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Private Investment in After-School Programs Led to Dramatic Public Spending Increase, NYU Study Finds

In the decade since the Open Society Institute set out to help New York City institutionalize after-school programs as dependable resources for kids and families, every level of government has increased funding for daily, comprehensive after-school programs. The city's after-school system has become "one of the foundations of service for children and youth" in New York.

That is the independent conclusion of scholars at The Institute for Education and Social Policy (IESP) at New York University, an organization that conducts nonpartisan scientific research on education and social policy.

Researchers at IESP analyzed an array of data measuring city, state and federal spending on after-school. In the policy brief "Public Funding for Comprehensive After-School Programs, 1998 to 2008," released today, they document a public policy transformation on behalf of New York City kids and families. Since 1998, they find, every level of government established initiatives to expand the availability and quality of after-school programs that kids can attend every school day, generally for three hours a day, while their parents work. City, state and federal funding for those programs increased from approximately \$23 million in 1998 to nearly \$30 million in 2008, with the City of New York contributing the greatest share to building a citywide system of programs.

"Over the past ten years in New York City," the researchers concluded, "public support for after-school programs has become one of the foundations of service for children and youth."

"This policy brief provides independent confirmation that the creation of an after-school system is one of the most successful private-public initiatives ever to benefit New York City kids," said Lucy N. Friedman, the president of The After-School Corporation (TASC). "It is a testament both to the vision of the Open Society Institute and its founder, George Soros, and to the power of government and private institutions working together to achieve transformative public policy change on behalf of the kids and families in New York City."

She noted that Friday, October 16, is LightsOn Afterschool, a national rally to support the expansion of after-school programs for all kids who need them. The policy brief concludes that of New York's 1.1 million public school students, approximately 160,000 now attend comprehensive after-school programs.

“As we brace for tough economic times, families in distress and working parents need to know their after-school programs will be there for their kids,” Friedman said. “TASC is building on this decade of momentum to find new partners and resources to expand these essential programs, and to work with policymakers and our community partners to produce the greatest benefits from every dollar spent on programs that support, educate and inspire kids.”

In 1998, The Open Society Institute (OSI) issued a \$125 million challenge grant to establish The After-School Corporation (TASC.) At the time, few public resources were devoted to comprehensive after-school programs that met for three hours a day, every school day. TASC set out to develop after-school programs that demonstrably benefit kids in kindergarten through high school, with the goal of demonstrating that large numbers of kids can be served in high quality programs. With the support of OSI, a foundation that aims to shape public policy to promote economic, legal and social reform, TASC advocated for after-school and summer programs to be publicly funded and institutionalized as an essential service for kids in New York City, the state and the nation.

Under Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in 2005, New York City launched the Out-of-School Time (OST) Initiative to create a system of high quality programs supported through a sustained funding stream. IESP researchers document that since 2004, the City of New York has dramatically increased its proportional share of funding for after-school programs, compared to state and federal sources, to establish the nation’s largest municipally-funded after-school system.

New York City now provides about two-thirds of all public funding for after-school programs in New York City. OST programs are administered by the city Department of Youth and Community Development. The federal government provides approximately a quarter of the funding for programs in the city, and state government provides approximately eight percent.

The After-School Corporation is dedicated to giving all kids opportunities to grow through after-school and summer programs that support, educate and inspire them. TASC’s vision is that kids from all backgrounds will have access to the range of high quality activities beyond the school day that every family wants for their children: experiences that support their intellectual, creative and healthy development and help them to be their best, in and out of school.

