



A Great America Needs Great Americans: Learn All the Time Network Statement on the President's Proposed Budget

For at least three decades, the out-of-school time sector has conducted research on the outcomes and impact of afterschool and summer programs on student achievement and youth development. It is very disconcerting to us at Learn All the Time that President Trump would propose eliminating the federal budget for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), from which the state of Texas receives about \$100 million a year. Even more perplexing is the administration's statement that there is "no evidence that after school programs help kids do better in schools." On the contrary, research shows that after school programs improve not only student academic performance, but also their health, well-being, and preparedness for life as young adults and active, responsible citizens of their community.

In Central Texas alone, over 100,000 students, mostly from underserved neighborhoods, access programs that highly depend on 21st CCLC funding. These programs provide opportunities for young people to close achievement gaps by preventing summer learning loss and staying on track academically with their more affluent peers.

In addition, after school programs are a great help to families who would otherwise need to leave work early to pick up their kids from school or navigate a complicated landscape to access high quality yet affordable programs during the summer months. For many poor families in Central Texas, programs funded with 21st CCLC grants are the only way they can access programs that provide safe, learning-centered environments for their children when school is not in session.

It is therefore of utmost urgency that we here in Central Texas contact our representatives in Congress to make sure funding for 21st CCLC is intact and even increased. Eliminating funding means elimination of needed programs. We either invest now in the development and well being of our children and in the prevention of risky behaviors or pay later as a consequence of our neglect and abandonment. Studies have shown that the cost of providing quality afterschool programs for young people averages between \$30-40 a day, while the average expense per person for juvenile residential facility is \$437 a day. The math is clear and simple. Not only is it the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do!

The investment needed in programs for young people cannot be solely covered by local and state agencies, philanthropy, and private sector. This, as a national priority, needs to be a shared investment at the federal, state, and local levels with private sector and philanthropy filling in gaps. After all, if we are to make America great again, we need to produce the kind of Americans who feel that the country invested in their development and well-being.

Allison Ivey
Executive Director
Learn All the Time Network