21st CCLC FY19 Cohort Funding

Testimony before the Illinois State Board of Education Board

Good Morning,

My name is Full Name and I am the Title/Role of Organization Name. Our organization aims to… (insert mission and goals of your program in one to two sentences). Our organization is a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grantee and belongs to the Fiscal Year (FY) number cohort. We are also part of The Afterschool for Children and Teens Now (ACT Now) Coalition, which is a statewide organization that works to ensure that young people in Illinois have access to quality and affordable afterschool and youth development programs.

I am speaking today to address the immediate funding cliff for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grantees across the state. On April 10, 2023, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) shared that the state agency had inaccurately forecasted available funding for programs. During the pandemic, ISBE allowed grantees to roll over funding for the first time. Due to this error, there is now no funding (estimated to be $12 million) for the FY19 cohort when their contracts run out this summer.

- This means more than 12,000 students will lose access to afterschool programs and approximately 550 afterschool staff members will lose their jobs.
- 80% of these students are people of color, including 30% being Black youth and 36% being Latinx youth. These students all attend high-poverty and low-performing schools.
- Over 80% of these employees are women and roughly 50% are people of color.

Our program, alone, serves # students in location.

- Highlight one key thing that your program is doing, leveraging 21st CCLC funding, to support students' and/or families.

21st CCLC programs have struggled for years due to delays in hearing about funding competitions and continuations from ISBE. We know firsthand the importance of sustaining programmatic services to youth and families in the community. We also know that institutional knowledge will be lost and relationships with students and community members will be broken because of ISBE's actions.

Insinuating that program providers have not planned for sustainability while allowing grantee cohorts to roll off without a reapplication opportunity to apply for funding is unacceptable.

We request that you take swift action to ensure all 21st Century grantees have the funding they need to support the students and families in their communities.