

January 30, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

As Congress prepares to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the below signed 266 organizations **urge you to maintain the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative as a separate and specific federal funding stream for school and community partnerships to support students in grades Pre-K through 12 during the hours outside of the school day.** The undersigned local, state and national organizations strongly support maintaining and strengthening 21st CCLC to provide the next generation of before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs that keep young people safe, inspire them to learn and support working families.

For more than 15 years 21st CCLC has leveraged school and community partnerships to help millions of low-income children become engaged in their academic studies, while sparking new interests in a wide variety of topics from the sciences to theater. Authorized in Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the 21st CCLC initiative provides students attending high-poverty schools with academic enrichment activities; a broad array of additional services designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program, such as: hands on experiments to excite children about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), access to physical activity, drug and violence prevention programs, formal and informal mentoring, counseling programs, art, music, opportunities to be creative and technology education programs; as well as literacy and related educational development services to the families of children who are served in the program.

A decade of research proves the wide-ranging impacts of quality afterschool and summer learning programs:

- Studies have shown that quality programs give students the academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend programs have better grades and behavior in school; better peer relations and emotional well-being; and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy.
- Research in 2011 and 2012 from several state education agencies found that teachers report that students regularly participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers show improvements in homework completion, class participation, attendance, behavior in class, and reading and math achievement scores and grades (American Institutes for Research, 2011 & 2013; Evers, 2012).
- A separate 2013 study out of the University of California, Irvine's School of Education found that regular participation in afterschool programs helped to narrow the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes, and reduced school absences (Pierce, Auger & Vandell, 2013).
- More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college (Alexander et al, 2007). 21st CCLC supports low-income children during the summer as well as before-school and afterschool during the school year.

Now is the time to step up support for students during the time when they are not supported by school or family, the hours after school when 11.3 million children are unsupervised and juvenile crime and other inappropriate activities peak. The unmet demand for afterschool programs has steadily risen over the last 10 years to approximately 19.4 million children (41 percent) in 2014 that are not currently in an afterschool program but would be enrolled in a program if one were available

to them, according to their parents (America After 3PM, 2014). Eliminating the dedicated 21st CCLC funding stream would mean 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 other purposes.

Afterschool and summer learning programs can be essential partners to community schools and provide an infrastructure to bring in other resources to our children including access to mentors, tutors, nutritious snacks and meals, and in some places medical, dental and mental health programs. For-profits, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), tribal organizations, non-profits, charter schools, local governments, colleges and universities and others currently serve as critical partners and lead organizations under 21st CCLC and help foster the broad positive results the program has yielded. Afterschool STEM programs play an important role in developing workforce skills and preparing a diverse range of young people to access higher education and jobs in these fields that are critical to the economic well-being of the nation. The ability of quality programs to leverage state, local and private resources, offer professional development and training to staff, and achieve desired outcomes around student success will be lost given the broadening of the funding stream and competing provisions.

We ask that the ESEA reauthorization process be used as an opportunity to maintain and strengthen 21st CCLC to enhance the quality of federally funded afterschool and summer learning programs; better emphasize science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), 21st century skills, creation and support of evidence-based mentoring relationships for children and physical activity and nutrition education; improve the manner in which the 21st CCLC initiative is evaluated; and strengthen the school-community partnerships that are the hallmark of quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

CC:

Sen. Michael B. Enzi (WY)
Sen. Richard Burr (NY)
Sen. Johnny Isakson (GA)
Sen. Rand Paul (KY)
Sen. Susan Collins (ME)
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK)
Sen. Mark Kirk (IL)
Sen. Tim Scott (SC)
Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (UT)
Sen. Pat Roberts (KS)
Sen. Bill Cassidy, M.D. (LA)

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (MD)
Sen. Bernard Sanders (VT)
Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr. (PA)
Sen. Al Franken (MN)
Sen. Michael F. Bennet (CO)
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)
Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI)
Sen. Christopher S. Murphy (CT)
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (MA)

Sincerely,

A World Fit For Kids!
Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)
Afterschool Alliance
After-School All-Stars
America SCORES
American Anthropological Association
American Heart Association
Association of Science-Technology Centers
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Campaign for Youth Justice
Candler County Family Connection
Champions, Knowledge Universe
Children's Home Society of America
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Developmental Studies Center
Early Autism Project
Early Care and Education Consortium
Ecological Society of America
Education Development Center, Inc.
Elev8
Every Child Matters Education Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Research and Action Center
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Girls on the Run (GOTR)
Girls Inc.
Iron Will Kids
Kids Included Together
MENTOR
National 4-H Council
National Afterschool Association
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Collaboration for Youth
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS)
National Education Association
National Farm to School Network

National Network for Youth
National Recreation and Park Association
National Summer Learning Association
National Writing Project
NIAAA (National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association)
Oral Health America
Save the Children
School Nutrition Association
STEM Education Coalition
The Children's Aid Society
The National Girls Collaborative
Trust for America's Health
United Way Worldwide
YMCA of the USA

AK Alaska Afterschool Network
AK Alaska Children's Trust
AK Alaska Food Coalition
AK Anchorage Youth Development Coalition
AK Fairbanks After School Coalition
AK Food Bank of Alaska
AK Juneau Afterschool Coalition
AK Sitka School District
AK United Way of Anchorage
AL Alabama Afterschool Community Network (ALACN)
AL Alabama Community Education Association (ACEA)
AL Alabama Math, Science, Technology, Engineering Coalition
AL Guntersville City Schools
AL Stevenson Middle School
CA California School-Age Consortium
CA Techbridge
CO Redhouse Training and Consulting
CT Connecticut Afterschool Network
CT Opportunities Industrialization Center of New Britain, Inc.
DC DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (DC Trust)
FL Children's Campaign
FL Children's Home Society of Florida
FL Florida Afterschool Network
GA Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA
GA Boys and Girls Club of Candler County
GA Future Foundation Inc.
GA Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential

GA Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
GA Operation P.E.A.C.E., Inc.
GA Positive Growth Inc.
GA Reach for the Stars Program/Cobb County School District
GA Stages Early Learning Enrichment Center
GA Towns County School System
GA Voices for Georgia's Children
GA VOX Teen Communications
IA Child and Family Policy Center
IA Iowa Afterschool Alliance
IA Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (SHIP)
ID Coeur d'Alene School District
ID Idaho Afterschool Network
ID Idaho Hunger Task Force
ID Marsing 21st CLCC
IL ACT Now Coalition
IL Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
IL Illinois Alliance of YMCAs
IL Chicago Youth Centers
IL Children's Home + Aid
IL Enlace Chicago
IL Federation for Community Schools
IL Metropolitan Family Services
IL Y.O.U.
IL Zion Elementary School District 6
IN Indiana Afterschool Network
IN MCCOY Inc.
IN The Villages of Indiana
KS Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence
KS Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka
KS CGS After School Program
KS Johnson County Park & Recreation District
KS Kansas Afterschool Network
KS Kansas PTA
KY Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance
MD Advocates for Children and Youth
MD Family League of Baltimore
MD Girls on the Run of Montgomery County, MD
MD Maryland Association of Local Management Boards
MD Maryland Out of School Time (MOST)
MD Mid-Atlantic Girls Collaborative (MAGiC)
MD Montgomery County Collaboration Council
MD Queen Anne's County Community Partnerships for Children

MI Michigan's Children
MI Michigan PTA
MI Michigan After-School Partnership
MI Priority Children
MN Ignite Afterschool, Minnesota's Afterschool Network
MO Child Care Aware® of Missouri
MO Missouri AfterSchool Network
MO Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry
MO Missouri School Age Community Coalition (MOSAC2)
MO Science Pioneers, Inc.
MO United 4 Children
MO Vision for Children at Risk
NC NC Center for Afterschool Programs
NH New Hampshire Kids Count

NH NH Afterschool Network
NH Seacoast Youth Services/Seabrook Adventure Zone
NJ Impact 21 Community Development Corporation
NJ Impact21/Destiny Afterschool Haven
NJ New Jersey Community Development Corporation (Paterson, NJ)
NJ NJSACC
NJ REAL Center (Regional Enrichment & Learning Center)
NJ Team Walker Inc.
NM Appletree Educational Center
NM Boys and Girls Club of Sierra County
NM New Mexico PTA
NM YMCA of Central New Mexico
NY AfterSchool Works! New York
NY Alliance of New York State YMCAs
NY Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo
NY Boys and Girls Club of the Northtowns
NY Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, Inc
NY Child & Adolescent Treatment Services
NY Child Care Resource Network
NY ChildCare Network of the Niagara Frontier, Inc
NY Children's Agenda
NY Citizen Schools New York
NY Community Action Organization (CAO) of Erie County, Inc.
NY Comprehensive Development, Inc. (CDI)
NY Concerned Ecumenical Ministry
NY Early Care & Learning Council
NY ENACT, Inc.
NY Esperanza Preparatory Academy

NY Gateway Youth Outreach
NY Good Shepherd Services
NY Greater Rochester After-School Alliance
NY Greater Southern Tier BOCES
NY Henry Street Settlement
NY Hornell City School District consortium
NY Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program
NY Kids Creative
NY Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY
NY Neighborhood Family Services Coalition
NY New York State 4-H Youth Development Program
NY New York State Afterschool Network
NY Northwest Buffalo Community Center
NY Oasis Children's Services, LLC
NY P2L: Pathways to Leadership
NY Proaction of Steuben and Yates Inc.
NY Say Yes Buffalo
NY Southside Community Center
NY St. Anne's Institute
NY The Valley Community Association Inc.
NY United Activities Unlimited
NY United Neighborhood Houses
NY United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc.
NY Vision Education & Media - Robofun
NY Watkins Glen Central School District
NY Wings of Eagles Discovery Center
NY YMCA of Hornell, New York, Inc.
OH America SCORES Cleveland
OH Bellaire-Puritas Development Corporation
OH College Now Greater Cleveland
OH From Me 2 U, Inc.
OH Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association
OH Horizon Education Centers
OH Ohio Afterschool Network
OH Ohio Alliance of YMCAs
OH Ohio Association of Child Care Providers
OH Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association
OH Parma Area Community/Business/School Partnership
OH The Goddard School
OH United Rehabilitation Services
OH United Way of Greater Toledo
OH University Settlement
OH Urban League of Greater Cleveland

OH Voices for Ohio's Children
OR Oregon Girls Collaborative Project
OR OregonASK
PA A+ Schools
PA APOST (Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time)
PA Educational Advocates Reaching Today's Hardworking Students, Inc. (EARTHS)
PA LifeSpan School and Day Care
PA Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA
PA Sarah Heinz House
RI Children & Families First
RI Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA)
SC The Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University
TN Black Children's Institute of Tennessee (BCI)
TN Memphis Urban League
TN Music City (TN) Chapter, The Links Incorporated
TN NAACP, Tennessee State Conference
TN Raise Your Hand Tennessee
TN Tennessee Afterschool Network
TN United Way of Greater Knoxville
TN United Way of Metropolitan Nashville's
TN United Way of the Mid-South
TN United Ways of Tennessee
TX Engineering for Kids
TX IT'S TIME TEXAS
TX Texas Afterschool Association
TX Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST)
UT Community Education Partnership of West Valley City, Inc.
VA Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST)
VT Burlington Parks & Recreation, City of Burlington
VT Caledonia North Supervisory Union
VT ENCORE After School and Summer Programs
VT Caledonia Central Supervisory Union
VT Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union
VT GRACE Project
VT Grand Isle Supervisory Union
VT Hunger Free Vermont
VT Lamoille North Supervisory Union
VT Open Doors in St. Albans
VT Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union
VT REACH! Afterschool & Summer Programs
VT Student Success Winooski School District
VT Unbound, the Peoples Academy Program
VT Vermont Afterschool, Inc.

VT Vermont Superintendents Association
VT Voices for Vermont's Children
VT Windham Central Supervisory Union
WA School's Out Washington
WI Racine Unified School District Extended Learning
WV Lincoln County 21st Century Community Learning Program
WV Monongalia County Schools
WV Mountaineer Boys and Girls Club
WV PATCH
WV Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers
WV Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS)
WV Spring Hill Elementary
WV Wayne County 21st Century Community Learning Centers
WV West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network