

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

to the

Education Committee

March 17, 2014

RE: After School Grant Program

Good Afternoon. 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 Senators Andrea Stillman and Beth Bye as well as members of the Education Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony to you today in support of after school funding. Now more than ever, the after school community of teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, parents, children, and social service organizations need your support in restoring full funding by adding \$3.9 million to the current state after school grant. Doing so will continue the momentum allowing more children and youth the opportunity to experience the academic and social gains current participants are showing. Additionally, we ask your support of a *new line item* specifically targeting “*summer learning loss*” by adding \$6.2 million in funding to the State Department of Education’s budget. By doing so, more communities will offer sorely needed summer academic enrichment programs that will ultimately reduce the wide spread summer learning loss that exists today. The *state after school grant* program supplements federal 21st Century Community Learning Center dollars enabling our state to serve an estimated 6,000 additional children during critical after school hours. Restoring full funding to this effort coupled with a separate line item supporting summer programs will pave the way for after school providers to engage more young people and assist communities in closing the achievement gap.

Attached please find a few facts about Bridgeport’s Lighthouse Program, which relies on this funding to meet the needs of its 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.*

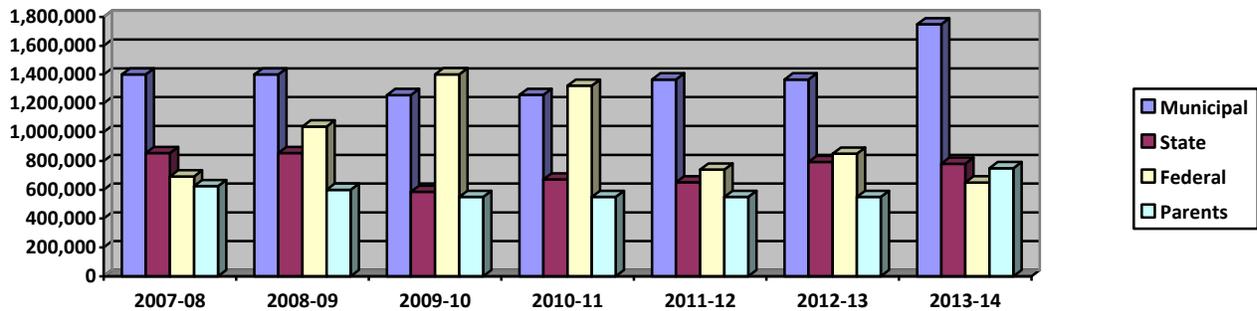
Serving: 2,600 Bridgeport children in grades K-8 during the school year from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. daily and 2,000 during the summer for five weeks from 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. daily. Programs take place in 24 public schools. Of the 397 parent surveys returned, 43% are single parent households, 51% have

earned a high school diploma, and 34% have annual income of less than \$20,000 evidence that socio-economic conditions in Bridgeport continue to fall well below state and national averages.

Offerings: Includes 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 13% for the 2013-2014 school year.

Lighthouse Revenue History:



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

Without continued support on the state and federal level, Lighthouse would only be in a position to serve 1,600 children per year.

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 2012-2013 shows that **89% of students surveyed and 97% of parents surveyed are generally satisfied with the program with 99.5% of parents and 89% of students noting the program is safe. Teachers note improved performance on tests and quizzes as well as class participation, homework, and quality of assignments. Additionally, achievements for Lighthouse participants were particularly notable in reading, writing, and math for most grades as the percentage of students reaching proficiency or above were higher than their non Lighthouse peers. (For a copy of the "Executive Summary" or full evaluation report, please feel free to contact me at 203-576-7252. I would be more than happy to share it with you)**