

Connecticut After School Network

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
In Support of Funding for After School Programs
March 1, 2011

Submitted by Michelle Doucette Cunningham, Executive Director
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Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Michelle Doucette Cunningham, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut After School Network, a statewide alliance representing the thousands of children, parents and staff who participate in after school programs all across the state.

I am here this evening, on behalf of the After School Network and all its members, to thank you for your past support for programs for children and youth, ask you to support the flat funding of the After School Grant funding in the Governor's budget. The state-funded after school grant program is the backbone of funding for programs in 27 towns serving 5,000 children.

After School Program Facts:

- The After School Grant Program serves almost **5,000 kids** grades K-12 at 61 sites in **27 cities and towns** across Connecticut, from small rural communities to the state's largest cities.
- More than twice as many grant applications were submitted for this program than could be funded, showing that the need for this type of funding is great.
- The **average grant was \$120,000** per year and leverages significant additional local funding and in-kind support.
- The average program serves **120 students**, many serving more than one site in their community, at a cost to the state of less than **\$1,000 per student** or about \$10 per day.
- After School programs funded by these grants **employ approximately 500 staff** in total, as well as providing thousands of working families with necessary child care. About 90% of the funding is spent on salary expenses.
- This is a competitive grant program for which any nonprofit, school or municipality can apply.

After school programs supported by this grant help working families, keep children safe, and improve student learning. Families are relying even more on afterschool supports as they work to keep their jobs, take on more hours, or struggle to afford basic necessities for their children. In addition to the immediate economic benefits, early evaluation results of grant-funded programs demonstrate that program participants show significant CMT test score improvements in math and reading, and is an important tool for the Connecticut State Department of Education to close the achievement gap. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you this evening.