January 30, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

As Congress prepares to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the below signed 266 organizations urge you to maintain the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative as a separate and specific federal funding stream for school and community partnerships to support students in grades Pre-K through 12 during the hours outside of the school day. The undersigned local, state and national organizations strongly support maintaining and strengthening 21st CCLC to provide the next generation of before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs that keep young people safe, inspire them to learn and support working families.

For more than 15 years 21st CCLC has leveraged school and community partnerships to help millions of low-income children become engaged in their academic studies, while sparking new interests in a wide variety of topics from the sciences to theater. Authorized in Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the 21st CCLC initiative provides students attending high-poverty schools with academic enrichment activities; a broad array of additional services designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program, such as: hands on experiments to excite children about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), access to physical activity, drug and violence prevention programs, formal and informal mentoring, counseling programs, art, music, opportunities to be creative and technology education programs; as well as literacy and related educational development services to the families of children who are served in the program.

A decade of research proves the wide-ranging impacts of quality afterschool and summer learning programs:

- Studies have shown that quality programs give students the academic, social and career-ready skills they need to succeed. Students who regularly attend programs have better grades and behavior in school; better peer relations and emotional well-being; and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and unintended pregnancy.
- Research in 2011 and 2012 from several state education agencies found that teachers report that students regularly participating in 21st Century Community Learning Centers show improvements in homework completion, class participation, attendance, behavior in class, and reading and math achievement scores and grades (American Institutes for Research, 2011 & 2013; Evers, 2012).
- A separate 2013 study out of the University of California, Irvine’s School of Education found that regular participation in afterschool programs helped to narrow the achievement gap between high-income and low-income students in math, improved academic and behavioral outcomes, and reduced school absences (Pierce, Auger & Vandell, 2013).
- More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college (Alexander et al, 2007). 21st CCLC supports low-income children during the summer as well as before-school and afterschool during the school year.

Now is the time to step up support for students during the time when they are not supported by school or family, the hours after school when 11.3 million children are unsupervised and juvenile crime and other inappropriate activities peak. The unmet demand for afterschool programs has steadily risen over the last 10 years to approximately 19.4 million children (41 percent) in 2014 that are not currently in an afterschool program but would be enrolled in a program if one were available.
to them, according to their parents (America After 3PM, 2014). Eliminating the dedicated 21st CCLC funding stream would mean most, if not all, of the funding currently supporting 1.6 million students in afterschool and summer programs is at risk of being redirected to other purposes.

Afterschool and summer learning programs can be essential partners to community schools and provide an infrastructure to bring in other resources to our children including access to mentors, tutors, nutritious snacks and meals, and in some places medical, dental and mental health programs. For-profits, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), tribal organizations, non-profits, charter schools, local governments, colleges and universities and others currently serve as critical partners and lead organizations under 21st CCLC and help foster the broad positive results the program has yielded. Afterschool STEM programs play an important role in developing workforce skills and preparing a diverse range of young people to access higher education and jobs in these fields that are critical to the economic well-being of the nation. The ability of quality programs to leverage state, local and private resources, offer professional development and training to staff, and achieve desired outcomes around student success will be lost given the broadening of the funding stream and competing provisions.

We ask that the ESEA reauthorization process be used as an opportunity to maintain and strengthen 21st CCLC to enhance the quality of federally funded afterschool and summer learning programs; better emphasize science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), 21st century skills, creation and support of evidence-based mentoring relationships for children and physical activity and nutrition education; improve the manner in which the 21st CCLC initiative is evaluated; and strengthen the school-community partnerships that are the hallmark of quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

CC:

Sen. Michael B. Enzi (WY)
Sen. Richard Burr (NY)
Sen. Johnny Isakson (GA)
Sen. Rand Paul (KY)
Sen. Susan Collins (ME)
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK)
Sen. Mark Kirk (IL)
Sen. Tim Scott (SC)
Sen. Orrin G. Hatch (UT)
Sen. Pat Roberts (KS)
Sen. Bill Cassidy, M.D. (LA)

Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski (MD)
Sen. Bernard Sanders (VT)
Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr. (PA)
Sen. Al Franken (MN)
Sen. Michael F. Bennet (CO)
Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (RI)
Sen. Tammy Baldwin (WI)
Sen. Christopher S. Murphy (CT)
Sen. Elizabeth Warren (MA)
Sincerely,

A World Fit For Kids!
Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK)
Afterschool Alliance
After-School All-Stars
America SCORES
American Anthropological Association
American Heart Association
Association of Science-Technology Centers
Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Campaign for Youth Justice
Candler County Family Connection
Champions, Knowledge Universe
Children’s Home Society of America
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Developmental Studies Center
Early Autism Project
Early Care and Education Consortium
Ecological Society of America
Education Development Center, Inc.
Elev8
Every Child Matters Education Fund
First Focus Campaign for Children
Food Research and Action Center
Foster Family-based Treatment Association
Girls on the Run (GOTR)
Girls Inc.
Iron Will Kids
Kids Included Together
MENTOR
National 4-H Council
National Afterschool Association
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
National Collaboration for Youth
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Council of Youth Sports (NCYS)
National Education Association
National Farm to School Network
National Network for Youth
National Recreation and Park Association
National Summer Learning Association
National Writing Project
NIAAA (National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association)
Oral Health America
Save the Children
School Nutrition Association
STEM Education Coalition
The Children's Aid Society
The National Girls Collaborative
Trust for America's Health
United Way Worldwide
YMCA of the USA

AK    Alaska Afterschool Network
AK    Alaska Children's Trust
AK    Alaska Food Coalition
AK    Anchorage Youth Development Coalition
AK    Fairbanks After School Coalition
AK    Food Bank of Alaska
AK    Juneau Afterschool Coalition
AK    Sitka School District
AK    United Way of Anchorage
AL    Alabama Afterschool Community Network (ALACN)
AL    Alabama Community Education Association (ACEA)
AL    Alabama Math, Science, Technology, Engineering Coalition
AL    Guntersville City Schools
AL    Stevenson Middle School
CA    California School-Age Consortium
CA    Techbridge
CO    Redhouse Training and Consulting
CT    Connecticut Afterschool Network
CT    Opportunities Industrialization Center of New Britain, Inc.
DC    DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation (DC Trust)
FL    Children's Campaign
FL    Children's Home Society of Florida
FL    Florida Afterschool Network
GA    Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA
GA    Boys and Girls Club of Candler County
GA    Future Foundation Inc.
GA    Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential
Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
GA
Operation P.E.A.C.E., Inc.
GA
Positive Growth Inc.
GA
Reach for the Stars Program/Cobb County School District
GA
Stages Early Learning Enrichment Center
GA
Towns County School System
GA
Voices for Georgia’s Children
GA
VOX Teen Communications
IA
Child and Family Policy Center
IA
Iowa Afterschool Alliance
IA
Siouxland Human Investment Partnership (SHIP)
ID
Coeur d’Alene School District
ID
Idaho Afterschool Network
ID
Idaho Hunger Task Force
ID
Marsing 21st CLCC
IL
ACT Now Coalition
IL
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
IL
Illinois Alliance of YMCAs
IL
Chicago Youth Centers
IL
Children’s Home + Aid
IL
Enlace Chicago
IL
Federation for Community Schools
IL
Metropolitan Family Services
IL
Y.O.U.
IL
Zion Elementary School District 6
IN
Indiana Afterschool Network
IN
MCCOY Inc.
IN
The Villages of Indiana
KS
Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence
KS
Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka
KS
CGS After School Program
KS
Johnson County Park & Recreation District
KS
Kansas Afterschool Network
KS
Kansas PTA
KY
Kentucky Out-of-School Alliance
MD
Advocates for Children and Youth
MD
Family League of Baltimore
MD
Girls on the Run of Montgomery County, MD
MD
Maryland Association of Local Management Boards
MD
Maryland Out of School Time (MOST)
MD
Mid-Atlantic Girls Collaborative (MAGIC)
MD
Montgomery County Collaboration Council
MD
Queen Anne’s County Community Partnerships for Children
Michigan's Children
Michigan PTA
Michigan After-School Partnership
Priority Children
Ignite Afterschool, Minnesota's Afterschool Network
Child Care Aware® of Missouri
Missouri AfterSchool Network
Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Missouri School Age Community Coalition (MOSAC2)
Science Pioneers, Inc.
United 4 Children
Vision for Children at Risk
NC Center for Afterschool Programs
New Hampshire Kids Count
NH Afterschool Network
Impact 21 Community Development Corporation
Impact21/Destiny Afterschool Haven
New Jersey Community Development Corporation (Paterson, NJ)
NJSACC
REAL Center (Regional Enrichment & Learning Center)
Team Walker Inc.
Appletree Educational Center
Boys and Girls Club of Sierra County
New Mexico PTA
YMCA of Central New Mexico
AfterSchool Works! New York
Alliance of New York State YMCAs
Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo
Boys and Girls Club of the Northtowns
Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, Inc
Child & Adolescent Treatment Services
Child Care Resource Network
ChildCare Network of the Niagara Frontier, Inc
Children's Agenda
Citizen Schools New York
Community Action Organization (CAO) of Erie County, Inc.
Comprehensive Development, Inc. (CDI)
Concerned Ecumenical Ministry
Early Care & Learning Council
ENACT, Inc.
Esperanza Preparatory Academy
Gateway Youth Outreach
NY  Good Shepherd Services
NY  Greater Rochester After-School Alliance
NY  Greater Southern Tier BOCES
NY  Henry Street Settlement
NY  Hornell City School District consortium
NY  Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program
NY  Kids Creative
NY  Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY
NY  Neighborhood Family Services Coalition
NY  New York State 4-H Youth Development Program
NY  New York State Afterschool Network
NY  Northwest Buffalo Community Center
NY  Oasis Children’s Services, LLC
NY  P2L: Pathways to Leadership
NY  Proaction of Steuben and Yates Inc.
NY  Say Yes Buffalo
NY  Southside Community Center
NY  St. Anne’s Institute
NY  The Valley Community Association Inc.
NY  United Activities Unlimited
NY  United Neighborhood Houses
NY  United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc.
NY  Vision Education & Media - Robofun
NY  Watkins Glen Central School District
NY  Wings of Eagles Discovery Center
NY  YMCA of Hornell, New York, Inc.
OH  America SCORES Cleveland
OH  Bellaire-Puritas Development Corporation
OH  College Now Greater Cleveland
OH  From Me 2 U, Inc.
OH  Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association
OH  Horizon Education Centers
OH  Ohio Afterschool Network
OH  Ohio Alliance of YMCAs
OH  Ohio Association of Child Care Providers
OH  Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association
OH  Parma Area Community/Business/School Partnership
OH  The Goddard School
OH  United Rehabilitation Services
OH  United Way of Greater Toledo
OH  University Settlement
OH  Urban League of Greater Cleveland
OH  Voices for Ohio’s Children
OR  Oregon Girls Collaborative Project
OR  OregonASK
PA  A+ Schools
PA  APOST (Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time)
PA  Educational Advocates Reaching Today's Hardworking Students, Inc. (EARTHS)
PA  LifeSpan School and Day Care
PA  Philadelphia Freedom Valley YMCA
PA  Sarah Heinz House
RI  Children & Families First
RI  Rhode Island Afterschool Plus Alliance (RIASPA)
SC  The Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University
TN  Black Children's Institute of Tennessee (BCI)
TN  Memphis Urban League
TN  Music City (TN) Chapter, The Links Incorporated
TN  NAACP, Tennessee State Conference
TN  Raise Your Hand Tennessee
TN  Tennessee Afterschool Network
TN  United Way of Greater Knoxville
TN  United Way of Metropolitan Nashville’s
TN  United Way of the Mid-South
TN  United Ways of Tennessee
TX  Engineering for Kids
TX  IT'S TIME TEXAS
TX  Texas Afterschool Association
TX  Texas Partnership for Out of School Time (TXPOST)
UT  Community Education Partnership of West Valley City, Inc.
VA  Virginia Partnership for Out-of-School Time (VPOST)
VT  Burlington Parks & Recreation, City of Burlington
VT  Caledonia North Supervisory Union
VT  ENCORE After School and Summer Programs
VT  Caledonia Central Supervisory Union
VT  Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union
VT  GRACE Project
VT  Grand Isle Supervisory Union
VT  Hunger Free Vermont
VT  Lamoille North Supervisory Union
VT  Open Doors in St. Albans
VT  Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union
VT  REACH! Afterschool & Summer Programs
VT  Student Success Winooski School District
VT  Unbound, the Peoples Academy Program
VT  Vermont Afterschool, Inc.
VT  Vermont Superintendents Association
| VT | Voices for Vermont's Children |
| VT | Windham Central Supervisory Union |
| WA | School's Out Washington |
| WI | Racine Unified School District Extended Learning |
| WV | Lincoln County 21st Century Community Learning Program |
| WV | Monongalia County Schools |
| WV | Mountaineer Boys and Girls Club |
| WV | PATCH |
| WV | Playmates Preschools and Child Development Centers |
| WV | Southern Appalachian Labor School (SALS) |
| WV | Spring Hill Elementary |
| WV | Wayne County 21st Century Community Learning Centers |
| WV | West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network |