



November 27, 2007

Utica Budget Hearing Address

My name is Kate Alcott and I am the Associate Director of Peaceful Schools.

My organization has provided Violence Prevention Curricula, resources and training to the youth of Oneida County for the last 10 years, including the Utica City School District (UCSD), Madison-Oneida BOCES and Whitesboro Central Schools among others.

I have come here today on behalf of the youth that we serve to ask for the governor's commitment to sustaining the Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention initiative in the State Budget.

Initiated in 1997, as part of the Learning and Developing by Directing Education Resources Legislation (L.A.D.D.E.R), ESD/SVP was originally authorized as part of the Schools Against Violence in Education Act. This funding was originally designed for scheduled adjustments and should have been funded at \$55 Million by 2002. Instead the funding has fluctuated between 28 and 30 Million since 2001. These funds are currently made available to 103 High Need Districts in NYS serving over 30,000 youth.

It is important to differentiate ESD/SVP from other funding initiatives. Unfortunately the name: Extended School Day, leads to a misperception that these funds are limited to after school programming and there may even be concern of duplication of funding sources with other initiatives such as Advantage and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. In fact ESD/SVP is unique for two reasons.

First it allows funding to be used for both regular day and extended day, enabling providers the flexibility to work with the specific needs of each district served.

Second this initiative requires providers a focus on Violence Prevention through development of social skills and preventative interventions.

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Peaceful Schools currently provides programs and services to **9** elementary and **2** middle schools in the Utica City School District during the school day. These programs are funded in a large part by the ESD/SVP initiative. Our programs include:

- Peaceful People & Promoting the Peace – Conflict Resolution Skills Curricula for elementary and middle school students
- Mediation - A Structured Conflict Resolution Process
- Additional Services – Includes Individual Social Skills, Conciliations, Group Interventions, Referrals to Other Services and Student Check-ins.

During the 2006-2007 school year these dollars resulted in the following:
(Please see attached for a detailed summary of services)

- We have presented Peaceful People and Promoting the Peace Programs to **242** Classrooms reaching approximately **5377** students – giving students the skills to understand recognize and respond to everyday social problems.
- We have conducted **1034** Mediations for **2091** students, with 96% of those students reaching an agreement. Through the mediation process, students peacefully resolve potentially violent or disruptive incidents in school building served by this program.
- **1864** Students have utilized the Additional Services provided by our Building Coordinators enabling them to actively respond to problems that they are facing under the direction and facilitation of a caring adult provider.

We ask that the Governor consider moving beyond the reauthorization of ESD/SVP and keep the promise made to NYS youth by restoring ESD/SVP to \$55 Million, the level previously determined under L.A.D.D.E.R. Do not allow the original goals of a safer school environment to be compromised.

Thank you for your time and dedication to supporting Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention funds and for allowing me to represent my concerns in this budget process.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions. Thank You

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