

Connecticut Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
After School In Support of Funding for After School Programs
Network February 21, 2012
Submitted by Michelle Doucette Cunningham
Executive Director, Connecticut After School Network

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 and summer 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 and to testify on three parts of the Governor's budget. Number one, the after school grant program line item in the Department of Education for \$4.5 million is essential flat funding the second-year of two-year grants for forty grantees serving more than 5,000 children after school. After school programs supported by this grant help working families, keep children safe, and improve student learning. The RBA scorecard prepared by the Department each year shows that they are reaching their targeted participants and making a difference in the lives of young people.

Secondly, I want to voice my support for the Governor's proposed changes to the State Department of Education and the additional \$50 million budgeted to implement these reforms, as well as the movement of education related grants from OPM and DSS to SDE. Many of the organizations which I work receive funding, or at least apply for funding, from all three of these departments, and having them align under a the State Department of Education will reduce paperwork, better align goals and outcomes, and make data collection and reporting much easier.

After School Program Facts:

- The After School Grant Program serves more than **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.