

ESSA: A New Era for Education and Afterschool in Pennsylvania

The opportunity:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the new K-12 federal education law, which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces No Child Left Behind.

ESSA was signed into law in 2015 and will be phased in over the next few years. The law aims to increase local input and flexible decision making based on what communities and states need. Ensuring all students have access to a quality education—inside and outside the classroom—is one of ESSA's key goals. This new law provides tremendous opportunities to secure resources for afterschool programs across Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is currently drafting a state plan, which will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in the spring of 2017. The time to engage is now!

Here's how you can help:

Weigh in on 21st CCLC. As the Pennsylvania Department of Education works to update the RFP process, PSAYDN will be sharing input and suggestions from the afterschool community. Please let PSAYDN know what changes you'd like to see in future RFP processes so that we can advocate on your behalf. ESSA requires meaningful consultation with stakeholders in the development of the new RFP and your ideas will be critical to the future of 21st CCLC. Your input about eligibility criteria, competitive priorities, quality, professional development, and updated performance measures will be key!

Reach out to decision-makers. As states write their new plans, they are required to consult with stakeholders—that includes afterschool providers! This is an opportunity to let your voice be heard and to impact real policy in our state. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is planning a five-stop listening tour across the commonwealth to present the ESSA plan, as it evolves, at open public meetings.

You can attend these events or connect directly with state or local boards of education, superintendents, and other school leaders to explain how afterschool is critical to our state's education plan.

Check the Pennsylvania Department of Education site to learn about upcoming opportunities to engage in ESSA implementation: www.education.pa.gov/Pages/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act.aspx#tab-1



Some ideas to help you communicate effectively:

Tell your story. The most important thing you can do is share your story to give an example of how your work is improving the lives of children and their families. Share with your local school leaders and the Department of Education that their investment in afterschool is a smart one!

Share the facts. Explain how afterschool benefits the students, families, and schools in your community. Share materials at meetings (or via email), like factsheets showing how afterschool supports **academic success**, helps to close the **achievement gap**, reduces **absenteeism**, and helps students **graduate**.

Explain funding opportunities. Because afterschool is such an integral part of educational improvement, the Pennsylvania Department of Education can combine different funding streams to provide afterschool programming to kids:

- Use Title I school improvement funds for afterschool and summer programs
- Use Title II, Part B to provide grants for literacy instruction in partnership with afterschool programs
- Use Title IV, Part A funds to support STEM and college and career readiness opportunities in afterschool and summer programs

If you have questions, need additional support, or want to share feedback from one of your meetings, please contact Laura Saccente: lsaccente@csc.csiu.org.



About the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity-building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania's children, youth, and families.

PSAYDN's mission is that all children and youth deserve access to high-quality out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood.

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