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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 10, 2018

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Burlington School District's Christy Gallese Chosen as One of Just 15 'Afterschool Ambassadors' in United States This Year

Gallese Will Work in Vermont and Nationally to Increase Access to Afterschool Programs

Burlington, VT – Burlington School District and the Afterschool Alliance are proud to announce that Christy Gallese, BSD's Director of Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO), has been selected to serve as a 2018-2019 Afterschool Ambassador. She is one of just 15 leaders in the country chosen for the honor this year. In addition to leading their local afterschool program, Afterschool Ambassadors serve one-year terms for the Afterschool Alliance, organizing public events, communicating with policy makers, working to grow awareness and support for afterschool and summer learning programs.

"I am excited to join in the Afterschool Alliance's work to build support for afterschool programs," said Gallese. "In my 15 years working in the field, I've seen over and over again the extraordinary difference that afterschool makes in the lives of young people in Vermont. These programs help students explore their interests and discover their passions, while giving parents the security that comes from knowing their children are safe and supervised, with opportunities to learn and grow, after the school day ends. I look forward to building support for the out-of-school-time opportunities all students need."

"The people in Burlington have known for a long time that Gallese is an incredible asset to our youth and to the Burlington School District," said Burlington Superintendent Yaw Obeng. "With this selection, we are pleased that the greater community will now also benefit from her tireless efforts to advocate for quality programming to serve students across the country."

"We're thrilled that Gallese will serve as an Afterschool Ambassador this year," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Now more than ever, with federal funding for quality afterschool and summer learning programs under attack, we need strong advocates like her. She will mobilize parents, educators and business, community and faith leaders, among others, to help safeguard funding for the afterschool programs that keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help give working families peace of mind. These programs offer hands-on learning opportunities, homework help, mentors, science and technology, healthy snacks and meals, sports and fitness, arts programming, college and job prep, and much more."

Burlington ELO's mission is to foster the social and academic success of Burlington youth through quality programming in an environment that creates lasting connections with peers, adults and the community. The program serves more than 1,700 K-12 students across nine schools, during both the school year and summer months. It supports students in achieving vital outcomes such as increased academic performance, increased leadership and social skills, increased cultural and global awareness, and the cultivation of a belief that they can make a difference in their community and world. The elementary school-aged programs are 5 STARS sites (Step Ahead Recognition System), and program is recipient of 2018's 21st Century Community Learning Center grant.

Each Ambassador will organize a major event for *Lights On Afterschool*, the Afterschool Alliance's annual rally for afterschool, to be held on October 24th in Burlington this year. Last year, 1 million people participated in some 8,000 *Lights On Afterschool* events across the United States and at U.S. military bases worldwide.

The [America After 3PM](#) household survey of more than 30,000 families, commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance, found that participation in afterschool programs has increased to 10.2 million students nationwide, up from 6.5 million in 2004. But the unmet demand for afterschool programs has increased as well. Today, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more whose parents say they would participate, if a program were available. Unmet demand is especially high in rural communities and communities of concentrated poverty. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends.

A large and growing body of evidence demonstrates improvements in attendance, behavior, academic achievement and more among children in afterschool programs. Researchers have also found that afterschool programs encourage increased parental involvement – an important building block for student success. Burlington School District is excited to support the professional development of Gallese while advocating for stronger Afterschool programming across the country.

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Burlington School District (BSD) is a pre-k-12 public school system of about 4,000 students in Burlington, VT. BSD's mission is to graduate students who: value different cultures, engage with the community, communicate effectively, think creatively, skillfully solve problems, and achieve at their highest academic, intellectual, and personal potential. www.bsdvt.org

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. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.