

After-School Programs are part of a Sound Basic Education



Background: The Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit

In 1993, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) filed a lawsuit charging that the State under-funded New York City schools in violation of the New York State constitution. In 2003, the New York State Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, ruled in CFE's favor, finding that the constitution requires the State to provide every child -- from Kindergarten to the 12th grade -- with the opportunity for a "sound, basic education," also known as a "meaningful high school education." The Court ordered the State to provide City schools with adequate funding to meet these requirements, and recommended that the State do the same for all under-funded school districts statewide. Governor Eliot Spitzer proposed a comprehensive education reform plan in his 2007-08 budget: a \$7 billion increase in state education aid after 4 years and accountability for results.

How Do After-School Programs Connect to the CFE Lawsuit?

Under the principles established in the CFE case, students must be provided with programs that enable them to succeed academically. After-school is one of the programs that have been found to work to improve student achievement. In a 2001 decision in the CFE litigation, Justice Leland DeGrasse found that a sound, basic education includes an expanded platform of programs to allow students to spend more time on task, including after-school programs, and that after-school was particularly helpful in improving student achievement for at-risk students. Recognizing these principles, Governor Spitzer identified after-school as a priority in his first "State of the State" address, and in his budget the Governor included more 'time on task' as one of the options for spending the new school aid.

What's The Next Step?

In his 2007-08 budget, the Governor proposed reforms of the unfair state school aid formula to provide a greater share to needy school districts and to hold districts accountable for raising student achievement. The Governor's education reform plan requires that school districts consider programs to increase student time on task as one of the key strategies to raise student achievement. CASF agrees, and recommends that the reform legislation include a requirement that school districts use some of the new funding for after-school programs. Now, it's time for our state leaders to work together to pass a fair funding formula in 2007 that significantly raises student achievement. After-school programs are critical to reaching that goal.

"We know that more time in the classroom – in the form of longer school days, a longer school year, and after-school programs – also makes a difference."

Governor Eliot Spitzer,
State of the State, 1/3/07

School Districts
should spend some
of their new
increased school
aid to expand
after-school
programs.

**Coalition for
After-School Funding (CASF)**
94 Central Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

T: (518) 518-465-4600 (x104)
F: (518) 465-2890
E: bcohen@citizenactionny.org
W: www.casf-nys.org