



## Your Questions Answered

from the webinar *Will Expanded Learning Time = Better Outcomes?*  
*Webinar aired Dec. 14, 2011*

**Q: Is it possible for districts to apply to the U.S. Department of Education or their State Education Agency (SEA) for an additional waiver?**

**A:** No, the SEA must apply for the waiver. A Local Education Agency (LEA) may not request this flexibility independently of its SEA. The LEA would be able to exercise the flexibility based on the Education Secretary's approval of its SEA's request. Similarly, each LEA in the state would need to meet the principles that are part of this flexibility, consistent with the SEA's authority to impose requirements on its LEAs under state law.

For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>

**Q: Does this waiver also allow states/schools to use ED funds to pay for coordination of community-school services?**

**A:** While funding for the coordination of community-school services is not expressly stated in the waiver proposal, the waiver allows SEAs and their LEAs to have more flexibility around how to use funds and transfer them to other programs. An LEA has the flexibility to spend funds that would otherwise be spend on choice-related transportation, supplemental education services or for professional development on any allowable activity designed to improve student achievement under Title I, Part A. It's possible that an LEA could spend this funding on programs that provide for integrated, comprehensive and community services for youth or other activities identified by the state's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system.

For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>

**Q: For states that haven't yet applied for the waivers, what do you think are the strongest, most relevant talking point in favor of not checking the box?**

**A:** The Education Department did not offer much incentive to NOT check the box. It really is a simple check mark, and the department does not demand that states explain what they would do with their new flexibility. However, for state education departments that are already over-stretched in terms of capacity, it may be easier just to avoid Waiver 11 altogether and avoid creating new processes for the grant. Sometimes, leaving things as is – especially if they are working well – is the better and easier road.

**Q: How will Waiver 11 affect community based organizations that are grantees of 21st Century funds? What programs might be jeopardized?**

**A:** Given that most of the first 11 states that sought waivers did want the 21st Century Community Learning Center flexibility, it would seem that community-based organizations in those states would be in danger of losing that money. With budgets tight, states and school districts will likely decide to use the money to expand their own programs rather than send money to outside providers.

**Q: Can you please provide your operating definition of "expanded learning"?**

**A:** Effective expanded learning opportunities offer an integrated approach to learning across the day and year,

and address what, where, when, and how students learn.

- **What.** Academic preparation is critical but not enough. Young people also need to develop a range of social and civic competencies and the skills to manage risky behaviors.
- **Where.** Community-based organizations, museums, libraries, parks, faith-based organizations and other settings offer a range of spaces for learning and engagement focused on issues that connect to and go beyond academic success.
- **When.** Young people learn and develop every day, across their waking hours, during the school year and the summer.
- **How.** The features of effective learning environments cut across settings and include inquiry and project-based learning, youth choice and voice, supportive relationships, and physical and psychological safety.

**Q: Re: the examples used in the webinar, are these expanded learning opportunities (ELO) or expanded learning time (ELT) examples? (ELT = ALL students must participate)**

**A:** Fifth Quarter is mandatory for students in the schools in which it operates (low performing elementary schools); Providence After School Alliance's (PASA) summer science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program is not mandatory. Participation in Citizen Schools varies depending on implementation site but is typically optional.

**Q: What data do you suggest examining in order to ensure alignment in the expanded learning hours?**

**A:** Ideally, both teachers and staff working in ELOs have access to student achievement data and curriculum plans (for school and ELO).

**Q: How do you assess student outcomes for those who participate in the extended hours verses those that don't? In particular, what would you suggest for ensuring academic gains?**

**A:** In the Providence example, students in the summer STEM program take a pre- and post-participation survey that assesses skill development and attitudes in several areas, and PASA will analyze state test performance of the summer scholars and a matched comparison group. More broadly, PASA is working with the Providence School District to form data teams in each middle school that will examine school attendance, grades, behavior and state test data to look at how students participating in several out-of-school time (OST) efforts (the AfterZone and the AfterZone STEM Summer Scholars program) progress. PASA has a formal data sharing agreement with the district enabling it to coordinate a shared data and accountability plan between OST educators and school-day teachers.

**Q: Do they have in mind a Quality Improvement System that can measure the impact of programs that happen after school?**

**A:** The Youth Program Quality Assessment is an observational assessment of program quality that anchors an evidence-based continuous quality improvement system (the Youth Program Quality Intervention) that is now being implemented in more than 60 OST networks around the country to assess and improve programs. You can learn more about this at [www.cypq.org](http://www.cypq.org).

**Q: Is anyone working on moving us all to a year-round school calendar?**

**A:** There is an association called National Association on Year-Round Education, which does not appear to have been active in the past couple of years: [www.nayre.org](http://www.nayre.org). It seems that the national organization working more closely on this is the National Center on Time and Learning, which focuses on various strategies for expanding learning time effectively; that can include but is not limited to year-round schooling.

**Q: One of the reasons structured youth programs appear to be so effective is that they are the antithesis of traditional education methods. How do we keep extended learning from becoming extended traditional education?**

**A:** This is a major risk. Maintaining an environment where young people can make choices about their activities and be actively involved in planning, implementing and reflecting on projects is critical. Maintaining a more flexible and somewhat less formal environment than the typical classroom can go a long way toward increasing young people's ownership and motivation to participate.

**Q: How are 21st Century Funds in Cincinnati combined with other resources to support partnerships between schools and expanded learning providers?**

**A:** Cincinnati 21st Century Grant Program Providers (typically community-based organizations) include summer programming in their afterschool grant applications. They budget some of their grant funds to help provide the enrichment part of the full-day summer experience. The amount of 21st Century funding varies from school to school. Most of the 21st Century grant-funded sites are able to staff the Fifth Quarter program for at least two hours each day and offer some type of enrichment activities or field trips for the four-week period.

In addition to the 21st Century programs, our schools have other partners who provide in-kind programming and activities for Fifth Quarter. This opportunity to share fiscal responsibility for the implementation of Fifth Quarter allows the district to use its dollars for academics, while the 21st Century grant funds extend the day and community partners add a variety of enriching experiences for the students.

**Q: Does Cincinnati have a quality rating system for their programs?**

**A:** Cincinnati does not have a formal rating system for Fifth Quarter. Last year, Cincinnati was chosen to be part of the Wallace Foundation Summer Learning Demonstration Project, which includes both formative and evaluative feedback. Cincinnati looks forward to learning from the Wallace Foundation project and will benefit from the findings. The Wallace Foundation will share their evaluation of Fifth Quarter, along with those of other participating summer programs in 5 cities, in a public report.

**Q: Where can I learn more about Cincinnati's Fifth Quarter initiative to extend learning?**

**A:** More information about Cincinnati's Fifth Quarter can be found here: <http://www.cps-k12.org/academics/AcadInitiatives/FifthQtr/FifthQtr.htm>

**Q: What does the Department of Education's guidance regarding Waiver 11 explicitly say?**

**A:** The Department of Education provides some guidance on this issue. However, this guidance is vague and does not require states to provide plans that are very specific.

**From "ESEA Flexibility," September 23, 2011**

<http://www.ndcel.org/cms/lib2/ND07001211/Centricity/Domain/1/esea-flexibility-request%209-23-11.pdf>

**Optional Flexibility** - In addition to its request for waivers of each of the requirements above, an SEA may wish to request flexibility through a waiver related to the following:

Flexibility in the Use of Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program Funds: An SEA would have flexibility under ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) to permit community learning centers that receive funds under the 21st CCLC program to use those funds to support expanded

learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (i.e., before and after school or during summer recess).

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### **Consultation**

Each SEA must engage diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. By engaging relevant stakeholders at the outset of the planning and implementation process, an SEA can ensure they have input in shaping the SEA's comprehensive plan, which will help ensure successful implementation of the SEA's plan. Ideally, an SEA will solicit input from stakeholders representing diverse perspectives, experiences, and interests, including those that will be impacted by and implement the policies included in the SEA's plan, and will strengthen its request by revising it based on this input.

Each SEA must provide a description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives. Each SEA must also provide a description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes. Finally, each SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

***From "ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions," October 3, 2011***

<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility/documents/esea-flexibility-faqs.doc>

### **Expanded Learning Time**

#### **B-24. What does this flexibility include with respect to expanded learning time?**

Under this flexibility, an SEA may request flexibility to permit its LEAs to use funds for community learning centers under the 21st CCLC program to support activities that provide high-quality expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (i.e., before and after school or during summer recess).

#### **B-25. What does high-quality expanded learning time look like?**

Supporting activities to provide high-quality expanded learning time might include:

- Adding significantly more time by expanding the school day, school week, or school year to increase learning time for all students;
- Using the additional time to support a well-rounded education that includes time for academics and enrichment activities;
- Providing additional time for teacher collaboration and common planning; and
- Partnering with one or more outside organizations, such as a nonprofit organization, with demonstrated experience in improving student achievement.