



FRAC's Recommendations for ESEA Reauthorization

Expand Federal Support for Afterschool Meals

Recommendation

FRAC recommends that Congress increase the number of states included in the Afterschool Supper Program, and allow schools in supper states to participate through the National School Lunch Program to reduce unnecessary administrative barriers.

Why Should We Expand Support for Afterschool Suppers?

Suppers play an important role in supporting student achievement because they help draw children into quality afterschool programs that provide education and enrichment activities. An evaluation of the Urban School Initiative School Age Care Project (an evaluation of afterschool programs in 17 of Ohio's urban school districts) found that food was an especially important afterschool component. It helped boost attendance at programs and positively impacted students' test scores.

Afterschool suppers provide students, especially older youth, with enough nutrition to continue learning throughout the afternoon. Children arrive at afterschool programs hungry - they may have eaten lunch as early as 10:30 in the morning. Extensive research illustrates that hungry children cannot learn. An apple and a glass of milk (a typical afterschool snack) is just not enough food to stave off hunger and keep children going through a long afternoon.

The suppers support low-income students who often need the most assistance to achieve at school. The children receive a nutritious meal at the afterschool program, many of which operate for longer hours to better accommodate the needs of low-income children and their parents, who may work non-traditional hours. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides the perfect opportunity to expand this important program to insure that children have adequate nutrition to benefit from academically enriching afterschool programs.

Background

Funding to provide children up to age 18 with snacks is available to afterschool programs through the National School Lunch Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Funding for afterschool suppers also is available through only CACFP, but just for children up to age 12. These rules require much more paperwork and discourage participation, except in the seven states operating the Afterschool Supper Program.

In 2000, Congress created this Afterschool Supper Program modeled after the Afterschool Snack Program, which allows afterschool programs in Delaware, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Oregon, and Pennsylvania to serve suppers to children up to age 18 through CACFP. Congress added Illinois in 2001. Over the last six years no additional states have been added.