



Afterschool Alliance

AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

5) Improve quality and delivery of Supplemental Education Services by making these funds more accessible to comprehensive afterschool programs.

Studies show that quality, comprehensive afterschool programs¹ benefit children and youth the most (Halpern, 2002; Piha and Miller, 2003; Fusco, 2001). These programs not only boost student achievement but also positively impact student behaviors, skill development, self-esteem and confidence. Evaluations find that limiting programs' focus to purely academic activities reduces the impact on academic achievement. For example, Ross et al (1992) found that while afterschool programs that promote increased self-esteem and confidence for students have positive effects on standardized test scores in math and reading, those focusing primarily on homework completion did not result in increased academic achievement.

Additionally, research reveals challenges in the implementation of Supplemental Education Services (SES) with slow rates of take-up and eligible students going unserved - often because parents are not getting timely or adequate information about SES and have limited opportunities to make informed decisions about the program or providers (Public/Private Ventures, 2006). In fact, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that in the 2003-2004 school year only 18 percent of eligible students received the free services (2005). Meanwhile, locally operated afterschool programs that could be serving as known and trusted institutions for service delivery face hurdles that prevent many from becoming providers. Administrative requirements, difficult recruiting environments created by the nature of SES, and the financial mechanism that SES employs constitute obstacles that keep many of these smaller organizations scarce among SES providers (Public/Private Ventures, 2006).

In order to enhance quality and better serve students, we propose directing states to increase emphasis on a comprehensive service delivery model that encourages existing school-based, community-based, faith-based and other public agency afterschool programs to become SES providers, and/or strengthens partnerships between SES providers and afterschool programs. This can be done by directing states to prioritize outreach and technical assistance to such programs, including 21st CCLC programs, and to incorporate an expectation of partnership with afterschool programs into state SES criteria. Additionally, the Department of Education should make an exception for 21st CCLC programs run by schools or districts to the rule that LEAs and schools designated as in need of improvement are unable to provide SES. Because 21st CCLC programs must be comprised of a partnership between the LEA/school and entities outside the school (such as community-based organizations), 21st CCLC programs should be considered distinct from the school or school district itself and therefore able to provide SES. Finally, in order to reduce the current barriers that keep smaller organizations from participating in SES, states should be directed to consider intermediary organizations for approval to provide SES.

Another obstacle that has impeded the success of SES is the lack of any administrative funds for the states to implement the program. As a comparison, the 21st Century

¹Comprehensive afterschool programs are those that present academic instruction in fun and engaging activities, and at the same time provide a safe environment for children and youth where they can explore extra-curricular interests, develop talents, and receive extra attention and support from caring adults. These programs typically operate a minimum of 12 hours per week.



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Community Learning Centers Program allows for states to set aside up to two percent of their 21st CCLC allocation to be used for “the administrative costs of carrying out its responsibilities.” We recommend the consideration of a similar structure for the administration of SES. This would not only facilitate administration of the program, but would aid states in supplying the above-mentioned support to afterschool programs.