

PRESS RELEASE

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Release of State’s 2019 Out-of-School Time Learning Report Reveals Programs’ Success Improving Student Performance, Graduation Rates; More is Needed

The new report was the focus of the RI Afterschool Network’s Lights On Afterschool summit, where local education professionals and programs were also honored for their impact on young lives

Providence, R.I. (October 24, 2019) For the 34,704 Rhode Island students engaged in afterschool learning, there are another 37,471 who would participate in a program if one were available to them – programs proven to positively impact student performance in the classroom and beyond.

That was one of the major takeaways of a [new report on Out-of-School Time Programs in Rhode Island](#) released on Thursday, Oct. 24, by United Way of Rhode Island’s (UWRI) Rhode Island Afterschool Network (RIAN). Funded by the Women United donor affinity group of UWRI, and the Rhode Island Foundation, the latest report on afterschool and summer learning programs in the Ocean State was the focus of RIAN’s *Lights On Afterschool* summit. The summit was attended by more than 300 local education professionals, school administrators, state leaders and advocates.

“Afterschool alone can’t improve low test scores, but the results they do have in our core cities – more students staying in school, graduating and pursuing college, social and emotional development – are clearly evident,” said Larry Warner, Director of Grants and Strategic Initiatives, UWRI. “These programs are a vital component to helping our youth do their best, and we must do what’s needed to make them available to every child.”

Released just two days after the latest Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) scores showed modest improvement, the findings of RIAN’s report demonstrate a model vital to the overall solution of closing the state’s achievement gap. However, despite the benefits of the programs and demand among families and youth, it is a lack of funding that minimizes access and reach.

In 2018, Rhode Island schools and community-based organizations requested \$7.3 million to help fund OST programs; only \$2.7 million of which was able to be funded, leaving tens of thousands of students without a program opportunity. One of the missed opportunities prominent in the report’s data on the impact of OST programs on high school graduation rates. For the hundreds of students who participated in programs offered by College Visions, New Urban Arts, Riverzedge Arts, and Young Voices, more than 96 percent completed high school.

“The data shows, that not only do these programs work, but kids and families really need them,” said Angela Bannerman-Ankoma, EVP, Director of Community Investment, UWRI. “There is great work being done, but in order to take that next step, we need to appoint a state director of OST programming and create a dedicated funding stream for these programs like our neighboring states have done.”

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The 2019 *Lights On Afterschool* summit also served as an opportunity for RIAN to recognize a slate of afterschool professionals and programs for their work.

Honored were:

- **Ashley Paniagua Cavallaro**, New Urban Arts: *Afterschool Director of the Year* (Providence)
- **Kris Wright**, Connecting for Children & Families: *Afterschool Director of the Year* (Woonsocket)

- **Kate Aubin**, Providence Public Library: *Afterschool Educator of the Year* (Providence)
- **Rosey Ok**, Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE): *Afterschool Educator of the Year* (Providence)

- **DownCity Design**: *Afterschool Program of the Year* (Providence)
- **Repurposed Fashion & Design Workshop, Chariho High School**: *Afterschool Program of the Year* (Richmond)

- **Jane Blanchette**, Pawtucket School Department Child Opportunity Zone: *Award for Success in the Face of Adversity* (Pawtucket)

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