost-effective means of raising student achievement. In a 2001 finding in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) litigation that was affirmed by the State Court of Appeals, Supreme Court Justice Leland DeGrasse found that in order to raise student achievement, students were entitled to an expanded platform of programs to spend more "time on task," including after-school programs. Justice DeGrasse also found that after-school programs were particularly valuable for "at-risk" children: the very class of children that suffered the greatest harm due to the maintenance by the State of a constitutionally inadequate school system. Under the landmark school aid reform legislation passed in 2007 in response to CFE (Chapter 57 of the Laws of 2007), the state invested \$1.1 billion in 2007-08 in additional "foundation aid" to schools statewide (a \$1.76 billion increase in total school aid). The amount we're seeking for after-school on a state and city level is small by comparison, given the benefits of high-quality after-school programs.

Finally, after-school programs also play an important role in advancing other State priorities, including crime, drug abuse, and pregnancy prevention -- in a cost-effective manner. For example, after-school has demonstrated benefits in steering youth away from drug use and crime. The \$1000 a child figure that is the basis for our \$30 million request from the State should be compared with the average cost of \$130,000 per year to incarcerate a juvenile in a secure facility in New York City.

I once again thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Coalition for After-School Funding and Citizen Action of New York on the City budget.

## Attachment 1

### Major After-School Funding Streams in New York State

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Administering Agency</b>	<b>Total FY 05-06 Allocation</b>	<b>Total FY 06-07 Allocation</b>	<b>Total FY 07-08 Allocation</b>
Advantage After-School Program (AASP)	Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)	\$20,200,000	\$27,500,000	\$28,200,000
Extended School Day /School Violence Prevention Program (ESD/SVP)	New York State Education Department (NYSED)	\$30,200,000	\$30,200,000	\$30,200,000
Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP)	OCFS	\$9,379,000	\$9,379,000	\$9,379,000
Youth Development Delinquency Prevention (YDDP)	OCFS	\$27,973,000	\$28,472,000	\$29,472,000

Note: After-school in New York State is also funded through a major federal program known as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), a component of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Legislature provided an emergency appropriation in FY 07-08 of \$7.5 million, which provided roughly one-quarter of the funding necessary for 207 programs serving 34,000 children to keep operating. The level of future federal and state funding for these and other 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs is unclear. Therefore, the future of many 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs is uncertain.