

Subject: [External] After School Funding and the Ed Fund

[External]

Jane,

It has come to my attention that there is a concerted lobbying effort underway by external advocacy groups to move money earmarked in the Education Fund for After School and Summer programming, to the control of external groups to be used to provide private after school and summer programming. This effort was rejected in the House last week when they passed their version of the Budget Adjustment Act (H.839); now I understand attention has turned to getting the Senate to add this back to the BAA. I am writing in objection to this effort to strip control of after school and summer program money from the direct control of LEAs, where it belongs.

In CCSU, we have an established history of providing robust afterschool and summer programming across all seven schools. Our programs are NOT childcare programs; they all have an educational, or educational-enrichment element to them. This happens because we are in the education business. Education Fund monies should be used for education, not childcare.

Moving Education Fund money to private sector control will undoubtedly have three results. First, it will eliminate the expectation that these programs *have* an educational component to them, raising the possibility that at least some of this money will be used to operate what are essentially childcare programs. Second, redirecting State money to private organizations creates opportunities for these organizations to discriminate against our students on the basis of need. Finally, it has its most negative impact on the rural school districts by diluting the pool of available students for our programming; if families of means are able to move their child(ren) into a private program, schools in our region will be drawing from a reduced pool of students. Our experience is that when this happens the schools end up providing services to the special needs students and the students whose families cannot take advantage of opportunities beyond the bounds of their local school. This is a fundamental equity issue for these students.

It is my understanding that you were instrumental last session in creating this additional pool of money in the Education Fund to support our after school and summer programs. This money is already being made available to school districts in the form of new AOE grants for after school and summer programs, and those grants will likely disappear if you take the underlying money away. In the FY25 budget cycle, CCSU schools have already shown their commitment to continued after school programming by transferring the funding from federal grant (ESSER) sources to local budgets. This local effort needs additional resourcing beyond what our local taxpayers can afford, and that money is already available in the Education Fund, so long as it is not diverted to private hands.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like me to clarify my concerns.

Thanks, as always, for your continued support of our schools in CCSU.

Mark

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Mark Tucker, M.A.

Pronouns: he/him/his - <https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>

Superintendent

Caledonia Central Supervisory Union