



c/o SCAA
150 State Street, 4th Floor
Albany, New York 12207
voice 518-463-1896
fax 518-463-3364
email dmastin@scaany.org
www.newyorkcan.org

January 9, 2009

Honorable David Paterson
Governor of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Re: 21-day Amendments to the Fiscal Year 2010 Executive Budget

Dear Governor Paterson:

The New York Children's Action Network (New York CAN) Youth Development Committee urges you to amend the Office of Children and Families portion of your fiscal year 2010 proposed budget to better serve the young people and working families of New York State.

We ask that you withdraw the Youth Programs Block Grant. The proposal to combine the Youth Development and Delinquency Prevention (YDDP) program, Special Delinquency Prevention Program (SDPP), Runaway Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) programs, Alternatives to Detention, Alternatives to Residential Placement and Secure and Non-Secure Detention Services will not serve the best interest of children and young people.

Mandated juvenile justice funds do not serve the purposes of youth development programs and should not be blended with youth development funding streams. Juvenile justice programs predominantly address intervention and treatment; youth development programs support primary prevention and positive choices. Moreover, the block grant proposal is saddled by a retroactive start date of January 1, 2009. This clause will require the repeal of the Fiscal Year 2009 appropriations for YDDP, SDPP and RHYA that fund programs for the current school year. Uncertainty in funding during the middle of a school year will lead to hardships for families who depend on regular access to these programs as a way to keep kids safe while parents are at work. The block grant also represents a total reduction of 25% in funding when compared to last year's allocation for these very same programs.

The Executive Budget also proposes cutting the Advantage After School Program by 25%. Advantage serves almost 26,000 students statewide and is critical to connecting youth development programming to the lessons being learned in the classroom. In 2007 only 36 new contracts were awarded from a pool of 247 applicants. If the 25% cut is realized, OCFS would go without releasing a new request for proposal for a second straight year, leaving a significant number of children who are eligible for participation in these effective programs without access once again.

As you consider budget amendments, please restore funding for Advantage After School and withdraw the Youth Programs Block Grant so these funding streams can remain separate and at level funding. Neither funding cuts to Advantage After School nor the Youth Programs Block Grant will serve our children and families – either in the short or long term.

Thank you for your serious consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Naomi Marsh
Co-Chair



John Albert
Co-Chair

cc: Commissioner Carrion
Dennis Whalen
Kristin Proud
Laura Anglin
Joseph Baker