



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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Testimony Re: H-5920 Out of School Time Learning Commission

House Health, Education & Welfare Committee

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its **support for House Bill 5920**. This bill would extend the reporting and expiration dates of the Out of School Time Learning Commission to January 28, 2020. The Out of School Time Learning Commission works to improve access to high-quality after school and summer learning opportunities for children in Rhode Island. The Commission oversees the implementation of the plan developed under the 2009 Rhode Island After School and Summer Learning Program Act.

High-quality, organized after-school and summer programs improve the supervision and safety of youth, promote positive social skills, and, with sufficient dosage, improve student achievement. Quality out-of-school time programs provide engaging activities that are intentionally designed to promote youth development and are taught by trained, dedicated instructors who work effectively with youth. Youth who participate consistently can show improved competence, caring, and connections.

In most communities there are not enough high-quality, affordable after-school and summer programs to serve all the children who could benefit from them. Resources are needed both to improve the quality of current programs and to expand access. In Rhode Island, the Providence After School Alliance and the Rhode Island Afterschool Network (a United Way of Rhode Island program) act as intermediaries to address access issues and support program quality improvement.

**Students Served by 21st Century Community Learning Centers
by Grade Span, Rhode Island, 2017-2018 School Year**

SCHOOL DISTRICT	GRADES PK-3	GRADES 4-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12	TOTAL
Central Falls	252	216	141	205	814
Cranston	72	47	73	0	192
East Providence	109	52	0	0	161
Newport	508	289	383	387	1,567
Pawtucket	515	305	12	0	832
Providence	368	224	1,178	2,375	4,145
Woonsocket	260	219	297	763	1,539
<i>Charter, State-Operated and Other Schools</i>	205	141	600	257	1,203
<i>Rhode Island</i>	2,289	1,493	2,684	3,987	10,453

Source: RI Department of Education, Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports, 2017-2018 school year.
Data are not unduplicated as students can be served by more than one grantee.

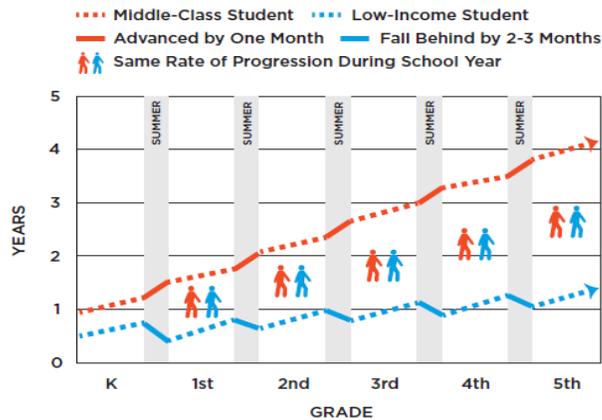
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Currently, the state manages two systems to provide access to after school and summer programs. One is managed by the Rhode Island Department of Education to invest federal 21st Century Community Learning Center funds and serves approximately 10,400 children during the school year and 2,700 children during the summer from ages 4 through 18. The other system is managed by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services which provides child care subsidies to approximately 4,175 school-age children to attend after school and summer programs. The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is currently paying rates that are well below the market rate for school-age programs which means that families have difficulty accessing high-quality programs that provide enriching learning opportunities after school and during the summer. **We also recommend passage of H-5106, sponsored by Representative Diaz to establish tiered quality rates for all ages of children in the CCAP program,** with high-quality programs receiving rates at the nationally recommended benchmark level (75th percentile of the market rate).

As you may know, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the United Way of Rhode Island are coordinating Rhode Island Reads, a statewide campaign to raise awareness about the importance of third grade reading proficiency. Reading proficiency in third grade is a key predictor of school success and high school graduation. Research shows that children who are not proficient readers by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers. Currently, only 40% of third graders in Rhode Island are meeting expectations for reading.

High-quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities can help close the reading proficiency gap. Research has shown that low-income elementary school students lose up to two months of reading skills over the summer while their higher-income peers make gains. Over time, this summer learning loss widens the language and literacy gap that is present between low-income and higher-income students at kindergarten entry so that low-income students are almost three grade levels behind in reading skills by the end of fifth grade.

THE EFFECT OF SUMMER LEARNING LOSS ON READING SKILLS, GRADES K-5



Children of all income levels need access to high-quality expanded learning opportunities during the summer and after school. The planning bill passed in 2009 called for resources to expand after school and summer learning that builds on the existing infrastructure in the state including child care programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Child Opportunity Zones (COZs), community-based organizations, and public schools.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT commends the House for its approval for the first year of the Out of School Time Learning commission. We urge you to approve its extension.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.