



Principles for Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Collaborative for Building After-School Systems (CBASS) is a coalition of leading after-school intermediary organizations representing cities and regions across the country. CBASS works to expand the availability of high-quality learning opportunities, including after-school and summer, that help children gain the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to lead successful lives. CBASS does this by helping cities and regions employ coordinated approaches to increase the scale, quality and accountability of programs, and to leverage the combined power of community organizations and schools.

CBASS supports the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program because it provides grants for the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

Accordingly, CBASS recommends that the following policy principles be included in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as they relate to the 21st CCLC program:

1. **Maintain 21st CCLC as a stand-alone program under ESEA.** In light of the demonstrated impact of 21st CCLC programs on student engagement and achievement, CBASS recommends maintaining 21st CCLC as a stand-alone program to continue the effort that currently serves over a million students and is the only federal education funding stream that is solely dedicated to supporting before school, after school, and summer learning programs.
2. **Maintain current formula-based 21st CCLC federal-state program with state to local grant competition.**
3. **Ensure communities can choose from a variety of high-quality options** without state or federal preference or direction that fall under umbrella of expanded learning opportunities: after-school, before school, summer, weekends, extended day or year, and community schools.

4. **Ensure strong partnerships are required for all 21st CCLC programs.** Strong partnerships between schools and community partners should be required in any model chosen, and both community-based organizations (CBOs) and LEAs should continue to be eligible to apply for funds and be the fiscal agent for grants.
5. **Encourage participation of intermediaries to help leverage resources, increase efficiencies, and promote sustainability.** Intermediaries can help develop quality expanded learning opportunity systems by training staff; providing technical assistance to promote continuous improvement; ensuring accountability (by holding programs accountable to results); and directing funds quickly and effectively to a wide range of programs.
6. **Ensure 21st CCLC funds are used to provide direct services to students.** 21st CCLC funds should be used to support the programs and activities that improve and expand opportunities for underserved students and communities. While a redesign of the school day and year for all students is well worth exploration, funding should be pulled from multiple federal funding streams that more appropriately address the administrative and planning activities associated with whole school redesign models such as Title I funds and School Improvement grants.