



March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015

Dear Appropriations Committee,

I write today in support of after school programming in the state of Connecticut. In my professional position, I can give you statistics of how important after school programming is to the success of New Haven students, but I believe it is much more powerful for students to speak for themselves.

During the 2015 Co-Op After School (CAS) Spring Application, we gave the prompt, "Please tell us WHY you would like to participate in the programs." Below is a sample of the responses we received, organized by the impact after school programming makes on these students' lives.

***After school programming increases the academic performance of students.***

**Melody C:** "Honestly, when I'm at home I can barely focus on work or sometimes I don't understand the work, so Homework Club can really benefit me when it comes to my grades."

**Julian J:** "I wish to join Homework Club because I get easily distracted at home and being in school might be the right environment. I would also enjoy just staying in school a bit longer because I love it."

***After school programming enhances students' relationships with their teachers and with their peers***

**Bria H:** "I would like to join this program so I could have something to do afterschool and I really like the teacher of the program I picked. I think it will be very fun and it would be nice to be out of the house doing something I enjoy."

**Derrick S:** "I think it would be pretty cool if I get to make videos with one of my favorite teachers, Mr. Brenner."

***After school programming allows students to explore their individuality in a safe space.***

**Rashae R:** "I have participated in Gay-Straight Alliance in my freshman year, as well as in the fall of my sophomore year and enjoy having a space where I can feel comfortable."

**Raven B:** "I want to join the Multicultural Exploration because I want to explore different cultures and customs. We're learning about tolerance in World History and how it relates to religion so I want this program to add more to my experience. Overall, I'm really excited to meet new people of different grades and arts."

***After school programming provides opportunities to gain additional skills needed for the personal development of students.***

**Trequan M:** “Now that I’m a junior-soon-to-be a senior, applying for jobs and trying to get an interview is the second most important thing after school...I would enjoy participating in Life Skills with Ms. Onofrio on Tuesdays, I believe understanding how to run a household, budgeting, and becoming an employee is extremely important because many other students and myself will be leaving Co-op and going into the world of adulthood...[Life Skills] will prepare me to be wise and have a better understanding of living life as an adult.”

**Shannaya G:** “I think [Invincible] is an absolutely amazing program. It teaches you leadership skills, self-advocacy and how to use your words to fight for your beliefs.”

**Diamanate M:** “[CAS Agency] will help with learning about things that are related to the communications major I am thinking about taking when I go to college.”

*After school programming gives students quality leadership experiences*

**Gabriel O:** “I have participated in the CAS Agency and am actually considered a cofounder. I would like to continue working for the CAS Agency. Entrepreneurship is important for me as a potential business owner as well as for my music career.”

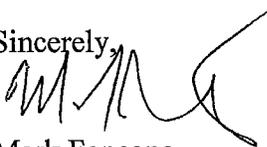
**Naomi K:** “I’d like to tutor at the middle school because it’ll give me the experience I’ll need if I ever want to become a teacher. It’ll also help me decide whether or not I want to teach.”

These students speak volumes for the efficacy and strength an effective after school program plays on their lives. In addition to these students, please consider that the grant we’ve received from the State Department of Education has allowed our program to:

- Offer 45 arts, academic, and enrichment programs in Fall 2014,
- Engage 337 students, more 50% of the student population at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School, in daily academic and enrichment activities during the academic year.
- Achieve an attendance rate of over 80%, with 37 students reaching 30 days’ attendance in the fall semester alone,
- Realize a 91% satisfaction rate on surveys administered to students in Fall 2014, with 93% saying they’ll likely attend again, and
- Affect the lives of students so much that 34% of students surveyed say that attending CAS is the main reason the attend school.

Please consider the importance of after school programming and its effect on the youth of Connecticut. The ultimate goal should only be strengthening these programs as an investment in Connecticut’s future.

Sincerely,



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