



NEWS RELEASE
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**New Research on Afterschool in Connecticut:
*Deepening Funding Shortfalls Take Toll on Connecticut Afterschool;
Parents Pleased with Programs, but State Has Too Few to Meet Demand***

Hartford, Connecticut – Newly released data from two separate surveys show that a small minority of Connecticut students benefit from afterschool programs, while many youth in the state are unable to enroll because funding shortages are limiting the availability of these programs.

The data come from two newly released surveys. *Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk*, a web-based survey of afterschool providers conducted by the Afterschool Alliance; and *After School in Connecticut: What Are Kids Doing After School?*, a telephone survey of parents in the state, conducted for the Connecticut After School Network.

Taken together, the surveys, released today at an event at the State Capitol, find that parents of children in afterschool programs are overwhelmingly satisfied, but that existing programs are oversubscribed and underfunded – and that there are not nearly enough to meet demand.

“Connecticut has a lot of quality afterschool programs, but not enough to go around,” said Connecticut After School Network Executive Director Michelle Doucette Cunningham. “Many of our political leaders understand the problem, and are addressing it. Speaker of the House James Amann backed a package of more than \$4 million in state appropriations for afterschool, which will supplement the almost \$3 million the state provides to priority school districts for extended day programs and the almost \$8 million from the federal government’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative. In addition, both of Connecticut’s Senators are members of the Senate Afterschool Caucus, with Senator Christopher Dodd serving as co-chair. So we have strong political support for afterschool in the state, but we need that support to translate into more afterschool programs for our kids.”

The data from the two surveys were compiled into a single report, *New England After 3PM: Spotlight on Connecticut*, which is made possible by support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Key findings:

- 81 percent of Connecticut’s afterschool programs are functioning at or above maximum capacity, serving as many or more children as they were budgeted for. In addition, 84 percent of afterschool providers surveyed said there are children in the community who need afterschool care but cannot access it. [*Uncertain Times*]

- Nearly half of the afterschool programs in Connecticut have lost funding over the past two years (47 percent) or have seen their funding stagnate (25 percent). Just 28 percent have had an increase in funding. [*Uncertain Times*]
- Looking to the future, less than half of afterschool providers surveyed said they felt secure about their program's funding for the next two years (44 percent). [*Uncertain Times*]
- Just 10 percent of children in Connecticut are enrolled in a structured afterschool program. [*Afterschool in Connecticut*]
- 88 percent of parents of children in afterschool programs in the state say knowing their child is in a supervised afterschool program helps them better focus on their jobs in the afternoons. 78 percent say it helps them miss work less often. [*Afterschool in Connecticut*]
- 79 percent of parents agree that afterschool helps their child do better in school, and 93 percent say their child enjoys the program he or she attends. [*Afterschool in Connecticut*]
- 60 percent of parents with children not participating in an afterschool program say their children would likely attend a program if one were convenient and affordable. [*Afterschool in Connecticut*]
- 44 percent of programs in the state operate in a community where half the children qualify for the free or reduced-price lunch program. [*Uncertain Times*]

At a luncheon today at the State Capitol to release the report, the Connecticut After School Network presented Speaker Amann with the 2006 "Children's Champion Award" in recognition of his leadership on the issue. "All of us know that afterschool programs work," Speaker Amann said. "Indeed, they are an integral part of the learning day for students. The challenge is to find the money and the will to fund them."

"We've made important progress in extending the learning time of students in Connecticut and throughout New England. But too many children are still without access to academically enriching afterschool programs," said Nellie Mae Education Foundation President and CEO Blenda J. Wilson. "Policy makers, education, business and nonprofit leaders and parents must work together to increase that access and, in turn, improve student performance."

"Afterschool programs in Connecticut keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. That's why parents are so pleased with them," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "But like many other states, Connecticut simply doesn't have enough programs to meet the demand, and that problem has everything to do with funding shortfalls."

The report is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org or from the Afterschool Alliance media office at 202/371-1999.

Uncertain Times: Funding Insecurity Puts Afterschool Programs at Risk is a web-based survey of afterschool coordinators across the country, conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, asking questions about program funding and accessibility. Eight-seven respondents from Connecticut participated, representing 283 afterschool program sites and more than 100,000 children. Forty-four percent were with community-based organizations; 23 percent were with school-based; 18 percent were affiliated with national organizations such as the YMCA or Boys & Girls Clubs. The survey began in August 2006 and concluded in late September. *Uncertain Times* used web-based survey software, and the survey was e-mailed to more than 10,000 contacts nationwide in the Afterschool Alliance database in August. Recipients were encouraged to forward the survey to afterschool program staff, and to be certain that only

one person per program completed the survey. Nationally, 2,111 surveys were completed, representing 9,813 afterschool sites, serving more than 1.5 million children.

After School in Connecticut: What Are Kids Doing After School? is a survey commissioned by the Connecticut After School Network. Conducted by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, the survey is a random study in which 513 parents or guardians with at least one child between the ages of 5 and 14 were selected and interviewed by telephone between November 15 and December 19, 2005.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

The Connecticut After School Network is a partnership of individuals and organizations working to see that every Connecticut child and youth has the opportunity to participate in high quality, affordable after school programs. Network partners recognize that quality after school programs provide positive child and youth development while meeting their community's needs for keeping kids safe and families productively employed. For more information, visit www.csaca.org/ctafterschoolnetwork/.

Based in Quincy, Massachusetts, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation is the largest philanthropy in New England that focuses exclusively on promoting access, quality and effectiveness of education. Established in 1998, the Foundation provides grants and other support to education programs in New England that are designed to improve low-income and underserved students' academic achievement and access to higher education. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$63 million in grants and support to education programs in the region. For more information, visit www.nmefdn.org.