

September 8, 2010

The Honorable Dan Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
722 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human
Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
731 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United State Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Inouye and Harkin and Vice Chairman Cochran:

We applaud the Senate Committee on Appropriations for increasing funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) program by \$100 million in its fiscal year 2011 Labor, Health, Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations proposal while also providing states, districts, and schools with new flexibility to expand learning and enrichment opportunities for students through the expansion of the school schedule or through voluntary after-school and summer programs. This change gives districts and school leaders greater choice and flexibility in using CCLC funds to best meet the individual needs of children.

Providing school and community leaders greater flexibility and choice in how they use CCLC dollars, which are currently limited to activities during non-school hours, is critical to supporting their efforts to improve student achievement. School and community leaders on the ground are best equipped to determine whether after-school or summer programs, or a redesigned and expanded school schedule can best help students prepare for success in college and careers. Local control also means that any expansion of the school schedule would be subject to federal, state, and local laws and agreements governing employee-employer relationships.

We also applaud the focus on expanding enrichment programming in addition to core academic time. We agree that all children deserve a well-rounded education. We encourage deep partnerships between schools and a diverse array of community organizations whose staff help children build new skills and interests.

Over the last ten years, visionary school leaders in cities including New York, Pittsburgh, Tulsa, Miami, New Orleans, and Buffalo have embraced increased learning time as a key component of their strategy to improve low-performing schools. In the last few years, new research has made clear that more time implemented in conjunction with high-quality teaching can have a significant impact on student outcomes. High-performing schools such as the national KIPP network of college preparatory schools, the Edwards Middle School in Boston, MA, and the Jacob Hiatt Magnet School in Worcester, MA, are proving that public schools with the resource of added time can deliver extraordinary results for children. These models, including extended-year programs such as Cincinnati Public Schools 5th Quarter, deserve to be replicated, and broadening the use of CCLC funds will make that possible.

Thank you for your leadership on this important education reform issue.

Sincerely,

American Association of School Administrators
Alliance for Excellent Education
The Business Roundtable
Center for American Progress Action Fund
Council of Great City Schools
Democrats for Education Reform
Education Equality Project
Education Pioneers
Jobs for the Future
Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools
National Center on Time & Learning
National Education Association
National Summer Learning Association
New Leaders for New Schools
NewSchools Venture Fund
Public Education Network

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions