



ESEA Reauthorization: A Policy FAQ

There has been a lot of movement on reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in Congress. In July, the House voted on H.R. 5, the [Student Success Act](#), proposed by Rep. John Kline (R-MN), Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee. The bill passed along party lines, with all 209 Democrats and 12 Republicans voting against it. Prior to that, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee [passed](#) S. 1094, the [Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013](#), at the committee level—also along party lines. That bill has yet to reach the full Senate floor for debate, but CBASS is pleased that its current language reflects our policy priorities, including: not expressing a federal preference for one type of expanded learning program over another, requiring school-community partnerships, and supporting quality and innovation.ⁱ

Here's what you need to know about the two bills and what happens next.

Q: What are some key provisions of S. 1094, the *Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013*, that would affect after-school systems and expanded learning?

A: Most importantly, S. 1094, the [Strengthening America's Schools Act of 2013](#), maintains the basic structure of the 21st CCLC continuing guaranteed funding for expanded learning programs. The bill makes a significant change to allow 21st CCLC funds to be used during in-school hours for extended-day and extended-year programs in addition to out-of-school time hours. A few other critical changes help to ensure that local needs are met and cement the role of community-based organizations in all expanded learning approaches:

- **Ensures strong partnerships.** School districts must partner with community-based organizations in order to receive funding, and community-based organizations that wish to receive funding must partner with local educational agencies;
- **Provides options.** States and communities have the full authority, without federal preference or direction, to make their own decisions about whether to use 21st CCLC for before school, after school, summer learning and/or expanded-day and -year programs. This flexibility allows schools/districts to provide the services their students most need.

Q: What are some key provisions of H.R. 5, the *Student Success Act*, that would affect after-school systems and expanded learning?

A: The bill consolidates the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program, together with some 70+ other education programs, into a block grant called the Local Academic Flexibility Grant. In doing so, the bill eliminates any guaranteed funding for much-needed expanded learning programs, making this block grant a big step backwards for after-school and expanded learning. While we have strong opposition to the bill due to the block grant provisions, it is notable that there is positive language on partnerships. Under the block grant, school districts, community-based organizations, and private entities can all receive funding as long as they work in partnership with one another. While 21st CCLC programs have been partnering for a long time, other programs that were consolidated under the

program did not have that requirement. This means that, as a whole, more funds will be driven through partnerships rather than school districts alone. While this does not make the overall elimination of 21st CCLC acceptable, it recognizes that community organizations and other partners are critical to successful learning systems.

Q: What happens next, now that the full House has voted on its bill to reauthorize ESEA?

A: There are still many steps ahead in the process of fully reauthorizing ESEA. S.1094 is awaiting consideration by the full Senate. Once the Senate has passed (and potentially amended) S. 1094, and if the Senate and House follow regular process, S. 1094 and H.R. 5 will be sent to conference committee. Conference committees are made up of members of the House and Senate, and charged with working out the differences between the two bills and producing a conference report. If they are successful, then the full House and Senate must pass the conference report and send it to the President to sign into law.

Q: What are the Obama administration's priorities for ESEA reauthorization? How likely is it that President Obama will veto or sign a conference bill by the end of this year?

A: The Obama administration laid out its vision for ESEA in [A Blueprint for Reform: The Elementary and Secondary Reauthorization Act](#), which includes college and career readiness standards and assessments, innovation, teacher and principal reforms, and programs to ensure equity and opportunity. The Obama Administration also proposed to allow 21st CCLC program funds to be used during the school day and has encouraged the use of longer school days and years in programs such as School Improvement Grants and, most notably, ESEA flexibility waivers.

While it is unlikely that the House and Senate will send the President an ESEA bill to sign by the end of this calendar year, it is possible that the process will continue towards that end into next year.

Q: What can and should expanded learning leaders be doing to ensure that dedicated funding for high-quality expanded learning programs continues?

A: Don't stay silent. Continue reaching out to your Congress people and Senators to explain the critical role that 21st CCLC and expanded learning play in improving student success:

- Ask them to maintain and strengthen 21st CCLC, not eliminate it.
- Invite them to visit their local expanded learning programs to see first-hand the critical difference the 21st CCLC program is making.
- Develop ongoing relationships with the staff of your Congress people and Senators and share good news about your work with them, particularly focusing on the data.
- Demonstrate that 21st CCLC funds matter to their community and without them, students and families lose.
- Privately and publicly thank those Congressman and Senators who support 21st CCLC.

ⁱ For more details on aspects of the proposed legislation that we support or have concerns about, read our [letter to Senators Tom Harkin and Lamar Alexander](#), [letter to Representative George Miller](#), and [letter to Representative John Kline](#).