August X, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander

Chairman

Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray

Ranking Member

Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

United States Senate

The Honorable John Kline

Chairman

Education and the Workforce Committee

United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott

Ranking Member

Education and the Workforce Committee

United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Alexander and Kline and Ranking Members Murray and Scott:

As your Committees prepare to begin conference negotiations to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), **we urge you to maintain the Title IV language in S. 1177, the *Every Child Achieves Act* (ECAA), which authorizes the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) initiative as a separate and specific federal funding stream.** The undersigned local, state and national organizations strongly support maintaining and strengthening 21st CCLC to provide the next generation of before-school, afterschool, expanded learning and summer learning programs that keep young people safe, inspire them to learn and support working families.

More than a decade of research has shown that 21st CCLC has resulted in wide-ranging positive impacts for students and families by leveraging school and community partnerships to help millions of low-income children become successful in school and in life. The bipartisan language supported **unanimously** by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee reauthorizes the 21st CCLC program while also strengthening it to reflect what has been learned over the past decade in providing high quality programming.

Afterschool, expanded learning and summer learning programs provide an infrastructure to bring in other resources to our children including access to mentors, tutors, nutritious snacks and meals, and in some places medical, dental and mental health programs. For-profits, faith-based organizations, community based organizations (CBOs), tribal organizations, non-profits, charter schools, local government, colleges and universities and others serve as critical partners and lead organizations under 21st CCLC and help foster the broad positive results the program has yielded.

We ask that the ESEA conferees maintain and strengthen 21st CCLC by accepting without changes the current language in the ECAA which enhances the quality of federally funded afterschool, expanded learning and summer learning programs; improves the manner in which the 21st CCLC initiative is evaluated; and strengthens the school-community partnerships that are the hallmark of quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

Now is the time to step up support for students during the time when they are not supported by school or family, the hours after the traditional school days ends when 11.3 million children are unsupervised and juvenile crime and other inappropriate activities peak.

Sincerely,

Afterschool Alliance

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Citizen Schools

National Center on Time and Learning

YMCA of the USA