



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
ONE UNION STATION
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

Testimony Re: House Bill 5211 Re: Afterschool and Out-of-School Time Act

House Finance Committee

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Paige Clausius-Parks, Senior Policy Analyst

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its **strong support** for **House Bill 5211** which would provide \$2 million to support high-quality afterschool, summer learning, and workforce development programs.

High-quality, organized after-school, summer, and out-of-school time 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.

School hours only cover 20% of the time children and youth have available for learning, forming friendships, developing and practicing skills, and exploring interests. What children do during out-of-school time matters for success in school and life. Yet, there are not enough affordable, high-quality, out-of-school time programs to meet the needs of families and youth.

Currently, the state manages two systems to provide access to after school and summer programs. One of these systems 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 2,300 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 school-age children to attend after school and summer programs.

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 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.

rikids@rikidscount.org
www.rikidscount.org



Students Served by 21st Century Community Learning Centers by Grade Span, Rhode Island, 2018-2019 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	GRADES PK-3	GRADES 4-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12	TOTAL
Central Falls	333	225	223	217	998
Cranston	84	46	68	0	198
East Providence	82	53	0	0	135
Newport	538	257	304	348	1,447
Pawtucket	504	330	9	1	844
Providence	378	196	1,374	2,505	4,453
Woonsocket	261	150	246	669	1,326
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>227</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>536</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>			<i>117</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>359</i>
<i>UCAP</i>			<i>131</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>2,341</i>	<i>1,385</i>	<i>2,699</i>	<i>4,014</i>	<i>10,439</i>

Source: RI Department of Education, Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports, 2018-2019 school year.

Data are not unduplicated as students can be served by more than one grantee. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

There is a substantial gap between high-quality afterschool and out-of-school time opportunities available to youth from low-income families compared to opportunities for youth from higher-income families, and higher-income families spend almost seven times more on enrichment activities which **contributes to persistent gaps in student outcomes**. Federal and city funding of high-quality afterschool and summer programs helps youth from low-income families participate in out-of-school time programs and helps to promote equity.

Out-of-school time programs have provided crucial services to students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic including assistance with academics, accessing technology, and addressing food insecurity for families. Rhode Island should continue to view out-of-school time providers as part of the system of supports for students and families.

State investments are needed to expand access to high-quality afterschool and summer programs and to build and sustain an effective out-of-school time workforce. We urge you to pass this important legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.