

LETTERHEAD

DATE

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester please reconsider the metrics of the LEAPS eligibility or provide additional funding for more school districts so that critical after school services can continue.

Thank you for your commitment to afterschool programming for children and youth across the state. We think the newly formed NYS Learning and Enrichment After-school Program Supports (LEAPS) is well intentioned and a step in the right direction. One consolidated funding stream will provide efficiencies and opportunities for growth for many providers which will in turn impact the children and youth served.

However, unfortunately the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, and more importantly, children and youth of the Bedford Central School District and Mount Kisco are slated to lose critical afterschool services of which they have come to rely next school year due to this change. Bedford Central School District is not identified as an eligible school district per the LEAPS competitive procurement. More than 70% of our after-school programming families are living at or below the national poverty level of \$30,000. Bedford Central School District has 4 elementary schools and Mount Kisco Elementary School which is less than a mile away from our Club is on the NYS List of Title 1 Schools. The Bedford Central School District is considered “at risk” for teens graduating on time since there is a high percentage of students whose first language is not English.

Through the current Advantage After School Program, the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, entering its 85th year of serving the community, currently provides services to approximately 140 youth for three (3) hours daily and an additional 100 for less than 3 hours a day. They run an outstanding program, meeting and exceeding all expectations and metrics. The Club has no other way to backfill or fund this program without assistance from the state and losing this funding will cause the very families who so desperately need after school programming to find themselves at a loss. The families, and children and youth of this school district should not be penalized and face a reduction of services due to the total demographics of the school district. In September of 2023 the Club welcomed Head Start programming and 2 ½ classrooms of children did not speak any English when starting. These children are now functionally

bilingual and water safe. These families expect to send their children to the Club for after school programming when entering Kindergarten and beyond.

For 15 consecutive years 100% of our high school seniors have graduated on time and gone onto College the Military or Technical programs. For the last 4 years all graduating seniors have gone to college. We serve over 130,000 meals and snacks annually and have taught more than 70,000 children to be water safe. Our teen programming includes concentration on advocacy and leadership evidenced by the fact that for 10 years we have prepared students to travel to Albany to advocate on behalf of critical legislation impacting youth throughout the state and send a Club YOY to Albany for NYS Youth of the Year.

Please add a personal statement how the Club has supported you, your family and or your community.

We truly appreciate your leadership and hope that together we can fix this unintended consequence of a program with great importance.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Regards,