

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

to the

**Appropriations Committee**

February 21, 2013

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 Harp, Representative Walker and members of the elementary and secondary education subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today opposing Governor Malloy's proposed elimination of State After School funding. The *state after school grant* program supplements federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center dollars enabling our state to serve an estimated 6,000 additional children during critical after school hours. If the Governor's proposed cuts to this education line are approved, these same children, which include over 300 from Bridgeport, will be affected.

Attached are some facts about Bridgeport's Lighthouse Program, which relies on this funding to meet the needs of our students and is currently the state's largest provider of after school services.

**Lighthouse After-School and Summer Program Statistics**  
**Bridgeport, Connecticut**

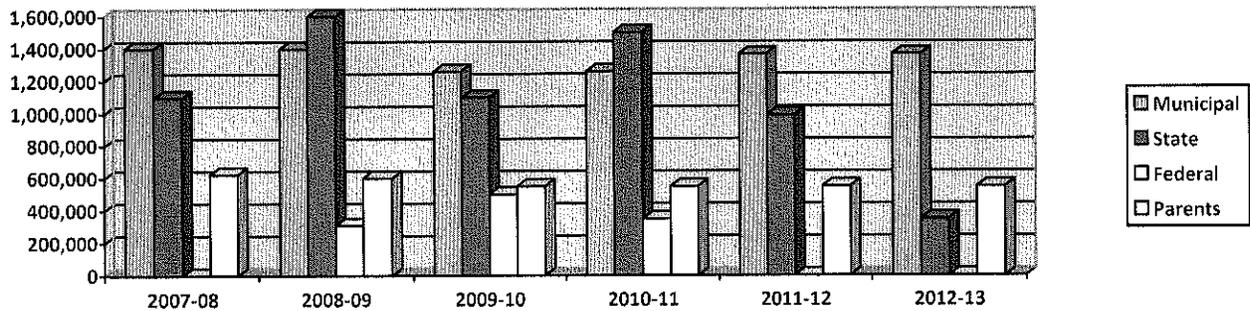
**History:** Partnership that began in 1993 between the City of Bridgeport, Board of Education, and numerous faith and community based organizations, as well as institutions of higher education. *The program is nationally recognized for excellence.*

**Serving:** 2,700 Bridgeport children in grades K-8 during the school year from 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. daily and 2,200 during the summer for five weeks from 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. daily. Programs take place in 26 public schools. Of the 361 parent surveys returned, 48% of children served are being raised in single parent households. Fifty one percent (51%) of parents or guardians report having earned a high school diploma and 38% of Lighthouse families report annual income of less than \$20,000.

**Offerings:** The program includes a healthy snack, homework/tutorial session, curriculum based activities, 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 2012-2013 school year.

**Lighthouse Revenue History:**



**Impact of Reduced State and Federal Funding in 2013-2014:**

No less than 300 children in 4 schools will be affected with few to no opportunities for summer and 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* evaluation 2012 shows that **an overwhelming majority of students surveyed and 97% of parents surveyed are generally satisfied with the program. Principals note improved student attendance, a reduction in discipline referrals and suspensions among participants and the program’s contribution to overall student performance. Additionally, achievements for Lighthouse participants were particularly notable in math where participants in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7, outperformed their non participating peers. Results for reading and writing showed comparable scores to the district with notable variations in grade 6 for Lighthouse participants in reading and grades 3 and 6 for writing.**

**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

