



Recommendations for the Reauthorization of ESEA *Improving Afterschool and Expanded Learning Time Opportunities*

As Congress takes on the many challenges facing our nation, we know that making an investment in our children's education is crucial to ensure the future health of our economy and our country. A high-quality education increases future earnings, strengthens civic bonds, and is essential to prepare a well-trained workforce for a global economy. Too much of our current education system is an artifact of an earlier age, and too many of our children continue to fall through the cracks. We need to re-imagine education for our century; and mobilize the untapped resources of time and talent that can help us restore the historic promise of education as an engine of opportunity for all Americans.

As Congress considers the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) we urge Members to improve the education of our children by **increasing learning time, making learning more relevant, strengthening learning and teaching in the middle grades and investing in innovation by growing what works:**

Enact Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Legislation: To expand the learning day most effectively, Congress should include the provisions of The Time for Innovation Matters in Education (TIME) Act (S. 1410, introduced by the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), and H.R. 3130, introduced by Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ)) in ESEA reauthorization. The TIME Act would fund expanded learning time initiatives in schools, giving them the opportunity to comprehensively redesign and expand their schedules – ultimately increasing learning time by at least 30% in partnership with extended day providers. It promotes partnerships between schools and afterschool programs to encourage broader learning opportunities that connect directly to school-day learning, and allows for direct application by nonprofit organizations in partnership with one or more school districts.

Expand and Strengthen 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC): The 21st CCLC program is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs. The program is authorized to be funded at \$2.5 billion, but current spending is approximately \$1 billion. Studies show that quality afterschool programs increase students' academic performance while providing much needed supervision in the out-of-school hours. The need for quality afterschool far outpaces the supply, and funding levels do not nearly meet the demand. According to the Afterschool Alliance there are 18.5 million children in the United States whose parents would send them to an afterschool program if one were available. Yet a mere 26% of the organizations that applied for 21st CCLC grants received funding in 2006. In a November 2008 poll, the Alliance further found that 76% of those surveyed want the new Congress to increase funding for afterschool programs.

To strengthen the 21st CCLC program, Congress should:

- Reserve half of any newly authorized funding for a national grants program to support growth of the most effective and high-potential afterschool learning initiatives, allowing applications by states, school districts, and nonprofit organizations;
- Give states the flexibility to make 21st CCLC grants renewable based on performance (after an initial 3-5 year grant period); and
- Increase competition and a focus on quality by encouraging direct application for any new funds to states by nonprofit organizations partnering with one or more school districts.

Reallocate Funding for Afterschool Tutoring: Congress should reallocate Title I funding dedicated for afterschool tutoring (Supplemental Educational Services) to allow school principals, in consultation with parents at the school, to select a single eligible ELT provider to partner comprehensively with the school to expand learning time for children.

Provide More Afterschool Resources to Quality Programs Serving Middle and High School Students: The Afterschool Partnerships Improve Results in Education Act (ASPIRE Act, S. 2785), introduced by Sen. Lincoln (D-AR) would fund multi-state, multi-site afterschool programs for middle and high school students to improve academic achievement, lower high school dropout rates, and spur interest in high-demand careers. The ASPIRE Act aims to spark students' interest in technology jobs and other growing industries by encouraging local partnerships between afterschool programs and trade, technical, and business organizations. It also encourages scaling up of effective and proven programs. The Investment in After-School Programs Act of 2009 (S. 1281) and a similar bill in the House (The Investment in Rural After-School Programs Act of 2009, H.R. 3078, introduced by Rep. Phil Hare (D-IL)) would provide grants of \$25,000 or more to local education agencies, community-based organizations, or other public or private organizations to establish or improve rural out-of-school time programs. It gives priority to applications that propose partnerships and programs that serve mostly low-income students.

Strengthen Middle Grades to Prepare Students to Succeed in High School: In the 111th Congress Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI) introduced the Success in the Middle Act (S. 1362). The bill and its House companion (H.R. 3006, introduced by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ)) seek to improve low-performing middle schools, and include such crucial student supports as expanded learning time, personal graduation plans, and coaching that enable all students to stay on the path to graduation.

Expand Opportunities for STEM Education: Over the last several years, federal and state governments, educators at all levels, and the American business community have directed the nation's attention toward the declining state of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in America. The ESEA's Math and Science Partnerships program is a promising antidote, but it should do more to promote partnerships with businesses and nonprofits. The private and nonprofit sectors can engage STEM professionals to work directly with teachers in America's classrooms to help bring STEM careers to life for students, assist teachers in conducting more relevant learning, and expose more STEM professionals to pathways to full-time teaching.

Invest in Innovation and Scale What Works: To continue scaling bold and effective education reforms, Congress should authorize an extension of the Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) created for the U.S. Department of Education by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This fund allows the Department to invest in school systems and nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated success in helping students succeed, and have the capacity and desire to implement new approaches or take their operations to a national scale. The Secondary School Innovation Fund Act introduced by Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) (S. 968) and by Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA) (H.R.2239) awards competitive grants to eligible partnerships to enable the partnerships to implement innovative strategies at the secondary school level to improve student achievement and prepare at-risk students for postsecondary education and the workforce.

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Citizen Schools is a leading national education initiative that uniquely mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement and bridge the achievement gap by teaching skill-building apprenticeships after school. At 44 middle schools in seven states across the country, Citizen Schools programs blend these real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing low-income students for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.