

ESSA Talking Points: What Do I Ask For?

These talking points are intended to help networks and advocates prepare for and participate in listening sessions and other meetings focused on ESSA implementation. We encourage you to consider specific “asks” for your state and focus on a few of the points provided that help support those asks. You also may need to create some talking points of your own.

Factsheets and graphics available on the ESSA toolkit (<http://essa.afterschoolalliance.org>) may help supplement your talking points. If you have questions, need additional support, or want to share points that resonated effectively at one of your meetings, please contact Jillian Luchner, JLuchner@afterschoolalliance.org.

Title I

The role of afterschool in ESSA implementation

- Afterschool and summer programs are an allowable use of Title I funding.
- Title I explicitly lists afterschool as an intervention for schools identified for targeted support, because many students need additional time, alternative settings, and safe, supportive spaces to interact with adults.
- Quality afterschool provides evidence-based supports for academic indicators and “fifth indicators,” that are related to school quality and/or student success, including attendance, behavior, coursework, health and wellness, and STEM.
- Afterschool programs define quality through multiple student indicators, including parent and student survey tools, behavior, homework, and attendance. This allows afterschool networks to provide states with expertise about how to incorporate such indicators for a more holistic picture of student success and well-being.
- Afterschool provides supports for well-rounded students, increasing student engagement in school and developing health and wellness, hands-on learning, social and emotional skills, leadership, and employability skills, among others.
- Students’ connections to passions and career interests are often sparked in out-of-school time, which can lead to greater perseverance during the school day and throughout the education pipeline from kindergarten through career. Three in four Nobel winning scientists say their passion was first sparked in out-of-school settings.¹
- Quality summer learning programs can help close the achievement gap and have been shown to reduce—and even eliminate—the “summer slide.”
- High-income parents (those in the top 20% of the income distribution) spend up to seven times as much on enrichment for their children compared with families in the lowest income distribution, which makes access to afterschool programs an important equalizer in resource equity and opportunity.
- Afterschool leverages community funding and parent and community engagement. For example, on average, a 21st CCLC program brings in \$67,000 per partner and averages nine partner organizations per grantee.
- Only one in three 21st CCLC grants get funded nationally, which means many more schools and communities need these programs.

¹ <http://www.click2sciencepd.org/about/why-out-school-stem-important>

ESSA Talking Points: What Do I Ask For?

Title I, *continued*

Asks: What we'd like to see in draft and final plans

- List afterschool and summer programs as an allowable use of Title I funds in the state plan.
- List afterschool as an evidence-based intervention for supporting student success.
- For the school quality and student success indicators (fifth indicators), adopt a dashboard of multiple indicators including, at a minimum: attendance, school engagement, safety, and opportunities for participation in afterschool and summer programs. *[Note: some states currently employ school climate surveys that address multiple indicators at once, however not all of these include access to afterschool and summer programs, which may need to be added as a separate indicator.]*
- Include access to and involvement in afterschool programs with enrichment and academic components as a mandatory component in any state and local needs assessments.
- Include access to and involvement in afterschool programs in any report cards issued by schools and/or districts.
- Include access to and involvement in afterschool in all conversations about resource equity.
- Work with state afterschool networks to provide technical assistance to districts and schools that provide (or are hoping to provide) quality afterschool and summer programs.

Title II: Teacher Preparation and Development

The role of afterschool in ESSA implementation

- Afterschool settings provide opportunities for training teachers by giving them experience in diverse settings with diverse groups of students.
- School day teachers and afterschool staff in some places are already participating in joint training in the areas of positive youth development, race and equity issues, and hands-on STEM.

Asks: What we'd like to see in draft and final plans

- Provide opportunities for school staff and afterschool staff to attend joint training and professional development.
- Provide teachers with real-world training and experience in diverse settings, including afterschool and summer programs, as part of the process for earning their hours of practice and observation.

Title IV, Part A: Student Support Grants

The role of afterschool in ESSA implementation

- Well-rounded supportive education includes the wrap-around services offered by afterschool and summer programs that help to support students' academic, social, and personal development, as well as a safe and supportive environment.
- Afterschool and summer programming supports students during their transitions between grades and levels of schooling and has an evidence base of improved graduation rates for students who regularly attend quality programs.
- Afterschool program participation is associated with fewer behavioral infractions during the school day and fewer suspensions.
- Afterschool programs show the greatest effects on student improvement in high-risk populations (e.g., low-income, minority students).
- Afterschool and summer programs provide opportunities for families to be part of their students' academic and enrichment experiences outside of the school day.
- When schools partner with community-based organizations, they are able to tap into additional resources, including staff and youth development expertise. This exponentially increases the supports available to students.

Asks: What we'd like to see in draft and final plans

- Explicitly state that the Department of Education recognizes afterschool and summer programs as evidence-based supports that help provide a well-rounded supportive education for students—and that districts can choose afterschool and summer programs as such supports.
- Encourage local districts to build on STEM learning during the regular school day by using Title IV, Part A funds to provide afterschool STEM programs that offer hands-on engagement and help students develop their interests, confidence, and experience in career building pathways.

Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers

The role of afterschool in ESSA implementation

- 21st CCLC providers need access to knowledgeable and trusted resources who understand the needs of afterschool and summer providers and have a history of helping to advance afterschool.
- Staff quality is a key determinant of program quality. 21st CCLC providers need quality professional development opportunities and access to vetted resources who can help them achieve results for kids and families.

Asks: What we'd like to see in draft and final plans

- Ensure that afterschool networks, programs, parents, and students are meaningfully consulted in the development of RFPs and are included in state-level advisory groups for 21st CCLC.
- Use the increased available quality set aside at the 5% level with the understanding that the SEA will work with experienced technical assistance providers (intermediaries, such as networks) to build program quality and provide staff professional development opportunities that can contribute to student outcomes.
- Define "external organizations" and "partners" as two distinct ideas. "External organizations" are technical assistance providers (like networks or intermediaries). For example they may help provide a grantee with professional development or support reaching quality standards. "Partners" are the organizations in local grant applications that will provide a role in the provision of services to students. This distinction is important because states under the law should create a list of pre-approved "external organizations" but not "partners."
- Ensure "expanded learning programs" for states allowing extended school days follow the law and 1) add a minimum of 300 additional hours of programming each year; 2) ensure programming be 'afterschool-like' in nature and not an extension or addition of traditional classroom activities; and 3) require partners for any LEA seeking this type of grant. Regular afterschool, before school, and summer programs are not subject to these special conditions.
- Clarify that both schools and community-based organizations are eligible to apply for 21st CCLC grants.