

**TESTIMONY OF
KENDRA GUILD, ORGANIZER
COALITION FOR AFTER-SCHOOL FUNDING**

**DIVISION OF THE BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
NOVEMBER 29, 2007**

For more information, contact:

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
www.citizenactionny.org

Representatives of the Division of the Budget: my name is Kendra Guild. I am the 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. CASF is coordinated by Citizen Action of New York, a statewide membership organization dedicated to social, racial, economic and environmental justice. Today, I am focusing my testimony on the critical budgetary needs of after-school programs throughout the state.

I. The Benefits of After-School

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 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.¹

II. CASF's Fiscal Year 2008-09 Funding Request

Despite the demonstrated benefits of after-school, state funding of this critical program has not kept pace with the need.² We frankly would like to come to the Division of the Budget (DOB) to ask for full funding for the 600,000 needed after-school slots in New York State.³ To provide one example of the unmet need, in 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 about 40 of the 400 agencies that applied ultimately received funding. However, we are of course aware that the Executive has indicated that the State's projected multi-billion deficit for the coming fiscal year makes expansions of programs extraordinarily difficult. Instead, the DOB and the Governor are faced with providing increases to address only the State's highest priorities. Our request meets that test.

We are asking you to propose in the Executive Budget the minimum amount necessary to enable after-school programs to have the *capacity* to maintain their current service levels -- not a penny more. Specifically, after-school programs must receive at least \$30 million more 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.⁴

¹ 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.

² A summary of the major 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.

³ See *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids New York, New York's After-School Choice: The Prime Time for Juvenile Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement* (2002); available at <http://www.fightcrime.org/ny/After-School/NYA-SFinal.pdf>.

⁴ 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 Prevention Program ("Extended Day"), administered through the State Education Department. However, at this time, CASF's primary concern is to provide the DOB with our best sense of the critical needs of after-school, rather than how our \$30 million request should be allocated among the existing programs. We will provide our views on the allocation of the \$30 million figure at your request.

It is not an exaggeration to say that after-school funding is approaching crisis proportions in New York State. Last winter, after previously telling programs to soon expect a new competitive round of funding for the 2007-08 school year, SED announced that programs whose funding through the federal 21st 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 that served over 30,000 children throughout the state with closure. The programs threatened with closure were distributed throughout the state, including in Albany, Rochester, Poughkeepsie, Elmira, Buffalo, Gowanda, Jamestown, Niagara Falls, Oswego, Port Chester, Rome, Syracuse, Utica, Yonkers, and all five New York City boroughs.

While my emphasis today is of course the threatened loss of programming and cutbacks that affect over 30,000 children, I would like to mention in passing that 21st Century has a significant training component. In addition to the loss of after-school slots for children, our communities face the loss of some or all of the benefits of the significant investment the state and federal government has made in the roughly 3,400 staff employed by the impacted programs if programs close or are cut back.

While \$7.5 million was provided by the Legislature last minute in the 2007-08 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 next year. As a result, there is the danger that 30,000 fewer kids will be served; roughly 20,000 here in New York City.

We estimate that at \$1000 a slot, \$30 million more would give after-school programs the ability to serve the 30,000 affected children. I must emphasize how conservative our \$30 million request is. Even \$1000 a child simply will not close to cover the full cost of serving the 30,000 children. For example, the New York City Out of School Time (NYC OST) program provides funded programs with an average of \$2,400 per elementary school child and \$1,700 for each middle school child, while Advantage provides a funding level of \$1,250 for each child. Even with this funding

level, the affected programs will need to leverage additional funding from other sources.⁵

III. Our \$30 Million Funding Request Would Advance Multiple State Goals

I'd also like to emphasize that the \$30 million increase we're requesting is a wise investment for the state, both because it's cost-effective and advances multiple goals. The most significant goal is raising student achievement. As you know, under the landmark school aid reform legislation passed in 2007 in response to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case (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), and is mandated to increase foundation aid by more than the \$1.1 billion amount in 2008-09. In the budget agreement, \$146 million was also provided for early childhood education.

In its 2003 decision in the CFE litigation, the Court of Appeals ruled that children statewide were entitled to the opportunity for a "sound, basic education" under the State Constitution. In 2003, the Court of Appeals also affirmed a 2001 finding by Supreme Court Justice Leland DeGrasse 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. Recognizing this point, Governor Spitzer pointed to the value of after-school programs in raising student achievement in his first State of the State address.

Given this history, adequate funding of after-school programs must be a key component of the State's implementation of the new school aid reform law. After-school programs are documented to provide academic enrichment and assistance to students in meeting State learning standards, particularly in high-poverty schools. Prompted by

⁵ Needless to say, NYC OST funding is totally unavailable to address the thousands of endangered after-school slots that exist outside of New York City. We are unaware of any comparable local program that funds after-school in any large school district other than New York City.

the CFE litigation and the national attention devoted to the "achievement gap," SED and other state agencies are correctly focused on meeting State learning standards, particularly in high poverty and low-performing schools. At a time when the State is investing billions of dollars towards that goal, it makes no sense to shut down effective after-school programs, especially given their demonstrated benefits in improving student achievement. I note that the \$30 million increase we're seeking for after-school is small compared to the total education investment made by the State for next year.

As I've already mentioned, 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/child figure that is the basis for our \$30 million request should be compared with the average cost of \$130,000 per year to incarcerate a juvenile in a secure facility in New York City.

We have one concern that is not primarily fiscal in nature. After-school programs are funded from a number of state and federal funding sources, and responsibility for regulation of after-school is split among more than one state agency. The multiplicity of funding sources means that after-school programs are faced with often contradictory and unnecessarily burdensome mandates from more than one agency -- requirements that are particularly difficult to meet for small community-based programs. For each hour spent on meeting these conflicting mandates, after-school program providers cannot devote time to training staff, and providing direct services to children. CASF therefore joins with the New York State Afterschool Network in calling for a comprehensive re-examination of the State's administration of after-school, and the establishment of a more comprehensive, fully-funded public policy framework. A state task force or senior official should be designated to coordinate all after-school funding streams and regulations, and to recommend a long-term policy and funding strategy with full input from all stakeholders and relevant agencies.

I once again thank you for the opportunity to comment on behalf of Citizen Action and the Coalition for After-School Funding on the Executive Budget.

Attachment 1

Major After-School Funding Streams

Program Name	Administering Agency	Total FY 05-06 Allocation	Total FY 06-07 Allocation	Total FY 07-08 Allocation
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 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st 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 21st CCLC programs is unclear. Therefore, the future of many 21st CCLC programs is uncertain.