



**Citizens' Committee
for Children** of NEW YORK



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Presented to the New York City Council
Committee on Youth Services

**Oversight:
Afterschool Programming (COMPASS and SONYC)**

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Good afternoon. My name is Daryl Hornick-Becker and I am a Policy and Advocacy Associate at the Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. CCC is a 75-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC is also a lead organization of the Campaign for Children, a 150-member coalition of advocates, civic leaders and early childhood education and afterschool providers in New York City.

I would like to thank Chair Rose and all the members of the Committee on Youth Services for holding today's hearing on afterschool programming. CCC appreciates this opportunity to testify.

Afterschool 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. Studies have shown that youth are at the greatest risk between the hours of 3 and 6 PM and that every \$1 invested in youth services saves \$3 for both participants and taxpayers.¹ High quality, year-round, afterschool programs 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 preventing economic insecurity. Afterschool programs are a win for children, families, communities and taxpayers.

CCC applauds the City Council for its long-standing commitment to preserving and expanding access to these afterschool benefits. In Fiscal Year 2020, Council-funded investments along with pressure on the administration brought total COMPASS elementary school slots to nearly 50,000, and they have continued to build on the Mayor's commitment to universal middle school afterschool by restoring funding every year for SONYC summer slots. On behalf of New York City's children and families, CCC would like to thank Speaker Johnson, Chair Rose, and the entire Council for securing those budget wins.

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>. 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.



In recognition of all the progress made last year, today I would like to speak about building on those wins, specifically as it relates to Introduction 1100 or the Universal Afterschool Program Plan. While we greatly support any effort to expand afterschool access towards achieving universality, we have some concerns with the legislation as it currently stands.

1) Any efforts to expand afterschool access and funding must include summer programming.

Calls for universal afterschool access fall short if they do not include a summer component. Just as children's learning and development does not end at the school day, it also doesn't end at the school year. Summer programming is a vital component of afterschool programming because it provides care for children while parents still work over the summer, and because it helps combat summer learning loss. New York's kids need universal year-round access to programming, but instead the current system leaves children and their families behind; either waiting until the last minute to find out if they have a summer slot, or not funding them at all.

Every year since Fiscal Year 2014, 34,000 summer SONYC slots for middle school students have been cut by the administration, and every year we must fight to restore them in the adopted budget. We fully expect the same budget dance to happen again this year, leaving parents waiting until the last minute to find out if they have programming available for their child over the summer. Additionally, this puts immense strain on the afterschool providers, who must develop budgets, staff up, and enroll their programs all at the last minute. Last year, although 34,000 SONYC slots did not include summer funding, the Council was only able to restore funding for 22,000 due to the effects of the late implementation on the capacity of providers.²

A real immediate commitment to expanding afterschool access would mean finally baselining the full 34,000 middle school summer slots *and* including them in earlier versions of the budget as to give providers, parents and youth the same time and security afforded to those who operate or enroll in private programs.

Moving forward, legislation to create universal access for afterschool programming cannot stop at programming for post traditional school hours alone, it must include a summer component for every slot currently provided and every new slot added. Additionally, programming must also be available on holidays and other days school may not be in session. There is no such thing as truly universal afterschool without a year-round component.

2) A universal afterschool plan must raise current rates for elementary school slots.

Currently, not all afterschool programs are funded equally. There are still many COMPASS afterschool slots for elementary school students that were funded by the previous administration at a base rate of \$2,800 per student, which is \$400 less than the current \$3,200 base rate for the rest

² NYC Council Finance Division. "Report to the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Youth Services on the Fiscal 2020 Executive Budget for the Department of Youth and Community Development," May 16, 2019. <https://legistar.Council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=7223927&GUID=B5AEC069-E8EE-4842-B9D2-82BABE153671>.



of COMPASS and SONYC slots. Before we can begin to add thousands more slots in either program, we must first fund all slots at the same rate to ensure equity and quality throughout the system. Universal afterschool legislation should first eliminate per-child rate disparities, so that as the system expands it doesn't leave some programs behind.

3) Implementation is key to a successful universal afterschool plan.

While we fully support universal afterschool access, this legislation does not specify an implementation plan or timeline towards achieving that end. Efforts to add slots, programming, and funding to get to universality, must be done strategically to ensure programming is stable, high quality, and fully enrolled.

Slots need to be first added where they are needed the most. Our contact with afterschool providers as well as the data shows this to be elementary school, where there are approximately 500,000 students enrolled in grades K-5, but where there are only 47,000 afterschool slots, meaning only 9% of elementary school students currently have access to afterschool. This administration has previously shown a commitment to middle school afterschool programming, where currently approximately 20% of students have access (although as noted this doesn't include access to summer).³ Right now, more slots are needed first in elementary schools before they are needed elsewhere. Prioritizing elementary school access would ensure that all slots are filled and that with added funding there is not an oversaturation of slots and competition between programs.

An implementation plan for universal afterschool should also be more specific in its goals for high school student programming. Currently, there are only approximately 4,000 slots available for over 300,000 high school students in public schools. However, even with this limited offering COMPASS High School has seen a decline in enrollment since 2014.⁴ This decline reflects the need for a variety of afterschool options for high school students, who are often juggling far more responsibilities as well as interests outside the classroom. Additional COMPASS High School programming that would result in full enrollment should be sure to include activities like work training, sports and a wide variety of teen interests.

Conclusion

CCC is excited by the Council's interest in achieving universal afterschool for New York's children, and we believe that by addressing our concerns and those of the advocates, providers and families here today, we can achieve a truly universal year-round afterschool system that benefits all New Yorkers. Once again, I'd like to 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 afterschool programs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify

³ New York City Independent Budget Office. "COMPASS NYC Funding, Budgeted Slots, and Enrollment by Grade Level and Program Area," April 2019. <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/compass-fb-table-2019.pdf>

⁴ *Ibid.*