



## **FACT SHEET: UNDERSTANDING FEDERAL PROPOSALS REGARDING AFTERSCHOOL AND LONGER SCHOOL DAYS/ EXTENDED LEARNING TIME (ELT)**

- The Department of Education's ESEA Reauthorization Blueprint, along with proposals in Congress, would divert 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) funds away from exclusively supporting before-school, afterschool and summer learning; and instead fund a longer school day. What is known about the impact of such proposals? Why is federal afterschool funding important? Is there a body of research on a longer school day? Now more than ever, working families need afterschool programs to ensure that their children have a safe place between the hours of 3 and 6 pm that enhances learning.
- Afterschool programs are a proven innovation; quality programs build on the best of the school day and the best of community partners to create a truly innovative learning experience for kids.
- When looking at the number of hours afterschool programs are available and comparing the cost of a longer school day (Extended Learning Time or ELT) to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool programs, it is clear that fewer children will be served if 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds are diverted to a longer school day. This is especially troubling given that 15 million children are currently unsupervised during the afterschool hours.
- The research base for a longer school day is minimal and inconclusive, whereas there is more than a decade of proven research on afterschool.
- If we want to provide more extended learning opportunities for kids, we need to adequately fund afterschool and ELT separately, not pit one approach against another in an already highly competitive funding stream.

### **How does the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program fund afterschool programs?**

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to before-school, afterschool and summer learning programs. The *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* reauthorized 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC in 2002, transferring the administration of the grants from the U.S. Department of Education to the State Education Agencies. Each state receives funds based on its share of Title I funding for low-income students.

There are more than 4,000 grants funding afterschool programs serving more than one million children and youth in about 10,400 school-based and community-based centers across the country. The average first-year grant size in 2009 was \$280,377. On average, there are 3 centers/sites per grant with an annual budget of \$109,096. The average annual cost per student ranges from \$627 to \$1,254.

While school districts or community-based organizations can apply for and receive funds, each grant must include school-community partnerships. The typical 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grantee has 6 partners who contribute to the project by providing services and resources not directly funded by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. Centers are open for an average of about 15 hours per week. Academic assistance, enrichment activities and recreational activities are the most common services offered by programs.

### **What is the proposed change to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC involving a longer school day?**

While proposals vary, the Department of Education's 2010 ESEA Blueprint for reauthorization, as well as language in the Senate FY2011 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bill, allows

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to be used to support school districts' efforts to lengthen the school day. The longer school day, also called Extended or Expanded Learning Time (ELT), is a change from current 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC law that limits program funding to out-of-school time activities. The specifics of the proposed changes are unclear concerning the existing requirement of school community partnerships, and whether or not community-based organizations could still apply for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to extend the school day. However, the Department of Education's ESEA blueprint suggests that grant applicants that focus on lengthening the school day for all students would be prioritized.

**There is a wealth of research about the impact of afterschool programs on students.**

More than a decade of research and evaluation has been conducted on programs funded by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. Student academic and behavioral outcomes have improved over time along with program quality. Highlights from the afterschool research base include:

- The Promising Afterschool Programs Study, a study of about 3,000 low-income, ethnically-diverse elementary and middle school students found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and improved work habits.<sup>i</sup>
- A meta-analysis of 73 afterschool evaluations concluded that afterschool programs employing evidence-based approaches to improving students' personal and social skills were consistently successful in producing multiple benefits for children including improvements in personal, social and academic skills, as well as their self-esteem.<sup>ii</sup>
- A May 2010 study by the Wallace Foundation cites a growing recognition that afterschool programs are important not just for elementary school students, whose parents need supervision for their children when they are not in school, but also for middle and high school youth, whose participation in OST programs can help keep them connected to positive role models and engaged in their education at a time when many are beginning to disengage from schools.<sup>iii</sup>

**There is very little research about the impact of longer school days on students.**

Lengthening the school day as a way to improve academic outcomes is a relatively new strategy in school turnaround. As such, there is not a large base of research evaluating the practice. The majority of the research comes from charter schools and Massachusetts, where a state-funded ELT effort has been in place for the past several school years.

The overwhelming majority of the research cited by proponents of a longer school day is based on charter schools (Farbman 2009 – 74 percent of the 650 schools analyzed for this study were charter schools<sup>iv</sup>; Hoxby, Murarka, and Kang 2009 – study of New York Charter schools.) Using charter school data to promote the effects of extending the school day is problematic because there are likely multiple reasons for charter schools' successes when compared to traditional schools. Those potential reasons include targeted student populations, different instructional focus, smaller student/teacher ratios and use of tutors in addition to a longer school day/year and isolating one aspect of charter schools as contributing to student success is difficult.

While other states and municipalities are experimenting with ELT, Massachusetts is the only state thus far with enough data to evaluate ELT. A report by Abt Associates, commissioned by the Massachusetts Department of Education, on the state's ELT initiative found mixed results over three years of implementation:

- Abt Associates' most recent (March 2010) report on Massachusetts ELT schools during the 2008-2009 school year struck an inconclusive chord, as it lacked any true takeaways. This third year follow-up study found that ELT had no statistically significant positive effects in English Language Arts/Reading or Math MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) scores for any grade level studied and only a small significant positive effect in 5th grade MCAS science gains, when compared to traditional schools not participating in ELT.
- Furthermore, when you examine the three studies as a set, the previous studies also found mixed results over the first two years of implementation depending on subject area and grade level:
  - There was no statistically significant effect of ELT on reading scores at grades 3, 4, and 7.
  - Math outcomes were mixed, with a positive effect for 6th grade scores, a negative effect for 8th grade scores and no effect for 4th grade scores.
  - Research found no effect on science scores in grades 5 or 8.
- And, students enrolled in ELT schools report having significantly less time for a range of activities after school:
  - Fifty-six percent of ELT participants report that they have less time to play outside, 62 percent report that they have less time to attend a church youth group and more than half report that they have less time to work on homework with an adult.
  - Additionally, children participating in ELT report having significantly less time to participate in art, theater, music or dance enrichment (55 percent), go to an afterschool program at their school (70 percent), play on a sports team (48 percent), spend time with family (40 percent), spend time with friends (43 percent), volunteer (61 percent) and work at a job (67 percent).<sup>v</sup>

In addition to the limited data on the impact of ELT, it is also important to recognize that ELT is a more costly model. Current public funding to implement the longer school day in Massachusetts is \$1300 per student, which goes primarily to schools and does not include funds for services provided by community partners. Based on costs associated with the Massachusetts ELT initiative, for each school that eliminates its afterschool program and instead uses 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) funding to extend the school day to 3:30 or 4 pm, six other communities with afterschool and summer learning programs supported by 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC will lose funding and be left with no expanded learning opportunities for kids.

Furthermore, most sites in the pilot ELT program in Massachusetts end by 3:30 or 4 p.m., meaning proven, effective afterschool programs are still needed to fill the gap until 6 pm, when most parents return home from work. As we all work to create a seamless learning environment that leverages innovative practices in school, after school and over the summer, it is important to carefully examine existing research (and take note when more research is needed) when considering policies at the local, state and federal level.

## Sources:

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<sup>i</sup> Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R., & Pierce, K. M. (2007). *Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs*. Policy Studies Associates, Inc. Retrieved from <http://www.gse.uci.edu/childcare/pdf/afterschool/PP%20Longitudinal%20Findings%20Final%20Report.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2007). *The impact of after-school programs that promote personal and social skills*. CASEL. Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/downloads/ASP-Full.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> Deschenes, S., Arbreton, A., Little, P.M., Herrera, C., Grossman, J.B., Weiss, H.B., and Lee, D. (April, 2010) *Engaging older youth: Program and city-level strategies to support sustained participation in out of school time*. Harvard Family Research Project and Public/Private Ventures.

<sup>iv</sup> Farbman, D. (2009). *Tracking an Emerging Movement: A Report on Expanded-Time Schools in America*. Boston: National Center on Time and Learning. Retrieved from [www.timeandlearning.org/databasefullreport2009.html](http://www.timeandlearning.org/databasefullreport2009.html)

<sup>v</sup> Peabody, B., Horst, M., Luck, R., O'Reilly, F., and Fox, L. (March, 2009). *Year two report: 2007-2008 – Evaluation of the Expanded Learning Time Initiative*. ABT Associates Inc. Retrieved from [http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/MA-ELT\\_Year\\_2\\_Report\\_Final\\_3-26-09.pdf](http://www.abtassociates.com/reports/MA-ELT_Year_2_Report_Final_3-26-09.pdf)