

Testimony of
Tammy Papa, Director
City of Bridgeport ~ Lighthouse Program

to the

Appropriations Committee

February 11, 2009

RE: After School Grant Program

Good evening. My name is Tammy Papa and I am the Director of the City of Bridgeport Lighthouse After School and Summer Program. On behalf of our partner agencies and the children and families that we serve, I would like to thank Senator Maynard, Representative Fleishmann and members of the education subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today opposing Governor Rell's proposed cut to the After School Grant Program. The state's after school providers were forced to drastically reduce services when the *21st Century Grant* program moved from the federal to the state level. The *state after school grant* program helped most communities increase services meeting the needs of some 6,000 additional children. If the Governor's proposed cuts to this education line are approved, these same children which include over 500 from Bridgeport will be affected.

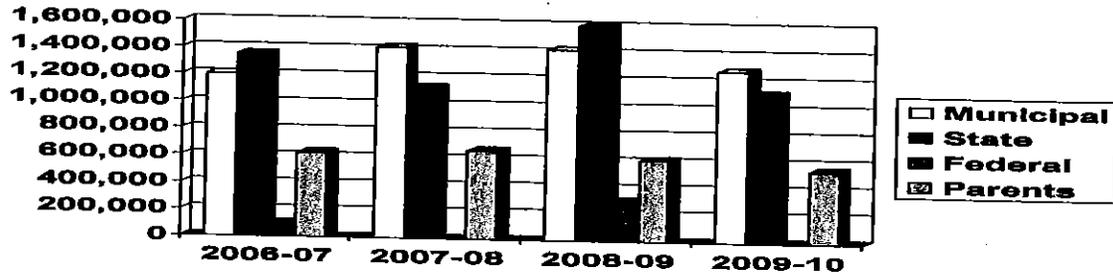
Attached are some facts about the Lighthouse Program, which is the city and state's largest provider of after school services.

Lighthouse After-School and Summer Program Statistics
Bridgeport, Connecticut

- History:** Partnership that began in 1993 between the City of Bridgeport, Board of Education, and numerous faith and community based organizations, as well as institutions of higher education. ***The program is nationally recognized for excellence.***
- Serving:** 2,800 Bridgeport children in grades K-8 during the school year from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. daily and during the summer for five weeks from 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. daily. Programs take place in public schools.
- Offerings:** Includes healthy snack, homework/tutorial session, curriculum based activities, tutoring, recreation, sports, computer and video technology, arts and crafts, educational board games, music, dance, drama, drumming, poetry, and so much more.

Percent of Public School Student Population Served: Approximately 12% for the 2008-2009 school year.

Lighthouse Revenue History:



Impact of Reduced State Funding in 2009-10:

No less than 500 children will be affected with few to no opportunities for after school programs

Recent Evaluation Findings:

Yale 4-year study shows academic growth, higher expectations of success, socially acceptable behavior, and a lower body mass index among participants when compared to children in parent, family or self care during after-school hours.

MRM yearly evaluation shows that 96.2% of participating students are rarely absent from school, 91% had a reduction in discipline referrals, and 63.4% of parents were more active in their child's school. Additionally, 2006 findings for Lighthouse participants are significant for Reading, Writing, and Math. The average CMT Mathematics score of Lighthouse students exceeded the district score in grades 3-8 and the average Reading and Writing score of Lighthouse students exceeded the district score in grades 3,5,7, and 8.

The Impact of After School on Bridgeport and the Region

- Economic Development
 - Employs 389 certified teachers, para-professionals, college students, and other adults
 - Allows approximately 1,800 families to work full days
 - Higher employee productivity levels
 - Incentive for company relocations
- Higher Test Scores
 - Reading, Writing, and Math
- Lower Crime Rates and Less Exposure to Crime
- Transition from Early Childhood Initiatives
- Lower Obesity Rates
 - Reduced health care costs
 - Improved Self Esteem
- Less Discipline Referrals
- Higher Attendance Rates

