

Empowering Local Education Decision Making Act of 2011

Legislation proposed in the Senate that would streamline the 21st Century Community Learning Center Program, along with 58 others, into federal block grants to be used at the discretion of states and local school districts, has some after-school advocates biting their nails.

The Empowering Local Educational Decision Making Act would combine funding from 59 existing funds into two pots: the Fund for Improvement of Teaching and Learning and the Safe and Healthy Students Block grant.

The new proposal would enable states to use funding from the former grant to increase the number and quality of their teachers and principals and the latter to promote students' health and safety.

Many after-school and extended learning advocates are worried at the proposals, given that the 21st CCLC program currently funds 8,900 centers that serve roughly 1.5 million students at roughly \$1.1 billion annually.

According to a release from the Hill, the new law would give states and districts the flexibility to use federal money as they see fit, as long as they fall under certain categories.

The after-school community worries that this consolidation would pull much needed money that supports after-school programs to others.

The bill is one of many ESEA reauthorization bills. As you may remember, last month I wrote an article about some of this other legislation that impacts 21st CCLC and has caused some friction in the OST realm.

Tune in for CBASS's recommendations to Hill staffers.