



Citizen Schools' Agenda for the 111th Congress

A New American Era of Service & Citizenship in Education

More Talent, More Time, and More Real-World Learning for our Nation's Children

As the 111th Congress takes on the many challenges facing our nation, we know that making the investment in our children's education is crucial to ensure the future health of our economy and our country. A high-quality education increases future earnings, strengthens civic bonds, and is essential to prepare a well-trained workforce for a global economy. Too much of our current education system is an artifact of an earlier age, and too many of our children continue to fall through the cracks. We need to re-imagine education for *our* century; and mobilize the untapped resources of time and talent that can help us restore the historic promise of education and opportunity for all Americans. At the same time, our nation is experiencing an impressive resurgence of commitment to our communities and a renewed response to calls to service. We can channel some of that commitment into addressing many of the needs faced by our nation's schools. The 111th Congress can **improve education by increasing learning time, making learning more relevant, and involving more Americans in the shared enterprise of education.**

EDUCATION

High-quality afterschool and expanded learning time programs provide more time, more enrichment, and more qualified educators for America's children. Children spend only 20% of their waking hours in school, yet we expect schools to shoulder almost all of the responsibility for educating them and preparing them for their futures. A child's capacity to learn does not end with the final bell. Afterschool and expanded learning programs provide the additional time needed to advance school success, as well as complementary learning opportunities outside of the regular school day. As we expect more from our students and teachers, we must also provide them with the time and resources they need to succeed. **As part of a reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind, Congress should:**

Enact Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Legislation: Legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate in the 110th Congress that would provide opportunities to expand the learning day. The Senate version of the legislation (The Time for Innovation Matters in Education Act, S. 3431), sponsored by Senator Kennedy (D-MA), would fund expanded learning time initiatives in schools, giving them the opportunity to comprehensively redesign and expand their schedules—ultimately increasing learning time by at least 30%. It also promotes partnerships between schools and afterschool programs to encourage broader learning opportunities that connect directly to school-day learning; gives priority to models that incorporate effective afterschool programs or community-based organizations in all aspects of planning and implementation; and allows 10% of funds for nonprofit education reform organizations working with schools to expand the learning day across one or more school districts and one or more states (we recommend this be increased to 20%). Similar legislation in the House, the Expanded Learning Time Demonstration Act (H.R. 3642), was sponsored by Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ).

Strengthen the Afterschool Workforce: To bring more caring adults into children's lives and assist schools in providing all that kids need, quality afterschool and expanded learning time programs will depend on a talented and well-equipped workforce. Across the country, too many communities lack the resources needed to recruit, train, and support a committed "second shift" of instructors and mentors to work with students in some of our nation's neediest schools. Introduced as the Teaching Fellows for Expanded Learning and Afterschool Act (S. 778) in the 110th Congress by Senators Kennedy and Burr (R-NC), this bi-partisan legislation would provide federal support for 10,000 AmeriCorps Teaching Fellows, recent college graduates who would commit two years as full-time "second shift" educators. Teaching Fellows would support school-day learning and lead afterschool and Expanded Learning Time classes. The act would strengthen and expand the afterschool sector, increase resources and opportunities for students and families in our nation's schools, and create a new professional pathway for young educators and mentors supporting academic achievement. The House companion legislation, H.R. 7154, also introduced in the 110th Congress, was sponsored by Rep. David Loebsack (D-IA).

Invest in Innovation and Scale What Works: In the Administration's budget outline, the President has proposed an education Innovation Fund seeking to extend the fund created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This fund would allow the Department of Education to invest in school systems and nonprofit organizations that have demonstrated success in helping students succeed, and have the capacity and desire to implement new approaches or take their operations to a national scale. This federal investment, and the private dollars it could leverage from the philanthropic sector, would address the lack of access to capital that limits the growth of many education entrepreneurs that bring proven results to communities. This Innovation Fund would allow a larger number of children across the country access to innovative initiatives that could significantly boost their achievement.

Expand and Strengthen 21st Century Learning Centers (21st CCLC): The 21st CCLC initiative is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to afterschool programs. While the No Child Left Behind Act authorizes the program to be funded at \$2.5 billion, current spending is approximately \$1 billion. Studies show that quality afterschool programs increase students' academic performance while providing much needed supervision in the out-of-school hours. The need for quality afterschool far outpaces the supply, and funding levels do not nearly meet the demand. According to the Afterschool Alliance, there are 15.3 million children in the United States whose parents would send them to an afterschool program if one were available. In 2006, a mere 26% of the organizations that applied for 21st CCLC grants received funding. The Alliance further found that, **in a November 2008 poll, 76% of those surveyed want the new Congress to increase funding for afterschool programs.** Funding should be increased at least to the currently authorized amount, and the program strengthened by targeting a percentage of new funds towards high-performing, high-quality programs.

Provide More Afterschool Resources to Quality Programs Serving Middle and High School Students: The After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education Act (ASPIRE Act, H.R. 6928), introduced in the 110th Congress by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN) would fund afterschool programs for middle and high school students to improve academic achievement, lower high school dropout rates, and spur interest in high-demand careers. The ASPIRE Act aims to spark students' interest in technology jobs and other growing industries by encouraging local partnerships between afterschool programs and trade, technical, and business organizations. It also encourages scaling up of effective and proven programs.

Invest in Improving Middle Schools to Prepare Students to Succeed in High School: In the 110th Congress as Senator, the President introduced the Success in the Middle Act (S. 2227). The bill and its House companion (H.R. 3406) seek to improve low-performing middle schools, and include such crucial student supports as expanded learning time, personal graduation plans, and coaching that enable all students to stay on the path to graduation. We propose an addition to the Success in the Middle Act that would support afterschool programs that prepare middle school students, especially those in high-need districts, for the pathway to college.

NATIONAL SERVICE

Our nation is experiencing a resurgence of commitment to our communities and a renewed response to calls to service. Currently, over 3.9 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds serve their communities through the core national service programs. Together, members and volunteers contribute over 228 million hours of service in communities around the country. **To harness the goodwill and increasing number of Americans willing to serve and volunteer, as well as put much-needed resources into the nonprofit community and stimulate local economies, Congress should:**

Pass the Serve America Act (S. 277) : The bi-partisan Serve America Act is a major legislative initiative to expand service opportunities, recruiting Americans of all ages to address some of the nation's most urgent challenges, including education. The legislation also invests in promoting innovative solutions to our nation's problems. It asks 175,000 more Americans to give a year of service to solve specific challenges, thereby expanding the number of national service participants to 250,000.

Specifically, the legislation would mobilize community members to work together to close the educational achievement gap by establishing an **Education Corps**. Corps members could work as instructors, mentors, and tutors to in expanded learning time and afterschool programs to increase student engagement and academic success. It would also create opportunities for nonprofit organizations to mobilize and manage even more volunteers by establishing a **Volunteer Generation Fund**; and it would support innovation in the nonprofit sector by creating **Community Solution Funds** to allow ground-breaking nonprofits to replicate and expand initiatives that have successfully addressed community challenges. Finally, Serve America would improve collaboration among the federal government, the nonprofit and the private sectors to meet our nation's challenges more effectively.

Reauthorize National Service Programs and Provide Sufficient Funds to Ensure a Successful Call to Service: Congress should reauthorize national service programs, including AmeriCorps, and reverse the slide in funding for these programs. The AmeriCorps program should provide sufficient flexibility to increase the ability of participating programs to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Funding for existing national service programs must return, at the very least, to original levels to ensure successful implementation; and new funding must be provided to meet the promised investment in our nation outlined in the Serve America Act.

-###-

Citizen Schools is a leading national education initiative that uniquely mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement and bridge the achievement gap by teaching skill-building apprenticeships after school. At 44 middle schools in seven states across the country, Citizen Schools programs blend these real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing low-income students for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.

For more information, contact Christin M. Driscoll, Executive Director of Policy and Communications, at christindriscoll@citizenschools.org.
308 Congress Street, Floor 5, Boston, MA 02210 • 617.695.2300 • in Washington, D.C. 703.524.2552

[www.citizenschools.org]