



**Department of
Youth & Community
Development**

TESTIMONY

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH SERVICES

OVERSIGHT HEARING: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

PRESENTED BY

COMMISSIONER BILL CHONG

SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

Good morning Chair Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee. My name is Bill Chong, and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Youth & Community Development. Thank you for holding this oversight hearing on afterschool programs.

As I sit here this morning, I am excited and proud of our agency's accomplishments in afterschool services, and our ability to help more youth develop successfully than ever before. Last week, 271 new after school programs for middle school students were launched. The Mayor made this possible, by making access to middle school afterschool programs a high priority. \$145 million this fiscal year and \$190 million next year and beyond, will support this expansion. These programs are part of **COMPASS, our Comprehensive Afterschool System of New York City**.

COMPASS programs offer a mix of academic, recreational and cultural activities for young people after school, on holidays and during the summer. Programs are available for elementary, middle and high school aged youth. They are located in schools, community centers, settlement houses, religious institutions, cultural organizations, public housing and parks recreational facilities. The majority of our programs are in high-need zip codes based on the following factors: youth in poverty, English Language Learners and youth in state subsidized child care. In FY 2015, there will be 88,938 program seats in COMPASS programs alone.

The origins of COMPASS date back to the restructuring of the city's afterschool system last decade. In late 2003, DYCD initiated a year-long planning process that included providers, foundations, researchers and a few city agencies. The result was the combination of several afterschool and childcare funding streams to create a new program model of afterschool services called Out-of-School Time (OST), which officially began in September 2005.

The creation of OST had several innovations, which are the bedrock of COMPASS today:

- Required number of service hours: An age appropriate amount of hours of programming to youth is offered. For example, all elementary school age programs offer services afterschool for 3 hours a day, 5 days a week during the school year. In our new middle school afterschool programs, youth get 15 hours of programming a week, 9 in structured activities and 6 in unstructured activities.
- Programs on school holidays and during the summer: As an economic support, this ensures that working families have a safe, free and quality program for their children to attend, when school is out at these times of the year.
- A mix of activities: To promote quality and engagement, programs offer academic, recreational and cultural activities.
- Increased program data and tracking of outcomes: Youth development research shows the benefits of consistent attendance and engagement in afterschool programs. With the generous support of the Wallace Foundation, we built DYCD Online, a web-based program management system designed to increase accountability, which allows DYCD and providers to track and analyze program attendance and trends in a timely fashion.

- Program support: To maintain program quality, DYCD offers program monitoring, coaching, professional development and capacity building services to its providers.
- Program evaluation: Policy Studies Associates, a Washington, D.C.-based evaluation firm, has analyzed the impact of COMPASS programs on the children and communities we serve.

To promote the investments being made to the city's after school system, we re-branded OST to COMPASS NYC, the Comprehensive After School System of New York City, with the middle school programs being known as **SONYC, for School's Out NYC**. New logos and promotional materials have been developed along with a dedicated SONYC website. A broad marketing campaign to promote SONYC enrollment was launched in mid-August. Elements have included social media; online pre-enrollment; letters from Chancellor Farina to PTA leaders and parents; and subway ads in three languages.

In the months ahead we will continue to develop the COMPASS system. We will release another SONYC RFP for center based and non-public school sites. We will also release a concept paper for a different model to be located at City family shelters and DOE district 79 schools. Finally, we're adding additional capacity building for providers and identifying evaluators for the SONYC expansion.

In addition to COMPASS, DYCD's **Beacon and Cornerstone** community centers offer youth programs during the school year and summertime, in community based settings that also include services for adults and families.

Launched under Mayor Dinkins, **Beacon Community Centers** have become a national and international model. Beacons are collaborative school-based community centers, operating afterschool, in the evenings and on weekends. They were created in the early 1990s in response to widespread concern about crime and drugs in New York City. Since their inception, Beacons have served more than one million youth and adults. Currently, there are 80 Beacons, 15 of which also host Administration for Children's Services foster care prevention programs.

Beacons offer middle school youth 216 hours of programming annually, which includes summer programs. Beacon youth can also participate in citywide activities such as the Beacon Girls Basketball and Soccer League, STEP It Up community services and dance, and the STEM Mentoring Program/First Lego League in partnership with the New York Academy of Science.

In addition to after school programming for youth, Beacons also provide an array of services for adults and other community residents such as:

- Life skills activities to increase personal responsibility, self-esteem, and confidence
- Career exploration workshops
- Civic engagement/community building activities to strengthen leadership skills and civic responsibility
- Recreational, health and fitness activities
- Cultural and art activities such as music, dance, and drama

Together, all Beacon programs serve more than 86,000 participants annually. Beacon programs are very popular, and have become pillars of community development and support in their respective neighborhoods.

Through our **Cornerstones**, DYCD offers programs for public housing residents in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) community centers. They were initiated after NYCHA proposed to close 25 of its community centers in 2008. Advocates and public housing residents urged to keep the centers open. In the FY 2009 budget, an agreement was reached to save the centers. \$12 million was added to DYCD's budget to develop a stronger program model to serve NYCHA youth, adults and families. The first 25 Cornerstones started in January 2009.

Cornerstone youth programs help participants acquire the academic foundation and interpersonal skills they need to graduate from high school, succeed in the workplace, and give back to the community. Typical youth activities include homework help, STEM activities, and high school and college prep; community engagement such as community beautification and mentoring; visual and performing arts such as dance, music, singing, and photography; and healthy living activities through sports and workshops. Citywide, there is a Cornerstone mentoring program and Boys Basketball League.

Cornerstone adult programs are designed to enhance skills and promote social interaction, community engagement, and physical activity. Typical adult activities include:

- High School Equivalency (HSE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction
- Employment services such as career exploration, job search strategies, resume writing and interviewing techniques
- Cultural activities
- Family relationships and parenting skills workshops
- Tenant education and advocacy
- Intergenerational programming

Last year, NYCHA was faced with the same decision in 2008, to close several of its community centers. Again, they were saved, and operation of the centers was transferred to DYCD. As a result, we launched 45 more Cornerstones in January 2014, bringing the total to 70 centers.

Cornerstone centers have also been an integral aspect of the \$210 million in mayoral initiatives to make NYCHA communities safer. DYCD received new funding to extend the summer hours of Cornerstone centers until 11pm daily, with centers containing gyms extended to 12:30am on weekends. The extended hours were a success – initial data shows that 3 ½ times the number of youth and adults attended Cornerstone programs this summer compared to last summer.¹

DYCD also operates several smaller youth programs as follows:

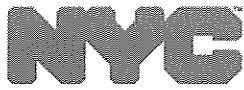
Teen ACTION, which stands for Achieving Change Together In Our Neighborhoods is DYCD's service learning program. Participants in grades 7 -10 engage in structured learning, service projects, and reflection. They are provided an opportunity to develop life skills while making a meaningful contribution to their community. Approximately 1,000 teens are in 17 Teen ACTION programs throughout the City.

¹ Last summer, 7,000 youth were served in Cornerstone programs. This summer, nearly 26,000 youth and adults attended these programs.

DYCD's **In-School Youth (ISY)** program, "Transition to Adulthood," helps high school juniors and seniors graduate from high school and prepare them for their next steps, whether in employment, post-secondary education, or both. Academic support is offered through tutoring, college visits and SAT prep. Career awareness activities include a paid summer job through SYEP, work readiness skills and mentoring. Participants also have support through guidance and counseling, stipends, leadership development activities, and follow-up services. ISY is a two year program, with up to one year of follow-up services, that's been supported by the federal Workforce Investment Act.

Finally, through our **Neighborhood Development Areas (NDAs)** we have youth programs that reach about 3,000 middle and high school aged youth. Federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding supports anti-poverty programs in 42 NDAs across the city. An NDA is comprised of having at least 20% of residents living at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. Neighborhood Advisory Boards represent the NDAs, whose members guide the City in allocating the CSBG funding for community-based human service programs. These include youth services, employment, housing, immigrant services, literacy and senior citizen services. Members conduct formal needs assessments, which are the basis of the NDA RFP.

Once again, thank you for holding this important hearing today on afterschool programs. We look forward to continuing to work with you to support positive youth development programs for New York City's young people.



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Department of
Youth & Community
Development

Bill Chong
Commissioner



THE COMPREHENSIVE AFTER SCHOOL SYSTEM OF NEW YORK CITY

FOR GRADES
K-5

APPLY NOW FOR AN **ELEMENTARY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM!**

LEARN MORE AT **NYC.GOV/AFTERSCHOOL**



SONYC HAPPENS EVERYDAY AFTER SCHOOL ALL OVER NYC. IF YOU ARE IN 6TH, 7TH OR 8TH GRADE, YOU CAN JOIN SONYC AT NO COST TO YOU.

FOR GRADES
6-8

APPLY NOW FOR A **MIDDLE SCHOOL AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM!**

LEARN MORE AT **NYC.GOV/AFTERSCHOOL**

Questions? Call Youth Connect at 1.800.246.4646 or 311

NYC

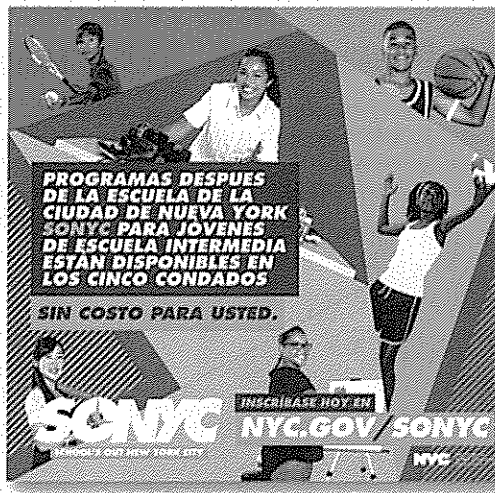
Bill de Blasio
Mayor

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COMPASS NYC

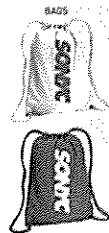
THE COMPREHENSIVE AFTER SCHOOL SYSTEM OF NEW YORK CITY



Subway Ads
2,000 ads for
4 weeks in
3 languages



SONYC



SONYC Gear

- 12 diff types of letterhead (flyers)- chef, basketball, fitness-
- 12 diff types of post cards (chef, basketball, fitness) 10,000 each
- 2 diff types of stickers (one logo only, one logo+design) 50,000 each
- 5 different colored wristbands 3,000 each
- 2 diff types of hoodies 250 each in various sizes
- 5 diff types of t-shirts 800-900 each in various sizes
- 2 diff color drawstring bags 2,500 each = 5,000 total

In addition, a **tool kit** was created for providers giving them access to SONYC logos, clip art, pre-made flyers and templates. (see next page)



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

Department of
Youth & Community
Development

Bill Chong
Commissioner



THE COMPREHENSIVE AFTER SCHOOL SYSTEM OF NEW YORK CITY

SONYC Tool Kit for Providers

A 19 page PDF designed to easily enlighten providers how to best utilize the SONYC brand to enroll youth in afterschool activities and keep them enrolled.



SONYC PROMOTION TIPS

During the SONYC brand development process, we conducted research with middle school youth throughout the City. The SONYC brand rules were designed based on this research. Here are a few additional tips for recruiting and retaining middle school youth based on that research. Middle school youth are starting to identify activities they like and don't like. Offer specific activities at set times each week and promote these days and times to youth. This will prevent youth who only like some activities from leaving the program altogether. Create special experiences for youth such as competitions, events, field trips, and/or exhibitions. This will give youth a reason to come more frequently and motivation to push themselves while participating. Match the skills of your adult staff with the topics they oversee. Middle school youth are looking to learn new skills that they would not learn doing the activity by themselves. Keep age groups separate. SONYC programs must already be promoted as for middle school youth only. It is important that this is also executed at sites and that middle school youth are engaged in unique and separate activities from elementary school youth.

THE SONYC BRAND



SONYC is designed to help providers throughout NYC recruit and retain more middle school youth in their programs. SONYC achieves this by:

Creating a single brand to represent NYC middle school after school programs and to increase awareness among youth, parents and stakeholders.

Requiring programs who use the SONYC brand to meet basic, research-based program standards.

Providing programs with professionally-made promotional materials that they can customize to their own SONYC programs.

Launching a Citywide advertising campaign to promote SONYC middle school programs.

Creating SONYC-branded trainings, branded clubs, culminating events and social media platforms to help programs retain participation year-round.



Testimony of

Stephanie Gendell, Esq.
Associate Executive Director
For Policy and Government Relations
Citizens' Committee for Children

Before the
New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services

Oversight Hearing:
After-School

September 16, 2014

Good morning. My name is Stephanie Gendell and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 71-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

I would first like to thank Chair Eugene and the members of the City Council Youth Services Committee for holding this important hearing and providing us with the opportunity to testify.

This is such an incredibly exciting time to be testifying about after-school programs in New York City. After years of testifying about the need to save after-school from budget cuts and watching the system shrink in size, I am now testifying after the tremendous expansion and re-branding of New York City's after-school system. CCC is grateful to the City Council for its long-standing commitment to preserving and funding after-school programs. We are also extremely grateful to the de Blasio administration for its unwavering perseverance and commitment to securing funds and vastly expanding the system. This afternoon, over 71,000 middle school students (double the number from last year) will be able to participate in after-school programs—this is truly remarkable.

After-school programs serve elementary, middle and high school children from approximately 3 PM-6 PM after school each day, as well as on holidays and throughout the summer. Youth are at greatest risk for engaging in delinquent behavior between the hours of 3 and 6 PM¹ and every \$1 invested in youth services saves \$3 for participants and taxpayers.² High quality after-school programs improve children's development, academic performance and social-emotional well-being. They allow children and youth to engage in academic and developmental enrichment activities in a safe environment. Further they allow parents to work and support their families. Thus, after-school programs are a win for children, families, communities and taxpayers.

Prior to this recent expansion, the largest component of the City's after-school system was referred to as OST (Out of School Time). At its height in Fiscal Year 2008, OST served 87,256 children (45,384 elementary school students; 13,865 middle school students; 13,917 high school students; and 14,799 in multiple grade level programs). Sadly and despite tremendous advocacy and resources restored by the City Council, we saw the OST system continue to decline in capacity to approximately 56,700 children last year. Notably, for two years, over half of those OST slots were funded by the City Council. CCC is grateful to the City Council for this and also to the Bloomberg and de Blasio administrations for ultimately baselining this \$61.4 million for OST.

The City's other two large after-school programs are Beacons and NYCHA Cornerstone. Beacons use schools as a hub for community based programs such as health and mental health

¹ Fight Crime Invest in Kids. *New York City's Out-of-School Time Choice: The Prime Time for Crime or Youth Enrichment and Achievement*, 2008. Available online: <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/NYCAS2pager.pdf>.

² Lattimore, C. B., Mihalic, S. F., Grotspeter, J. K., & Taggart, R. (1998); "The Quantum Opportunities Program"; In D.S. Elliot (Series Ed.), *Blueprints for violence prevention: Book four*; Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

services, ESL classes, and after-school programs. Beacons were designed to give youth a safe place in the community after-school and in the evenings. Approximately 800-1,200 youth are served in each of the City's 80 Beacon after-school programs. Currently, 66 of the 80 Beacon programs are City-funded, while the others are federally funded. There has been no increase in the based contract level of funding for Beacons since they were created in 1991. Thankfully, the City Council discretionary funding for seven of the programs (\$2.146 million) and to prevent an across-the-board cut (\$2.3 million) has now been baselined into the Beacon budget.

NYCHA Cornerstone programs are after-school programs located within NYCHA facilities. There has been an increase in the number of these programs recently and there are now 70 NYCHA Cornerstone programs. This past summer, these programs remained open until 11 PM as a means to reduce youth violence in NYCHA facilities.

As you know, expanding pre-k to all four-year olds and after-school programs to all middle school students has been the top priority for the de Blasio administration. Advocacy from City Hall, the City Council, UPK NYC, the Campaign for Children and hundreds of providers and advocacy organizations secured \$300 million for pre-k and \$145 million for after-school programs for NYC in the New York State Budget. Then, despite the short amount of time to issue RFPs, issue awards, inspect and license programs, and put contracts in place, the expansions rolled out earlier this month and so far they are tremendous successes. The Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) deserves to be applauded and recognized for their incredible work on the after-school expansion.

Over the summer, DYCD held a contest to rename the OST program and youth from across the City submitted suggestions. The new name for the OST program is now COMPASS NYC, which stands for Comprehensive After-School System of NYC. It is comprised of over 800 programs serving children in kindergarten through 12th grade. In total, it is anticipated that COMPASS will serve 85,000 children and youth.

SONYC (School's Out NYC) is the new name for the middle school after-school model serving children in grades 6, 7 and 8. The roll-out of SONYC includes 34,000 new middle-school after-school seats. This includes 271 new SONYC middle school programs, for a total of 562 SONYC programs. The rate for middle-school programs has been increased to \$3,000 per participant. Over 78,000 middle-school students will be able to participate in SONYC this school year.

We are so thrilled with the middle school expansion, as well as the Mayor and City Council's commitment to high-quality after-school programs. We are therefore hopeful that this remarkable expansion is the first step in ensuring every New York City child has access to high-quality after-school programs. To accomplish this goal, we ask that the Mayor, Department of Youth and Community Development and the City Council commit to the following:

- **Continue to expand access to after-school programs by significantly increasing capacity for elementary and high school students.** It is worth noting that high school programs have been hit especially hard by budget cuts in the previous administration. In addition, for parents to be able to work, they often need care for their young, elementary school children after 3 PM.
- **Address the rates for programs that were not impacted by the middle-school expansion.** While middle-school programs now receive \$3,000 per participant, the rates for elementary and high school COMPASS, Beacons and Cornerstone also need to be adjusted to ensure providers are reimbursed for the cost of care and are able to hire quality staff. It is also important to note that elementary programs previously funded by the City Council are currently reimbursed at an even lower rate than other elementary programs. Furthermore, funding for Beacons has not been increased since 1991.
- **Enhance the elementary school model by ensuring younger children, children with special needs and English Language Learners are engaged in programs that address their unique needs.** This includes ensuring that the 4-year olds in pre-k programs are able to access care after 3 PM, during holidays and during the summer. It likely means creating two types of elementary school programs based on age so that prek students, kindergarten students and first graders have a programs tailored to their young age.
- **Continue to enhance the communication, collaboration and data sharing between agencies (DYCD, ACS and DOE), providers and the public.**
- **Ensure funding for elementary summer programming remains intact in the budget by baselining the funds.**

We are looking forward to the continued success of NYC's after-school system. We once again thank the City Council and the administration and look forward to working together on the next phase of ensuring NYC's children have access to high quality after-school programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

neighborhood family services coalition

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SCAN New York
St. Nick's Alliance
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood
Center
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE

September 16, 2014

Re: Oversight of Afterschool Programs

Good morning. My name is Gigi Li and I am here to testify on behalf of the Neighborhood Family Services Coalition regarding afterschool programs in New York City.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the leadership of Chair Eugene and the members of the Youth Services Committee. Your commitment to the provision of high-quality neighborhood based youth services is greatly appreciated. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

The Neighborhood Family Services Coalition (NFSC) is a group of service providers and advocacy organizations that is committed to the delivery of quality services for children, youth and families at the neighborhood level. Our overarching goal is to transform best practice into public policy – focusing in the area of preventive services and also youth programs, youth employment, and increasing community organizations' collaborations with public schools.

Neighborhood Family Services Coalition is also a steering committee member of the Campaign for Children which is working to ensure that every child in New York City has access to high quality early childhood education and after-school programs.

Background:

For many years during the Bloomberg administration, NFSC stood with its advocacy partners, afterschool staff, parents, and youth to rally against persistent cuts to the afterschool sector. With a progressive Mayor and City Council, we are delighted by the commitment to expand the afterschool infrastructure in New York City.

The reshaping of Out of School Time into COMPASS for elementary school students and SONYC for middle school students represents a welcome new focus on the importance of after-school. This expansion represents a significant first step in the expansion of the afterschool sector, but there is also need for investment in areas not included in the expansion, such as elementary and high school afterschool programming and Beacons.

To that end, we offer the following recommendations:

- **Fully fund Beacons.** Instituted in 1991, the mission of Beacons was to serve communities' needs utilizing a neighborhood-based holistic approach. There are 80 Beacon programs throughout New York City which operate in the afternoons and evenings, on weekends, school holidays, and throughout the summer serving children, youth, adults, and seniors. The Beacon model is recognized nationally as a premier program for positive youth development. Annual funding for each Beacon has decreased due to incremental budget cuts, with providers currently operating Beacons at around \$340,000. There has been no increase in the Beacon budget since its inception in 1991 at \$400,000.
- **Expand services for elementary school and high school students.** While every middle school students that wants an afterschool program can participate through SONYC, many providers have waiting lists for elementary school afterschool programs. Currently, Beacons and Cornerstones are the programs serving high school students because there are very limited options otherwise.

Using the middle school expansion as an opportunity to identify the ways to strengthen the afterschool sector overall, NFSC is also focusing on improving the operational and regulatory processes that affect every afterschool provider. *To that end, we offer the following recommendations:*

- **Work with the State on reforming school age child care (SACC) licensing.** While improvements have been made in the past several months in regard to SACC licensing, NFSC urges the City to work with the State on recognizing one key principle: if the school is deemed safe for children during the school day, the same classroom is safe for children from 3-6pm. The delay in issuing the SACC license severely limits the range of activities an afterschool provider can conduct, which in turn affects attendance and participation.
- **Streamline fingerprinting of employees.** The middle school afterschool expansion resulted in 331 new programs. With a dramatic increase in staffing needs, and therefore fingerprinting and clearance, a fast and efficient way to fingerprint, and "green-light" afterschool employees for work is crucial.
- **Address space utilization challenges in NYCHA.** Many Cornerstone programs which are located in NYCHA developments require repairs and significant maintenance and upkeep to be deemed viable for operation. NYCHA should work with DYCD in addressing repairs.
- **Develop a system for DOE to share data.** Providers are increasingly being held to academic gains in afterschool programs, and with the transition to Common Core, there are significant challenges to running strong afterschool programs without access to students' basic data from DOE. While afterschool providers work very closely with teachers and school staff to align curriculum in the afterschool hours, this is further complicated by students that choose to attend afterschool programming in a different school.



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**Testimony of United Neighborhood Houses
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services
Regarding After-School in New York City**

Honorable Matheiu Eugene, Chair, Committee on Youth Services

**Gregory Brender, Deputy Director for New York City Policy &
Advocacy**

September 16, 2014

Thank you Chair Eugene and members of the Youth Services Committee for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gregory Brender and I am here on behalf of United Neighborhood Houses- New York City's federation of settlement houses and community centers. UNH member agencies have a deep commitment to youth development and are among the City's quality providers of after-school services. We are proud that UNH member agencies are a major part of the expansion of middle school after-school programs that is a centerpiece of Mayor de Blasio's vision for New York City. 18 of our members opened 41 new middle school programs last week. UNH member agencies also provide services in Beacons and Cornerstones as well as New York State and federally funded programs such as Advantage After-School and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. UNH is part of Campaign for Children which is working to ensure that every child in New York City has access to high quality early childhood education and after-school programs.

For years, we came before the City Council with the same request- stop the cuts to after-school. For the last two years of the Bloomberg Administration the City Council took action to prevent cuts to approximately 47,000 slots in early childhood education and after-school programs. We are very pleased not to be making that request anymore and even more pleased to be talking about expanding after-school programs.

This is an exciting and important time for New York City's after-school systems. The reshaping of Out of School Time into COMPASS for Elementary School Students and SONYC for middle school students represents a welcome new focus on the importance of after-school. Moreover, last week New York City established itself as the national leader on middle school after-school programs, by opening 331 new middle school

after-school programs- a 76% increase in the number of slots that brings the total number of programs up to 562.

The successful middle school expansion must be followed with more improvements and expansions to New York City's after-school systems.

In order to improve the after-school system in New York City, UNH makes the following recommendations:

- **Expand Services for Elementary School Students.** The recent expansion of middle school programs provided a great precedent for the continued expansion of after-school programs. With SONYC, New York City has taken the historic step of saying that every middle school student who wants an after-school slot will have access to one.

Yet, many of our programs still have long waitlists of elementary school students and some communities lack access to any after-school programs for their elementary schools students.

This type of expansion will also be successful for Elementary aged children and we look forward to working with both the administration and the City Council to expanding services for all New York City's children and youth.

- **Allow for Separate Services for Different Ages of Elementary School Children.** The developmental needs of children P-3 are significantly different than the developmental needs of 3rd through 6th graders. If put in the same classroom with the same menu of activities, many of the older children are likely to be bored or disengaged. UNH encourages DYCD to explore ways to support providers in offering separate menus of activities for younger and older Elementary school aged children.
- **Fully Fund Beacons:** The Beacon model is a successful model for providing both after-school for children and other community services for adults. It is the basis for community schools and we are glad to see that New York City is working to create more and better community schools.

Yet, despite the success of the Beacon model, Beacons have been subject to successive rounds of budget cuts. In fact, Beacons now receive approximately \$340,000 per Beacon while they received \$400,000 per Beacon when the model was founded in 1991. UNH urges New York City to fully fund Beacons at \$400,000 per Beacon.

- **Baseline \$17.2 million for 181 Elementary School Summer Programs.** While most of the funds previously allocated by the City Council have been baselined, funding for 181 Elementary School summer programs remains in the budget

dance. This year the City Council restored \$17.2 million to preserve these programs. However, these programs should have a stable consistent funding source which requires baselining. This stability is particularly important for summer programs which must be ready to go only days after the City passes a budget.

- **Fund wraparound services for children in UPK programs.** UNH member agencies are very pleased to be providing Universal Pre-Kindergarten especially as the program moves rapidly closer to fulfilling the promise of being truly universal. In order to make UPK education accessible to the children of working parents, the City needs to fund services for a longer day for families who need more than six and a half hours of care. For children, K-6th grade, COMPASS programs are available in many schools. However, outside of ACS programs, which have strict eligibility standards, no similar wraparound services exist for Pre-Kindergartners. UNH urges New York City to provide funding for wraparound services for children in Pre K.
- **Expedite repairs to NYCHA sites which host after-school programs.** Many community based after-school programs, including all Cornerstones are in New York City Housing Authority developments. Many of these sites have longstanding requests for repairs out and in some cases are waiting for NYCHA to perform maintenance work for which funds have already been allocated. UNH urges the City Council to work with NYCHA to expedite repairs to NYCHA sites that are home to after-school programs and community centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with you to expand access to after-school for all New York City's children.



**TESTIMONY
BEFORE
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**Presented to the NYC Council Youth Services Committee
Oversight: After-School Programs**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY
SABRINA GOMEZ
DIRECTOR, STEM EDUCATORS ACADEMY
TASC (THE AFTER-SCHOOL CORPORATION)**

September 16, 2014

Good morning. My name Sabrina Gomez and I am the Director of the STEM Educators Academy at The After-School Corporation, also known as TASC. I want to thank the New York City Council for the opportunity to testify about the work TASC is doing with programs throughout the city specifically with STEM.

Since its inception in 1998, TASC has helped more than 464,000 kids by supporting after-school and expanded learning programs in New York City and beyond. TASC-supported programs are operated by community-based organizations (CBOs) with roots in the neighborhoods and schools they serve. Our partnerships with CBOs ensure that programs provide a balanced range of services for children and youth, that includes academics, art, and sports. We also work to enhance the quality, availability and sustainability of comprehensive, daily after-school programs. TASC also funds, monitors, evaluates and supports after-school programs in New York City public schools.

I am here to speak about the work TASC is doing specifically related to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in after-school programs. TASC is so pleased to be in our second year working with the New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) and Institute of Play (IOP) to implement the STEM Educators Academy, a professional development program designed to strengthen collaboration and coordination between teachers and community educators and to help educators teach science in an integrated and highly engaging manner. Through a Summer Institute, mid-year institutes, and ongoing observation and coaching, Academy participants are introduced to hands-on instructional techniques, tools and resources, including design strategies which have proven to be powerful vehicles for teaching STEM. They work closely together to learn collaborative teaching strategies and be given opportunities to

explore how best to use the extra time afforded by after-school and expanded day programs to get kids excited about STEM.

As a former educator in the South Bronx, I had a fear that students were beginning to lose their excitement and love of learning. In many classrooms I enter, students are reading and taking notes – they don't always have the opportunity to engage in tasks that are challenging and authentic or to engage in discussions with peers. This program allows for students to have a completely difference experience with STEM. Kids are never passive learners sitting at desks, listening, and taking notes – they are explorers and scientists collaborating on projects, designing experiments, collecting data, reasoning and reviewing evidence, and drawing solutions to complete design challenges.

Students are engaged in a variety of STEM activities – some examples include:

**** Sheep Dissection** - Middle School students dissecting sheep hearts using scientific tools to better understand the circulatory system and compare its function and structure to a human system.

**** Hovercraft Design Challenge** - 5th graders applying their understanding of independent and dependent variables formed teams to design and build hovercraft models using plastic bottles, balloons, CDs, pipe cleaners, Styrofoam, tape, and glue.

**** Balloon Powered Cars** – Middle school students formed design teams and applied their understanding of forces and simple machines to build and test balloon powered cars. Cars were

constructed using styrofoam, cardboard, wooden barbeque skewers, straws, tape, and scissors.

Balloons were harnessed to the cars and tested on the gymnasium floor.

**** Designing Parachutes** – 3rd graders designed a variety of parachutes, tested and recorded how long each parachutes stayed in the air. Based on their tests, they drew conclusions that reinforced their understanding of air resistance and drag.

**** Egg Drop** – 3rd and 4th graders formed teams to design a parachute and harness that would prevent an egg from cracking as the parachute was dropped from different heights – a chair, desk, and even from a roof.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony today. We're grateful for the Council's continued support of TASC, after-school programs and young people across the city.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NYC Council Youth Services Committee

Oversight: After School Programs

September 16, 2014

First and foremost, the YMCA of Greater New York would like to thank Youth Services Committee Chair Mathieu Eugene and the members of the Youth Services Committee for hosting today's hearing focused on After School Programs in New York City. It is our sincere hope that working together, we can expand services to thousands more New Yorkers in the after school hours. We would be remiss if we did not also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation for the recent expansion of Middle School after school programming. We are the recipients of 3 expansion contracts and we look forward to serving hundreds of new young people this year.

The YMCA of Greater New York is a community service organization which promotes positive values through programs that build spirit, mind and body, welcoming all people, with a focus on youth. The Y gives young people a place to come after school for safe, enrichment activities that encourage and support academic performance, help to build their self-esteem and develop healthy decision making and routines. Among the hundreds of programs offered by the YMCA of Greater New York are a variety of youth programs, including child care, day care and after-school care programs, health and wellness programs, mentoring, leadership training and development, civic engagement, computer training, college/career preparation and summer camps. These programs as well as others allowed us to serve over 200,000 New York City youth last year.

As the largest non-government youth serving organization in the City, we believe it is our duty to submit testimony today. The YMCA is a member of the NYC Youth Alliance, and in turn the Campaign for Children, and echoes their sentiments regarding the expansion and coordination of services related to after school, including COMPASS and SONYC, as well as Beacons, Cornerstones and Community Schools.

For more than twenty years, we have been partnering with public schools and other community-based organizations to expand our Y After School programming, particularly in areas with the most need. We currently provide services to over 10,000 youth at more than 80 sites throughout the five boroughs, including at YMCA Branches, Beacon Centers, NYCHA Community Centers and, of course, New York City Public School buildings.

Y After School programs run from approximately 3-6pm each school day. Most of our program sites have an enrollment of 100 to 150 students. The great majority of students come from low-income, minority households and their parents/guardians pay no fees for program services. Each

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program site is run by a team of caring, trained professionals under the leadership of a full-time Site Director. There is also a part-time Education Coordinator, a certified teacher hired from the host school's staff who advises on creating lesson plans. This ensures that Y After School activities align with and complement the regular school day curriculum. The team is rounded out by a sufficient number of tutors and counselors to maintain a staff-to-student ratio of no less than one staff member for every ten children. This enables us to provide individualized attention to each student's academic and social-emotional learning needs.

In addition to providing a service that allows youth to participate in an enriching and engaging program in a safe environment, these programs are an economic development tool for our communities. After school programs support parents' ability to work and provide jobs to thousands of New York City residents within the same communities served by the programs themselves. We need to remember that the loss of a program to a community is not the simple loss of service; it is compounded by the loss of local jobs. Conversely, after school programs are not merely providing a service to individual families but creating job opportunities in the communities that need those most.

At this time we would like to briefly outline the three broad recommendations we would like the City to consider. First, we would like the City to take an aggressive role in supporting the partnership between all City agencies and community based organizations. That includes partnerships between the City and CBOs, as well as inter-agency collaborations. An example of this would be better coordination of cost sharing and services as it relates to security fees charged to CBOs for providing non-City funded after school programs in school buildings. Other examples include issues around permitting or fingerprinting, involving agencies such as the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Education.

Second, increases in resources and funding that will ensure parity and high quality services across all of the initiatives: COMPASS, SONYC, Beacons and Cornerstones. We urge the City to make sure that existing contracts do not maintain a two tiered system (discretionary vs. RFP), that Beacons are not working with a budget first awarded in 1998 and that programs have the resources to provide staff development training that keeps staff motivated and engaged.

Finally, we urge the City to expand all after school program initiatives throughout all five boroughs and across all grade levels: elementary, middle school and high school. We are grateful for the recent middle school expansion, yet we all know that there is much more that needs to happen. Elementary school programs maintain waiting lists and high school programs are few and far between.

In conclusion, we want to once again thank the Council and the Youth Services Committee specifically, for your ongoing support for the youth of New York City. We also hope to work with you to expand funding to the youth services programs that have been so successful in providing programming in the past. If you have any questions regarding the above, please contact Sharon Levy, Vice President for Public Affairs, at 212-630-9640.



TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

September 16, 2014

Good morning and thank you to the distinguished members of the City Council's Youth Services Committee for conducting this hearing today.

My name is Kimberley Wint and I am a Special Educator and Coordinator of After School and Summer Programs at Northside Center for Child Development. Northside is a 68 year old community based agency providing educational, mental health, child care and social services to over 3,000 children and their families across New York City. Our flagship site, which is where our After School and Summer Program is located, is in East Harlem.

We currently have a licensed School Age Child Care program that is designed to provide services to children with special needs. Our DYCD funded COMPASS program cultivates academic achievement, increases self-esteem, and provides behavioral support to many youngsters who do not thrive in standard school or after school environments, either because their remedial education needs are so great or their behavioral issues present significant challenges. **What makes Northside stand out from other youth development organizations is our integrated, holistic approach: we address our children's educational needs while providing behavioral health and therapeutic support. We strive to give our children every chance to succeed.**

Our program serves children ages 5-12 and runs daily during the school year from 3-6pm, and full days during the summer and several school holidays. Each year, children enjoy a

host of music, art, sports/fitness, nutrition and wellness activities designed to ensure the development of motor skills, socialization, healthy lifestyles and self-esteem. During the academic year eligible children obtaining low scores on the English Language Arts (ELA) and Math tests participate in an intensive remediation program which is foundation supported. During the Summer Program, children participate in a morning Reading Laboratory, where Bank Street interns tutor students every day. This latter program is crucial in terms of preventing learning loss over the course of the summer months.

Through **Homework Help**, an educational specialist, a certified teacher, and trained program staff ensure that students in the elementary after school program complete their homework and are keeping up with their class work as well as teach time management and organization skills.

Students also participate in our **Technology Center** which offers a range of computer-based learning activities including a 3-D design and pre-engineering problem solving program. Youngsters are also involved in an urban gardening program which incorporates science curriculum.

Northside students use our **Children's Library** services which houses a collection of 3,000 books, films, audio and materials, hosts cultural enrichment activities that feature storytellers, poets, and artists, and promotes the Chess Program for children to learn and compete in the game.

In collaboration with the Harlem School of the Arts our after school students participate in art classes that incorporate many media, including digital art, drawing, painting, and quilt making. African drumming also has been a program favorite for our youth.

Our program is a necessary resource for the stakeholders in the community including our school partners, Northside families and other provider organizations, in that we are uniquely able to service special needs children who might otherwise be unable to attend

an after school program. I can't tell you how satisfying it is to see these children flourish in our supportive environment. Needless to say, their parents are also full of gratitude because we haven't given up on their child.

In summation, a central theme in terms of Northside's services is our holistic approach. However, with inadequate funding across systems these much needed wrap-around services are endangered. An increase in after school funding would allow us to expand multidisciplinary services within the program itself by adding a social worker to coordinate care, as well as provide some direct group services and crisis intervention. Additional support for our after school educational team, which is not covered by the COMPASS budget, would also enhance our efforts.

All of our Northside children are "at risk" and mental health clinics and special needs after school programs are underfunded. For children and families with complex needs, multidisciplinary after school programs that can address both learning issues and social-emotional concerns can play a critical role in reducing poverty by improving academic performance, and fostering healthy outcomes for the children in our city's most beleaguered communities.

Thank you.

#

**Public Testimony on Oversight: Afterschool Programs
before The New York City Council Committee on Youth
Services**

September 16, 2014

My name is Allison Weingarten and I am a Program Director at Queens Community House, an organization that serves 25,000 Queens residents a year in 11 different Queens neighborhoods. Our program sites stretch from Jackson Heights through Corona, Elmhurst, Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens and into South Ozone Park and Jamaica .Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Queens Community House is a community-based organization providing 10 COMPASS programs and one fee-based after school program.

The new SONYC programs present good news for middle school youth. The principle of universal after school is one that we have supported for many years, and the expansion of opportunities for middle school youth was significant. The cost per participant was significantly increased to a level that enables us to provide quality programming, at \$3000 per student. There is some flexibility within the model for organizations to plan programming that is responsive to needs at the site.

Challenges do persist. In order to operate after school programming, we must secure a School Age Child Care Certification (SACC license); many school buildings are not compliant and the process of securing the SACC is both lengthy and beyond our control. Yet programs are penalized with poor Vendex ratings when the SACC approval is delayed. The requirements continue to be burdensome and in some cases unrealistic for school buildings that are already housing children during the day.

The new SONYC model does not include summer programming, a time of risk and summer learning loss for youth. At the same time, it avoids what has been a very difficult process of mandatory relocations when programs have to move from their host schools for summer.

There has been an evident effort by the city to expedite administrative delays, by using the HHS accelerator for the SACC licensing process, eliminating the requirement of dual fingerprinting of most staff by DOH

and DOE. We were particularly delighted that DOE space permits were approved as quickly as within a day.

However, our directors are being asked to enter newly enrolling participants' information daily into the DYCD on-line data system. Each entry takes some time. As our staff are required to leave the school buildings by 6pm this means that our supervisory staff have to spend program time updating the data base rather than providing supervision, or a group leader needs to be pulled away from program. The purpose of the daily entry is so that DYCD received daily updates on enrollment and indicators of the rollout. The time required for daily reporting takes away from the many tasks needed for effective start up: hiring staff, enrolling participants, meeting with school staff, planning program and interacting with youth and staff.

The expansion of middle school afterschool is an important step towards the goal of providing after school for all who need it. We were particularly pleased that services were made available to all youth regardless of the zip code of their school.

There are many unmet needs that persist. There is funding for 3 hours a day; at schools that dismiss earlier than 3pm, services can only be provided until 3 hours after dismissal, which means programs end as early as 5:20pm for some of our schools. We are very concerned that elementary school students will have opportunities under the new RFP. And there is a continuing need for community-center based as well as school-based programs.

As a director of a program that was previously funded by the city that was eliminated due to the zip code location of the program, I would urge that the city adopt the same principle of universal after school for the elementary age children as was done for middle school youth.

Thank you for your attention and support for after school.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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Name: Sharon Levy - #

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I represent: YMCA of Greater NY

Address: 5 West 63rd Street, 6th Fl NYC 10023

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Address: Neighborhood Family Services Coalition

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Sabrina Gomez

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I represent: _____

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Name: Commissioner Bill Chong

Address: Dy C.D. 2156 WILLIAM ST. NYC

I represent: Queens Community House

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Name: Allison Weingarten

Address: 108-25 62nd Drive Forest Hills NY 11375

I represent: Queens Community House

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I represent: DyCD

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I represent: DyCD

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