



**Testimony of
The After-School Corporation**

Presented to the New York State Division of Budget

Thursday, November 29, 2007

**Presented by
John P. Albert
Vice President, External Relations**

Good Afternoon. My name is John P. Albert and I am with The After-School Corporation also known as TASC. TASC is a not-for profit organization that supports after-school programs and TASC is a member of the New York City Youth Alliance a confederation of New York City organizations working on youth development, youth employment and disconnected youth issues.

Since its inception in 1998 TASC has helped more than 250,000 children over nine years by supporting after-school programs in New York City and beyond. TASC works to enhance the quality, availability and sustainability of comprehensive, daily after-school programs. TASC also funds, monitors, evaluates and supports after-school programs in New York City public schools.

TASC is dedicated to building the after-school field by expanding training and college opportunities for after-school staff, and by strengthening the alignment between school day and after-school learning. We develop measures of program quality and accountability, and share with after-school providers lessons learned throughout nearly a decade of developing programs.

TASC-supported after-school programs are operated by community-based organizations (CBOs) with roots in the neighborhoods and schools they serve. In New York City, we partner with such CBOs as the YMCAs, the Police Athletic League and the Sports and Arts in Schools Foundation. Our partnerships with CBOs ensure that programs provide a balanced range of services for children and youth, that includes academics, art, and sports.

As the New York State Division of budget contemplate next year's state budget, I hope you keep in mind the current need for after-school programs. After-School programs are still reeling from a recent funding crisis and needs an infusion of \$30 million in new funds just to return to 2006 service levels. Last year, 34,000 after-school slots were lost (20,000 of which were in New York City) due to a funding shortfall to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program.

In addition to last year's loss of programming, the overall need in New York City for these programs is far greater than the supply. According to the Citizen's Committee for Children, of the more than 1 million public school children in New York City, 450,000 youth are unserved and another 380,000 children are underserved. Statewide, the picture is equally bleak.

According to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, New York, nearly seven school-age New York children in every ten live in a household with a single parent who is working or two parents who are both working. On a regular basis, more than 800,000 New York children and teens are left unsupervised by adults.

To return to previous service levels the after-school community is urging you to support an additional \$30 million in state funding for after-school in the 2008-09 state budget. Some of the funding streams to consider include:

1. Advantage After-School Program. The Office of Children and Family Services reports roughly 26,000 children are currently enrolled in Advantage, which provides educational, cultural and recreational activities for elementary, middle and high school students. Since its inception, the program has received more qualified applicants than it can fund. Most recently, over 400 applicants submitted proposals for \$3.4 million in funding. Approximately only 40 programs were funded in the most recent round of awards. A new RFP is not expected in 2008 due to a lack of funding.

2. Youth Development Delinquency Prevention/Youth Services Programs.

The Youth Development and Delinquency Program (YDDP) is housed in the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and serves young people ages 6 to 21 through a broad spectrum of before- and after-school, weekend, and vacation initiatives that promote youth development. These programs are administered by local county youth bureaus and are the cornerstone of after-school funding to the counties. In New York City the Department of Youth and Community Development administers these funds and has used these funds as the basis of New York's highly recognized Out of School Time initiative. YDDP is currently funded at \$29.5 million.

3. 2007 Legislative Increases to After-School. In 2007, due to a crisis in the loss of after-school slots the Assembly added \$13.925 million for after-school programs. Through this measure, school districts and former 21st Century Community Learning Center programs were able to keep many programs open for an additional year. These funds will be lost in the coming year and should be extended.

4. Extended Day/School Violence Prevention Program. An initiative managed through the State Education Department, Extended Day funds academic tutoring and remediation, conflict resolution/violence prevention,

recreational and other programs for nearly 30,000 young people throughout the state. The program is currently funded at \$30.2 million.

In addition, it's important to note that after-school programs are funded from a number of funding sources, and responsibility for the regulation and quality of after-school is split among more than one state agency, including the State Department of Education and the Office of Children and Family Services. We urge that state government explore ways to more effectively 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. Coordination and consolidation should be combined with a long-term investment in after-school as other states like California are doing. The \$30 million is a first step towards that long-term investment.

Over the past nine years, through research, TASC has learned that after-school programs offer tremendous value to children, families, schools and communities. We have engaged a highly regarded Washington, D.C.-based education policy research organization, Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

(PSA), to evaluate the effectiveness of our after-school programs. PSA research shows:

- After-School Programs Improve Academic Achievement
- After-School Programs Encourage Positive Behavior
- After-School Programs Increase School Attendance
- After-School Programs Benefit Working Families

As you outline the Governor's budget priorities, TASC urges you to support a \$30 million increase in funding to these vital programs that provide our children with a safe place to go once the school day ends. These programs benefit children, working families and the entire community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.