

Connecticut
After School
Network

Public Hearing Testimony Speaker:
Michelle Doucette

Date:
3/12/07

Bill Number: 7348

7

work.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF RAISED BILL No. 7348
Education Committee Public Hearing, March 12, 2007
Submitted by Michelle Doucette Cunningham, Executive Director
Connecticut After School Network

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Committee:

I am here today to testify in support of Raised Bill 7348, An Act Concerning After School and Out-of-School Time Grants, on behalf of the Connecticut After School Network, a statewide nonprofit organization that works to ensure that children and youth have safe, supervised activities available during out-of-school hours. We are a large diverse group of more than one thousand private and non-profit providers, city officials, school districts, businesses, parents, faith-based and community-based organizations.

Raised Bill 7348 would enhance the after school grant program not only by allowing it to serve 6,300 more children and their families, but it would also provide needed access to technical assistance, evaluation, program monitoring and professional development. We also welcome the provision that would make it a two-year grant which would allow programs to plan in advance for the second year of funding, providing greater stability.

The Connecticut After School Network strongly supports the performance outcome requirements of the bill. All three of these measures – student achievement, school attendance, and in-school behaviors (such as school suspension and expulsions) – have been shown in formal evaluations of individual after school programs to be positively correlated with attendance at high quality programs.

In August 2006, the State Department of Education held the first grant competition for after school programs statewide. Other funding sources, most notably the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grants and Connecticut's Extended School Hours funding, are limited to high need areas. (*Please see the attached "Status of After School in Connecticut" for details on state and federal after school funding.*) Although the timing was difficult for programs given vacations and the collaborative requirements of the grant, 76 applications were submitted. These were for grants between \$25,000 and \$150,000 for one year. The \$2.1 million dollars available for this grant competition only allowed 17 to be funded, although the strengths of the applications were such that the state could have easily awarded another 35 programs, serving another 6,300 students.

These after school grants are a competitive grant program, one which encourages innovation and collaboration between community organizations and the schools. For example, the after school program at Irving Elementary School in Derby works with the

Making the Connections for After School

The Network operates in partnership with CSACA – Connecticut's after school professional organization.

local food pantry to provide backpacks filled with food to children on Fridays who might not otherwise get enough to eat over the weekend. Other programs collaborate with local agencies to provide all types of educational, enrichment and recreational programming.

Most after school programs in Connecticut are operated entirely on parent fees, many with some in-kind support. The average cost for an after school program is \$88.50 per child per week. Some programs also receive limited grant funding from foundations. Only a small percentage of programs receive any funding from local, state or federal government, and state and federal funding is primarily limited to the 15 or so poorest cities. Even those programs receiving one of these grants from the State Department of Education rely on substantial in-kind and charitable funding, as well as parent fees, although this is often based on a sliding fee scale.

Demand for These Programs is Greater Than Supply. There are currently 945 programs that are licensed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health to provide child care for school age children (may only be kindergarten wraparound program). The Network estimates there are at least another 200 sites with programs that are exempt from licensing (run by schools or towns). Last year, a Connecticut survey of the parents of 853 children ages 5-13 found that:

- **One in five children are inadequately supervised after school**
One in seven children (14%) regularly spends time after school looking after him or herself, and another seven percent (7%) of the kids were watched by a sibling age 12 or younger. This translates to more than 80,000 Connecticut children.
- **Demand for after school programs is much greater than supply**
Six out of ten parents with children who do not participate in an after school program would likely enroll their kids if more after school programs were available and met their needs. Many more children and families would take advantage of after school programs if programs were available in their communities that were safe, enriching for their children, affordable and convenient.

After school programs are a great investment. There is significant research that shows that participation in out-of-school programs results in better school attendance, fewer drop outs, more positive attitudes towards school work, greater completion of homework and improved grades, higher aspirations for education beyond high school, better work habits and interpersonal relationships skills, and less risk behavior. While it's too early to have all of the quantitative data on the 17 programs funded this year, we know that 3,160 children and youth are not home alone, are not unsupervised getting into trouble, for fifteen hours each week. If even only one or two of these children (and I'm sure the number will be many more) is prevented from straying down an unproductive path that could lead to crime, violence or drug addiction, then this investment would indeed pay off in the long run.

Connecticut After School Network

12 Melrose Avenue
Branford, CT 06405
Phone: 203-483-9757
Fax: 203-481-7160
www.ctafterschoolnetwork.org

Status of After School in Connecticut

February 2007

There are currently 945 programs that are licensed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health to provide child care for school age children (may only be kindergarten wraparound program). The Network estimates there are at least another 200 sites with programs that are exempt from licensing (run by schools or towns). A Connecticut survey of the parents of 853 children ages 5-13 found that:

- **One in five children are inadequately supervised after school**

One in seven children (14%) regularly spends time after school looking after him or herself, and another seven percent (7%) of the kids were watched by a sibling age 12 or younger. This translates to more than 80,000 Connecticut children.

- **Demand for after school programs is much greater than supply**

Six out of ten parents with children who do not participate in an after school program would likely enroll their kids if more after school programs were available and met their needs. Many more children and families would take advantage of after school programs if programs were available in their communities that were safe, enriching for their children, affordable and convenient.

Most programs are operated entirely on parent fees, many with some in-kind support. The average cost for an after school program is \$88.50 per child per week. Some programs also receive limited grant funding from foundations. Only a small percentage of programs receive any funding from local, state or federal government (see over for detail), and state and federal funding is primarily limited to the 15 or so poorest cities.

Federal – (SDE) 21st Century Community Learning Centers	\$7,200,000
SDE Extended School Hours	\$2,990,000
DSS Before and After School program	\$ 288,000
OPM Neighborhood Youth Centers	\$1,716,000
OWC Urban Youth Employment	\$4,000,000
DSS After School (new in FY07 in School Readiness line)	\$1,300,000
SDE After School Grant (new in FY07)*	\$3,100,000

* Only the SDE After School Grant is available statewide, through a competitive grant opportunity for which any town, school or nonprofit may apply. The first grant competition was held in August 2006, with 76 applications for 17 awards of up to \$150,000, with awards going to: Catholic Charities, Derby Public Schools, East Hartford Board of Education, JFK Middle School/Enfield, New Haven Public Schools/Brennan School, New Haven Public Schools/Clinton/Martinez Schools, New London Public Schools, Norwich Public Schools, Organized Parents Make a Difference/Hartford, Portland Public Schools, Region 8/Andover/Hebron, Stamford Public Schools, Stratford Public Schools/Community Services, The Village for Families and Children/ Hartford, Urban League/Hartford, Waterbury Youth Service Bureau and Windham Public Schools.

In addition, a small portion of DSS's Care4Kids child care subsidy dollars goes to school age child care centers, between \$40 and \$53 per week for 15 hours of care, limited to families under 50% of the median state income (\$44,659 for a family of four).

Making the Connections for After School

The Network operates in partnership with CSACA - Connecticut's after school professional organization.

State and Federal After School Spending in Connecticut, FY 06-07

SDE – After School Program funding

\$3.1 million in FY07 (increased from \$100k in FY06) for programs including:

- 17 programs awarded via competitive process, grants from \$48k – \$150k (\$2.1 million total)
- Bridgeport's Lighthouse Program (\$500k)
- Windham YSB's Positive Steps Mentoring Program (\$75k)
- Three original pilot programs in Plainville, Montville and Thompson (\$25k - \$50k)
- Connecticut Youth Service Association (\$225k)
- Connecticut After School Network (CSACA) (\$100k)

SDE – Extended School Hours (Priority School Districts only) Program funding

\$2.99 million for various after school activities including basketball, mentoring, homework clubs, etc. Fifteen districts receive formula grants from \$49k - \$405k.

DSS – After School Programs

\$1.3 million new in FY07 for various programs including:

- Charts a Course After School Credential Scholarships (\$100k)
- DSS After School Programs (\$475k)
- New Haven Skills Camp (\$75k)
- Bridgeport Charles Smith Foundation (\$150k)
- Bridgeport Sheehan Center (\$50k)
- West Hartford Justice Education Center (\$200k)
- Bristol Middle After School (\$75k)
- New Britain Youth Network After School (\$75k)
- Plainville Positive Youth Development (\$25k)
- New Haven Solar Youth (\$75k)

DSS – Before and After School Programs

Total of \$288,000 for 11 programs

OPM – Youth- Out of School

\$ 1.716 for Neighborhood Youth Centers

- San Jose Cooperative Youth, New Haven; Hill Cooperative Youth, New Haven, Central YMCA (\$200k total split)
- Boys and Girls Clubs (\$1 million)
- Neighborhood Youth Centers in New Britain, Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury (\$516k)

OWC – Youth Employment

Urban Youth Employment (\$4 million) - administered by Office of Workforce Competitiveness

Federal

The Federal Department of Education provided about \$7.2 million for 42 after school programs via the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant.