



School Redesign and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Statutory Language

S. 3295, the FY 2013 Senate Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill includes new language to expand the design options for subgrants under the 21st CCLC program for high-quality, afterschool, before school, summer learning, and expanded learning time programs.

The Senate bill changes current policy in that it broadens the scope of the 21st CCLC program to allow SEAs to award subgrants for “expanded learning time programs that significantly increase the number of hours in a regular school schedule and **comprehensively redesign the school schedule for all students in the school.**” The statutory language also requires that any such expanded learning time programs:

- Provide additional learning time in core academic subjects, other subjects, and enrichment activities; and
- Include strong partnerships between schools and community partners.

Concerns

We support the opening up of 21st CCLC funding to high quality expanded learning time approaches and believe that the program should support additional learning time activities in the many forms and times of the day and year that it can take place.

However, we oppose using 21st CCLC funds for whole school redesign efforts that divert funding away from innovative, high-quality additional learning time activities that can effectively support learning and achievement for the students who need it most.

- ESEA Title I and School Improvement Grants (SIG) – funded at over \$15 billion in FY 2012 – already support the administrative actions associated with whole-school redesign. Accordingly, we believe that 21st CCLC funds should complement not supplant school-day turnaround efforts.
- Only when funds are dedicated to direct services for students through additional learning time activities – whether afterschool, before school, summer learning, and/or expanded learning time – will federal funds have the dramatic impact on ensuring more students have access to more high-quality learning time that 21st CCLC intends.

“Redesign” means whole school reform – While “redesign” has not been defined, there is federal precedent that makes clear that “redesign” means using funds for reforming practices inside the regular school day.

- Under ESEA waivers, the lowest-performing schools in the state must receive meaningful interventions that are focused on improving the whole school and that

are aligned with federally-defined “turnaround principles.” By definition, turnaround principles must include redesigning the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration. This policy makes it clear that “redesign” is an element of whole school turnaround efforts.

- Redesign activities require significant planning time and resources, which could reduce funding available for expanded learning services for students. Accordingly, it does not make sense to pay for a whole school turnaround effort with 21st CCLC funds that should be used to provide students with additional time to participate in academic and enrichment activities that complement the academic program.
- While we support the use of Title I and SIG funds for whole-school turnaround or redesign, we do not believe that deploying 21st CCLC towards whole school redesign is an effective strategy.

21st CCLC should focus funds on expanding learning time so it’s done right – Need and demand for more high-quality expanded learning programs is exceptionally high in communities all across the country. For example, in California nearly 2,000 schools in low-income neighborhoods are still without state or federal after-school programs and many interested schools have been turned away due to lack of funding. In the last round of competitive applications for federal funds, demand was more than eight times higher than the amount of available funding. Accordingly:

- Federal funds should support high-quality approaches to expanded learning time so that we can continue to collect information on effective practices.
- Diverting funds to whole school reform is not the right strategy for advancing policy and practice around additional learning time. Instead, we must define high quality expanded learning, ensure funded programs have the tools they need to be successful, and that all programs are held to high standards around student success.

Recommendation

To help ensure that 21st CCLC funds continue to support academic and enrichment activities that complement the academic program and contribute to a well-rounded education, we recommend that language extending the program to include school redesign activities be removed:

Provided further, That State educational agencies may subgrant funds available under part B of title IV of the ESEA for expanded learning time programs that significantly increase the number of hours in a regular school schedule **and comprehensively redesign the school schedule for all students in the school.**