



February 3, 2025

To: [Chair Lew Frederic](#), Vice Chair [Weber](#), and Senators [Gelser Blouin](#), [Robinson](#), and [Sollman](#)
[Senate Committee on Education](#)

Re: **SB896** – After-School Learning and Enrichment Grant Program – **Support**

On behalf of Washington County Kids, a nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to out-of-school time (OST-early childhood, afterschool, and summer) programs, we urge you to support the passage of SB 896 which establishes a grant program for afterschool programs.

Research consistently shows that OST programs improve academic success, graduation rates, behavior, student safety, and good citizenship ([After School Alliance, 2014](#) and [2025; Vandell, et. al., 2020](#)). Quality child care and afterschool programs also contribute to long-term career success ([Parks, 2000](#)). A meta-analysis of 213 OST programs found significant gains in social-emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academics—resulting in an 11 percentile point gain in achievement ([Durlak and Weissberg, 2011](#)). Additionally, many programs provide federally subsidized nutrition, enhancing overall health and school performance.

These programs also benefit the workforce. Parents, particularly women, who have access to quality out-of-school-time care experience fewer absences and higher earnings. Families also save on child care costs, freeing income for essentials like housing, food, and medical care ([McCluskey, 2018](#)).

A [study](#) of Washington County 3rd and 8th grade language arts and math scores before and after the pandemic showed that economically disadvantaged students fell significantly behind their peers. Schools alone cannot bridge this gap—SB 896 will provide critical support for these students

We strongly support the bill's provision to grant funds directly to community-based organizations, reducing duplicative paperwork burdens through school districts and allowing for earlier planning and faster implementation. We work with experienced afterschool providers in Washington County who are well-qualified to deliver high-quality programs.

We urge your support of SB 896.

Sincerely,

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