



**TESTIMONY TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING ON 2020-2021
EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL ON HUMAN SERVICES
JANUARY 30, 2020**

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am Trudy Morgan, Policy Coordinator with the New York State Network for Youth Success, and I am here to talk to you about afterschool, summer, and expanded learning programs. Before I invite you to look at some of the research with me about the crucial impact of afterschool on New York State's children, I would like to emphasize that I am a testament of why afterschool matters. I am where I am today, in my role, following my passion because I was able to participate in several afterschool programs that broadened my perspectives as a new immigrant, equipped me with the necessary skills and resources to navigate my academics as a student-scholar, and served as a catalyst for my robust interest in policy and advocacy.

Evidence shows that afterschool programs play a critical role in improving student outcomes and that summer programs halt summer learning loss. As recently as 2019, a new Research for Action study looked at a broad range of afterschool programs across age groups and across focus areas such as academics, athletics, and career pathways, and found significant positive impacts on students. These quality afterschool and summer programs support students as they pursue their passions and learn how to take chances and make calculated risks and healthy choices.

For students who are fortunate enough to be enrolled in high-quality afterschool and summer programs, these opportunities contribute to the development of social-emotional skills that employers look for in their future employees. They also provide Protective Factors such as access to, and relationships with, nurturing adults that we know result in healthier children who make better decisions and are able to build skills that last a lifetime.

Parents also value quality afterschool programs. Programs not only help working families build bridges to their children's school day by offering academic and social supports, they also help working families maintain their own economic stability at work while knowing their children are safe and engaged. Programs are crucial for working families who need to know that their children are safe between the end of the school day and the end of the workday. Afterschool, summer, and other expanded learning opportunities play a necessary role for New York students and families.

We are pleased that the State has shown an interest in afterschool by increasing investments through the Governor's Empire State After-School Program (ESAP). While we support additional investments in afterschool programs from the State, we must ensure that existing funding streams that support currently operating afterschool programs are adequately funded as well.

Advantage After School Program

We urge the Legislature to restore funding for the AASP. The Governor's Budget Proposal of \$28 million is a reduction from last year's enacted budget. We thank the Legislature for restoring the \$5 million cut last year and ask you to do so again. If funding is not restored to \$33 million, at least 2,500 students currently enrolled in AASPs across the State will be at risk of losing access to their programs starting in the 2020-21 school year.

We urge the Legislature to increase funding for the AASP in order to increase the per pupil rate. Even with the increases noted above, programs are underfunded and struggle to provide the highest quality services to children and youth. Our research shows that funding is spent predominantly on salaries, with little left over for materials or activities. As the true cost of providing a high-quality experience is just under \$3,000 in Buffalo and an estimated \$6,000 in New York City, programs continue to have a difficult time both increasing salaries and paying for supplies/activities that not only support programs, but make those programs high quality.

This year **we are requesting that the per pupil rate for Advantage After School Program increase to \$2,320 to at least accommodate the increase in the minimum wage.** This \$2,320 rate would allow for the same level of services originally provided under this program, while accounting for the minimum wage increase. At the same time, we must continue to serve the same number of children.

Empire State After-School Program

We request that the State maintain the Executive's proposal to increase funding for the ESAP by \$10 million. This would raise the total funding to \$65 million and allow the program to expand across the State. We also ask that language for this new funding stipulate an increase of the per student rate for ESAP from \$1,600 to \$2,320 to account for the minimum wage increase. (Funding is in the Education Budget.)

Child Care Subsidies

We urge the State to invest \$40M to create a fund to increase workforce compensation and improve child care quality; and \$60 million to incrementally increase guaranteed eligibility levels and decrease the co-payment multiplier. The Executive Budget does not include any increase for subsidies or workforce development. More than one-third of child care subsidies in New York support child care for school-aged children, including afterschool and summer programs. Investing in child care subsidies helps families ensure that their children are safe after the school day ends.

Youth Development Program

We urge the State to restore \$1.5 million in funding for the Youth Development Program that was included in the FY19-20 budget. This funding supports afterschool and summer programs, in addition to other crucial youth services, as distributed by local youth bureaus throughout the state.

Summer Youth Employment Program

We ask the State to maintain the Executive's proposal to increase funding for Summer Youth Employment by \$1 million. This funding will allow summer programs to employ 750 additional staff, increasing the number of youth they can serve. Furthermore, the young adults employed through this program gain valuable work experiences to help them develop skills needed for future careers, and may spark interest in further youth development work.

Quality Standards and Technical Assistance for Afterschool

We urge the State to invest an additional \$1.8 million towards the Educational Incentive Program (EIP) for total funding of \$7 million.

EIP provides scholarships to assist child care providers participating in professional development activities with the intent to build provider knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve quality child care in the State. EIP funds were depleted at the end of September 2019, leading to a waitlist of applications totaling \$250,000 that would have been eligible to receive scholarships if additional funding were available.

We urge the State to reinstate \$50,000 from Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds to provide technical assistance to Advantage After School Program grantees and other school-age child care programs around increasing program quality.

The federal CCDBG funding no longer mandates an amount be directed to technical assistance for school-age programs despite 48% of subsidies supporting school-age children. This change has resulted in OCFS eliminating its long-standing contract with the Network suddenly and without an opportunity to re-apply. **There is now no dedicated funding to support quality in school-age child care programs statewide.** These funds helped the Network create and maintain the Quality Self-Assessment (QSA) Tool for more than 15 years. This assessment tool was created by experts and practitioners in New York State, and is considered highly relevant and reasonable for afterschool programs statewide. The QSA is recommended for use by all state-funded afterschool programs, including Advantage After School, Empire State After-School, and Extended School Day programs as well as federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers. In addition to this tool, the Network was able to provide online trainings, in-person professional development, and technical assistance around contracts and regulations through the support received from OCFS. The elimination of this funding will adversely impact afterschool programs, staff, children, and families statewide.

Regulated Adult Use Marijuana Revenue

Finally, we request that the State invest 25% of any revenue secured through the legalization of adult use marijuana in afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs enhance social-emotional development by focusing on responsible decision-making and self-management. They also strengthen Protective Factors—those characteristics that build resiliency and help kids cope with whatever is happening at home, at school, and in their neighborhoods.

In Alaska, which recently allocated 12.5% of revenue from the legalization of recreational marijuana to afterschool, data shows that youth who participated in programs just twice a week were 40% less likely to use marijuana.

In New York State, if we regulate adult use of marijuana, we can still keep children and youth safe, educate them on responsible choices, and provide them with the relationships that will help support them to success.

We know that drug use among youth increases in the unsupervised afterschool hours. According to the RAND Corporation, “The likelihood of youth exposure to drug use and other criminal behavior increases dramatically in the hours after school ends.”¹The National Crime

¹ <http://www.rand.org/topics/after-school-programs.html>

² <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/school-safety/strategies/strategy-before-and-after-school-programs>

³ <https://ccjs.umd.edu/sites/ccjs.umd.edu/files/pubs/GottfredsonWeismanSoule.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/fs200114.pdf>

and Prevention Council provides that “Latchkey children are particularly vulnerable to alcohol or other drug use because they are unsupervised by their parents or other responsible adults before and after school.”² This is confirmed by research and student surveys. One study found that being unsupervised after school doubles the risk that an eighth grader will smoke, drink, or abuse drugs.³ A YMCA survey found that teens who do not participate in afterschool programs are nearly three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs.⁴

Research shows that afterschool program participation decreases drug use. The Rand Corporation found that the availability of quality afterschool activities can reduce participation in, and victimization as a result of, illicit activities and boost academic performance.⁵ For example, a study of Boys & Girls Clubs found that housing projects without clubs had 30% more drug activity than those with new clubs.⁶ Another study of afterschool programs focused on positive youth development found that program participants exhibited significantly lower increases in alcohol, marijuana, other drug use, and any drug use one year after beginning the program, compared to a control group.⁷ And a meta-analysis reviewing dozens of studies found that students who participated in high-quality afterschool programs exhibited significant reductions in drug use and other problem behaviors.⁸ Lowering the risk of substance abuse among at-risk youth can save an estimated \$840,000 to \$1.1 million that the average substance abuser imposes on society.⁹

Afterschool programs help prevent substance abuse by not only keeping kids supervised, but also building Protective Factors that make them less likely to use drugs. The more Protective Factors present in a young person’s life, the more likely it is that they will engage in healthy behaviors. Afterschool programs reduce substance abuse through the development of protective or resiliency factors such as school connectedness, self-control, self-confidence, and quality peer relationships.¹⁰ Protective Factors also include increasing academic skills and positive school behaviors; research on high-quality afterschool has been shown to improve school attendance and academic success.

In closing, I want to note that our Executive Director is on the Steering Committee of *Winning Beginning NY* and the Network supports the Coalition’s agenda. Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

⁵ <http://www.rand.org/topics/after-school-programs.html>

⁶ Schinke, S.P., Orlandi, M.A., Cole, K.C., Boys & Girls Clubs in Public Housing Developments: Prevention Services for Youth at Risk, *Journal of Community Psychology*, OSAP Special Issue, 1992.

⁷ [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(07\)00104-8/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(07)00104-8/fulltext)

⁸ http://www.flume.com.br/pdf/Durlak_A_meta-analysisof_after_school.pdf

⁹ Cohen, M. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2009). *New Evidence on The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth*. Springer.

¹⁰ http://www.viriya.net/jabref/the_protective_function_of_after-school_programming_and_parent_education_and_support_for_students_at_risk_for_substance_abuse.pdf