

#### Our Partners

After School Matters Chicago, IL

> Boston After School & Beyond Boston, MA

Family League of Baltimore
Baltimore, MD

Nashville After Zone Alliance Nashville, TN

Partnership for Children & Youth Bay Area, CA

**Prime Time Palm Beach County**Palm Beach County, FL

Providence After School Alliance Providence, RI

The After-School Corporation (TASC) New York, NY

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The Honorable Lamar Alexander Chairman Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions United States Senate 455 Senate Dirksen Office Building Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Patty Murray Ranking Member Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions United States Senate 154 Senate Russell Office Building Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

Every Hour Counts writes to thank you for your continuing effort to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and for the opportunity to comment on the Chairman's ESEA discussion draft released on January 13, 2015. While we appreciate that the discussion draft would allow for local funding for expanded learning opportunities, including after school, summer school, and programs that extend the school day, week or year (section 2103 Local Use of Funds and section 4105 Local Educational Agency Authorized Activities), we strongly oppose the elimination of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program and believe that the draft can be greatly improved to ensure that partners and schools work together to achieve greater success for all children.

<u>Every Hour Counts</u> is a coalition of citywide organizations that increase access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for underserved students. Our approach – called an expanded learning system – coordinates the work of service providers, public agencies, funders, and schools so that dollars stretch farther and more young people are served. The result: students with better attendance, grades, and test scores; stronger work habits; and more positive social behaviors.

**Maintain 21st CCLC as a Stand-Alone Program.** The 21st CCLC program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide critical academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. There is a robust body of strong research showing that after-school, before

school and summer programs are effective in improving student outcomes. Particularly, the program helps students meet state and local 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. Unfortunately, too many children across the country do not have access to high quality expanded learning opportunities. Over 19 million parents say they would enroll their child in an afterschool program if one were available to them.

Because the expanded learning programs we support through 21st CCLC improve student engagement and achievement, we are troubled that the Chairman's Discussion Draft consolidates this successful program that currently serves over a million students and is the only federal education funding solely dedicated to supporting before school, after school, and summer learning programs. Accordingly, we strongly recommend that the *Chairman's Discussion Draft* maintain a separate funding stream for the 21st CCLC program under the same structure as current law of ESEA.

In addition, we believe that the 21st CCLC program policy should remain the same as current law with the following changes or clarifications:

- Ensure that programs have the capacity to succeed by strengthening the role of intermediaries to support systems-building efforts. Districts and community partners need co-management capacity in order to leverage the strengths of external entities. Expanded learning opportunity programs need extra support to meet their goals and help all students achieve. Providers often lack resources, training, systems, and strategies to succeed. Intermediaries help schools and nonprofits excel at direct student services, while providing the wrap-around services needed to build capacity, sustain and grow scalable programs, and get results. There is a need to build capacity and systems across programs to increase the return on investment, ensure sustainability, and improve results.
- Ensure partners are included in professional development activities. In order to implement successful expanded learning opportunity programs, it is important to allow joint professional development for teachers and expanded learning time partners that work with the districts. This allows schools and providers to work together to ensure that students are receiving the support and specific interventions they need to succeed.

• Ensure that local communities have full authority without state or federal preference or direction to make their own decisions about whether to use 21st CCLC funds for (1) after school, (2) summer learning programs, (3) before school, and/or (4) expanded learning programs.

In addition to maintaining the 21st CCLC program, we strongly support including relevant provisions from Senator Whitehouse's S. 2968 "The Community Partnerships in Education Act" in the ESEA bill. By incorporating the core elements of high-quality community partnerships into federal education programs, we can improve educational outcomes for all students. Specifically we urge you to:

- Require and incentivize school-community partnerships. Community-based partners bring a wealth of distinct approaches that support academic, work skills or engagement outcomes. In addition, community-based partners complement the instructional approaches of educators by customizing experiences for learning while also building the foundational skills for success in school, college, and careers. They can also fill gaps of expertise or capacity that is not found within a school, district, region or state.
- Require and incentivize inclusion of intermediaries. Intermediaries are the engines that ensure successful collaboration among public entities, providers, and policymakers in order to build capacity, enhance quality and raise productivity. They help raise private and public dollars, develop cost- effective program models to reach and engage more young people, and help leverage resources from the community to increase efficiencies and promote sustainability. Intermediaries strengthen program quality by connecting programs with community resources rich in content expertise such as artists, museums, scientists, and businesses. In addition, they help cities and regions employ coordinated approaches to increase the scale, quality and accountability of programs, and to leverage the combined power of community organizations, schools, and other public entities. Core functions of intermediaries include: brokering relationships, setting standards, convening local organizations; expanding services; improving program quality; providing professional development; conducting research and evaluation; advocating for effective polices; promoting sustainability; and raising funding.
- Advance growth of effective systems through data sharing to ensure youth have access to high-quality programs. Multiple institutions and sectors within a community provide services to youth. Too often these institutions and sectors are uncoordinated and do not share information about the youth they serve leading to duplication of effort and

reinventing the wheel each time a young person shows up at the institution's door. Data sharing allows for more accurate program evaluation and accountability. Effective data systems can be a critical element to breaking down silos and forging new partnerships that more effectively serve youth across systems.

• Improve program accountability. In order to demonstrate the benefits of quality programs and intermediaries, programs must be able to demonstrate a range of positive outcomes across youth, program and system levels. Outcomes and proof of effectiveness are critical to any program's success. Programs must provide data on critical youth outcomes, including academic achievement and 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration.

Recognizing that the language for reauthorization is under discussion, we have included amendments to current law regarding the proposals discussed above. We are happy to re-draft this language to the appropriate vehicle as negotiations continue.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We would be happy to discuss them further with you at your convenience. Please contact Jennifer Peck (<a href="mailto:jennifer@partnerforchildren.org">jennifer@partnerforchildren.org</a>, (510) 830-4200 x1601), Partnership for Children and Youth or Jessica Donner (<a href="mailto:jdonner@everyhourcounts.org">jdonner@everyhourcounts.org</a>, (646) 943-8738), Every Hour Counts, if you have questions. We look forward to working with you as the ESEA reauthorization process continues.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Caron CEO, After School Matters

Jessica Donner Executive Director, Every Hour Counts

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President, The After-School Corporation (TASC)

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Candy Markman Coordinator, Nashville After Zone Alliance Jennifer Peck Executive Director, Partnership for Children & Youth

Jonathon Rondeau President and CEO, Family League of Baltimore

Hillary Salmons Executive Director, Providence After School Alliance

Chris Smith Executive Director, Boston After School & Beyond

Wokie Weah President, Youthprise

# Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

# 101. School improvement grants

Section 1003(g)(6) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6303(g)(6)) is amended—

- (1) by striking and at the end of subparagraph (A);
- (2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting; and; and
- (3) by adding at the end the following:
  - (C) a commitment to carry out school and local educational agency improvement—
    - (i) in partnership with one or more community partners, including through joint planning and implementation, shared professional development designed to improve the effectiveness of school and community partner staff, development and implementation of shared data systems that support program improvement and the improvement of program outcomes, and the alignment and coordination of local educational agency, school, and community partner goals, activities, and training; and
    - (ii) with the involvement of one or more intermediary organizations that will assist the agency and its schools by training staff, providing technical assistance that is designed to ensure continuous improvement, helping to ensure accountability for results, and helping to ensure that program funds flow quickly and effectively to effective service providers and activities.

#### 102. State plans

Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311) is amended—

- (1) in subsection (b)(2)(C)(vii)—
  - (A) by striking and changes in and inserting changes in; and

- (B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: , and measures of the attainment of 21st century skills (such as critical thinking, problemsolving, communication, and collaboration);
- (2) in subsection (b)(2)(D)(i), by inserting, and aligned with the program the State will carry out with funds received under this part after if any; and
- (3) in subsection (h)(1)(C)—
  - (A) by striking and at the end of clause (vii);
  - (B) by striking the period at the end of clause (viii) and inserting; and; and
  - (C) by adding at the end the following:
    - (ix) information on student attainment of 21st century skills (such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration).

# 103. Local educational agency plans

Section 1112(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6312(b)(1)) is amended—

- (1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting, such as measures of the attainment of 21st century skills (such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration), after any other indicators;
- (2) in subparagraph (P), by striking and at the end;
- (3) in subparagraph (Q), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and
- (4) by adding at the end the following:
  - (R) a description of the data-sharing agreement or agreements that the local educational agency has entered into with other agencies and organizations so as to provide for shared access to information on student progress and success (consistent with the requirements of subpart 4 of part C of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232f et seq.)), integrated planning and joint review of the data, and coordinated adjustments in strategies for programs carried out with funds received under this part and activities in response to changes in student needs or to new challenges;

(S) a description of how the local educational agency will carry out programs with funds received under this part in partnership with one or more community partners, including through joint planning and implementation, shared professional development designed to improve the effectiveness of school and community partner staff, development and implementation of shared data systems that support the improvement of such programs and the improvement of the outcomes of such programs, and the alignment and coordination of local educational agency, school, and community partner goals, activities, and training; and

(T) a description of how the local educational will carry out programs with funds received under this part with the involvement of one or more intermediary organizations that will assist the agency and its schools by training staff, providing technical assistance that is designed to ensure continuous improvement, helping to ensure accountability for results, and helping to ensure that such funds flow quickly and effectively to effective service providers and activities.

# 104. Schoolwide programs

Section 1114(b)(1)(J) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6314(b)(1)(J)) is amended by inserting, with the assistance of one or more intermediary organizations described in section 1112(b)(1)(T), after Coordination and integration.

#### 105. Targeted assistance schools

Section 1115(c)(1)(H) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6315(c)(1)(H)) is amended by inserting, with the assistance of one or more intermediary organizations described in section 1112(b)(1)(T), after coordinate and integrate.

# 106. Academic assessment and local educational agency and school improvement

Section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316) is amended—

- (1) in subsection (a)(1)(B), by inserting, such as measures of the attainment of 21st century skills, after section 1121(b)(1)(A) and (B);
- (2) in subsection (b)(3)(A)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting community partners and intermediary organizations described in section 1112(b)(1)(S) and (T), after the local educational agency serving the school,; and

### (B) in clause (vii)—

- (i) by striking and the State educational agency and inserting the State educational agency; and
- (ii) by inserting and community partners and intermediary organizations described in section 1112(b)(1)(S) and (T), after under the plan; and

# (3) in subsection (c)(7)(A)—

- (A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting community partners or intermediary organizations as described in section 1112(b)(1)(S) and (T), after school staff,; and
- (B) in clause (vii), by striking and the local educational agency and inserting, the local educational agency, and community partners and intermediary organizations as described in section 1112(b)(1)(S) and (T).

#### 107. Evaluations

Section 1501(a)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6491(a)(2)) is amended—

- (1) by redesignating subparagraph (O) as subparagraph (Q); and
- (2) by inserting after subparagraph (N) the following:
  - (O) Whether and how local educational agencies are involving community partners and intermediary organizations in their activities carried out under section 1003(g) and part A, and the impact of that involvement.
  - (P) The implementation of the data-sharing agreements entered into under section 1112(b)(1)(E), and the impact of that implementation.

#### 108. Definitions

Section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801) is amended—

- (1) by redesignating paragraphs (7) through (24), and paragraphs (25) through (43), as paragraphs (8) through (25) and paragraphs (27) through (45), respectively;
- (2) by inserting after paragraph (6), the following:
  - (7) Community partner--The term community partner means a nonprofit or public organization that has expertise in the planning and delivery of education and related programs, in forging coordination and cooperation between educators and other members of the community, or in training educators and others that deliver educational services
- (3) by inserting after paragraph (25), as redesignated by paragraph (1), the following:
  - (26) Intermediary Organization--The term intermediary organization means a nonprofit organization that has expertise in training, forging public-private partnerships, systems development, capacity-building, improving scalability, evaluation, and the effective use of data to improve the progress of students, schools and other educational institutions, and education programs.