



For Immediate Release
April 12, 2013

CONTACT: [Gretchen Wright](#)
202/371-1999

President's Budget Offers Good and Bad News for Afterschool Programs; Time for the Administration to be Candid About Its Plans for Afterschool Programs

Statement of Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant

“President Obama’s FY 2014 budget proposal has both good and bad news for the millions of students and families that rely on afterschool programs.

The good news is that the President wants to increase funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative – the chief federal funding stream for afterschool, before school and summer learning programs – by \$100 million to \$1.25 billion.

The bad news is that the Administration would radically change 21st CCLC by making it into a federal competitive grant program, and permit school systems to use these funds to experiment with extending school time. In fact, the Administration’s budget narrative suggests that the additional funding is intended to support such experimentation. That would mean many more children unsupervised and at risk after the school day ends.

Afterschool programs are already woefully underfunded and, as a result, more than 15 million children are without the safe, supervised afterschool activities their parents want for them at the end of the school day. Quality afterschool programs keep kids safe, inspire them to learn, and help working families. We should be investing more in these proven programs, not weakening them by diverting their limited federal funding from its core purpose.

This is not the first time that the Department of Education has advanced a plan to divert afterschool funding to other initiatives. So far, Congress has wisely refused, recognizing the vital role that afterschool programs play in the lives of our children, families and communities. If the Department wishes to extend the current experiment with extended school time, it should create a new funding stream for the effort and rigorously assess the results – and it should have a candid conversation with the country, so people can decide if they agree with the inevitable outcome: countless afterschool programs closed, and millions more students alone, unsupervised and at risk after the school day ends.

There is a large [body of research](#) that shows afterschool programs produce positive results, in part because they offer hands-on, engaged learning that complements but does not replicate what is offered during the school day. That is precisely why they are so popular with parents and educators. Moreover, in part because they partner with community- and faith-based organizations, science museums, businesses and others, afterschool programs run longer and cost less than extended day programs. So shifting afterschool dollars to extending the regular school

day will not alleviate the need for afterschool programs. In fact, it will make the need more acute.

We welcome the President's proposal to increase 21st CCLC funding, and urge Congress not to dilute its impact by opening it up to other initiatives."

#

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.