

Smart, Efficient, Effective: Funding out of school programs essential to increase student success

The Afterschool Alliance recommends reauthorization of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers—or, at a minimum, the inclusion of a separate funding stream specifically targeted to before school, afterschool and summer learning—within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Without a separate funding stream specifically targeting learning outside the school day, essential learning opportunities that are helping at-risk youth better prepare for college, careers and life will disappear.

Unintended consequences of not providing a separate and distinct funding stream for out of school time:

- For-profits, faith based organizations, community based organizations (CBOs), tribal organizations, non-profits, local government, colleges and universities and others will no longer be permitted to be lead grantees for out of school time programming. Under the draft discussion bill recently released by Chairman Alexander only school districts can apply for the funding.
- Most, if not all, of the funding currently supporting 1.6 million students in afterschool and summer programs is at risk of being redirected to programming within the school day. The unmet demand for afterschool programs has steadily risen over the last 10 years. In 2014, approximately 19.4 million children (41 percent) not currently in an afterschool program would be enrolled in a program if one were available to them, according to their parents.
- Students will lose out on essential learning opportunities that help them prepare for school, college and careers. A [wide range of research](#) has found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool and summer learning programs is linked to significant gains in academics, school attendance, and work habits, as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.
- More students will be unsupervised afterschool and juvenile crime and other inappropriate activities will likely increase.
- More working parents will struggle to fill the gap between the end of the school and the end of the work day and overall worker productivity may decrease during those hours. Valuable partnerships between school day educators, community based organizations, faith based institutions and businesses that work together to provide afterschool and summer learning opportunities may disappear.
- Families will struggle to access a wide array of services that are currently provided or coordinated by comprehensive afterschool and summer learning programs including meals, access to social services, tutoring and mentoring.
- The ability of quality programs to leverage state and local resources, professional development and training, to achieve desired outcomes around student success will be lost given the broadening of the funding stream and competing provisions.

Given these concerns, we strongly urge Congress to maintain authorization of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative and strengthen it as proposed in the bipartisan Afterschool for America's Children Act.

The Afterschool Alliance is a non-profit organization that works to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. Our network of more than 26,000 afterschool partners is expanding learning opportunities for students nationwide and tapping community partners to provide engaging, hands-on activities that contribute to success for young people.