

February 16, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions on 21st CCLC and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Note: These are compiled by the Afterschool Alliance and do not represent the US Department of Education's opinion.

Q. Where can I find the ESSA text relating to 21st CCLC?

You can find the law text starting on page 181 of this link <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s1177enr/pdf/BILLS-114s1177enr.pdf>

Q. Where can I find a summary of the ESSA section on 21st CCLC?

You can find a short summary as part of this blog post:

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/afterschoolSnack/Senate-passes-ESEA-21stCCLC-sends-to-President-for_12-08-2015.cfm

Q. Is 21st CCLC part of a larger block grant or still a stand-alone program exclusively for programs that run outside the traditional school day?

21st CCLC is a stand-alone funding stream in part B of Title IV of ESSA. It is not part of the new comprehensive block grant authorized in part A of Title IV. There has been some confusion on this as the entire Title IV section of the bill is now called 21st Century Schools – not to be confused with 21st Century Community Learning Centers in Title IV Part B.

Q. In the new law under Title IV Part B, 21st CCLC, what is meant by external organizations?

The intent of the “external organizations section” was that each SEA would determine a prescreened list of external groups that might be available for 21stCCLC grantees to work with to get technical assistance and training on implementation of specific aspects of their grants including quality improvement, staff professional development, parent engagement and more. While to be decided, these groups could include city level or regional level intermediaries and/or state afterschool networks. It is unclear how the external group would be paid (i.e. if a 21st CCLC grantee would pay the external group out of their grant for the TA provided, or if the SEA would pay the external organizations directly to provide the TA to grantees). The percentage of funds SEAs can reserve for technical assistance was increased, in part, to allow SEAs to fund external organizations to do this TA.

Q. Has the role of community based organizations as partners in 21st CCCLC grants changed?

No. It remains the same as under NCLB. CBOs can apply as lead grantees and priority is given if schools and CBOs partner. CBO – school partnerships are not mandated, which was also the case under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Q. When does the law take effect for 21st CCLC?

The law states that programs like 21st CCLC will go into effect October 2016; however, it appears from the Department of Education’s communications that changes will be enacted for 2017-2018 school year. Our understanding from the U.S. Department of Education is that state education agencies are being asked to follow 21st CCLC as administered under No Child Left Behind when running Requests for Proposals (RFPs) up until grants that will begin in the 2017-2018 school year.

Q. Is expanded learning time allowable under the new 21st CCLC section in ESSA??

ESSA includes language that would allow 21st CCLC funds to be used for specific ‘afterschool-like’ activities as part of expanded learning programs in cases where at least 300 hours are added to the school day during the year. Additional language directs schools to work with community partners and to ensure activities do not supplant existing programs. Just as 21st CCLC can be used for the afterschool components of a community school – something we have long supported and praised – under this language 21st CCLC funds will also be able to be used for afterschool-like components of an expanded learning program. This increases the models of engagement and enrichment opportunities that young people can access while ensuring a dosage sufficient to be meaningful in the lives of students and families.

Q. When will ELT changes take effect and replace the waivers?

Under current law, only states given waivers under NCLB can offer extended learning time. At this time, it is still unclear when the new law’s language will replace the waiver, although full implementation will occur by the 2017-2018 school year. The FY2016 Omnibus spending bill, a distinct piece of legislation from both NCLB and ESSA, includes the same language as ESSA on expanded learning and could take effect prior to ESSA implementation; suggesting the waivers could be phased out even before the new law is fully implemented.

Q. Can students still be on application review panels at the SEA level as was the case under NCLB?

ESSA includes a fairly prescriptive vigorous review process for applications that does not list students; however, it seems reasonable that a student representative could be added as part of the review process as students are not explicitly excluded.

Q. Will current grants be able to continue under NCLB parameters until the end of the grant? Do the new ESSA rules apply only to new 21st CCLC grants?

Currently funded Grantees will continue to follow the NCLB requirements. New grants, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, will be awarded under ESSA requirements.

Q. Are school districts monitored for including STEM in 21st CCLC programs?

Because STEM is an allowable use and not required/mandated – programs are not monitored by the federal government to include STEM.

Q. Will there be changes in how 21stCCLC can work with Title I Funds as well?

This is uncertain at this time. There are opportunities for collaboration between Title I and 21st CCLC but that will likely depend on the states' plans and Department of Education guidance.

Q. For how many years is ESSA in effect until the next reauthorization?

ESSA is authorized for four years until September 30, 2020.