

# Community Renewal International



March 15, 2017  
Louisiana Department of Education  
Attn: John White  
State Superintendent of Education  
VIA email

Mack McCarter  
Coordinator

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Dear Superintendent White,

**Community Renewal-Shreveport/Bossier urges the department to consider our recommendations for enhancing the role of expanded learning opportunities in Louisiana.** We strongly support the department in their efforts for maintaining and strengthening the success of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center Program (CCLC). We are also encouraged by reference to 21st CCLC programs on page 9 of the ESSA draft framework, which highlights the after-school access issues that burden our state.

To help address solutions for these access issues, we recommend including an ESSA plan that emphasizes the role of quality based afterschool programs in cultivating academic interests and experiential learning opportunities, developing the whole child for success in college and career education, promoting family engagement, and targeting chronic absentee issues that hinder Louisiana's graduation rates.

Community Renewal believes that quality **neighborhood-based** afterschool programs help reach children and youth that would or could not receive the mentoring and enrichment activities in a school-based afterschool situation. We would like to see more neighborhood-based programs available.

These recommendations underscore our belief in quality afterschool programs, including the critical component of a community school--an afterschool program with engagement and learning that complement the school day content in an alternative way, with caring hands-on experiential learning activities. Quality after school programs serve the needs of the students and are an important component for Louisiana's working families, adding engaging activities that bring families and students together through an educational support process.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Leonard  
Coordinator