



March 31, 2017

Letters to the Editor
The Indianapolis Star
Attn: Tim Swarens

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Thank you for alerting your readers to the importance of after-school programs, particularly those that would not exist without federal 21st Century Community Learning Center funding.

Similar to the organizations highlighted in your March 24 story, AYS, Inc. operates 41 before- and after-school programs in the Indianapolis area and provides services to more than 3,000 students. AYS stands for At Your School, with all of our programs located within school buildings.

Five of our programs are 21st Century Community Learning Centers, serving approximately 200 students throughout the school year.

As you noted, President Trump's budget outline currently proposes that 21st CCLC funding be eliminated.

21st CCLC funding is intended to assist organizations like ours to provide out-of-school academic enrichment opportunities to children in high-poverty and low-performing schools. Through our five programs, we have welcomed students from all kinds of backgrounds, and built on what they are already learning in school with art, character development and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) activities.

And we see real results from our out-of-school-time programs. For example, 82 percent of the IPS parents who have kids in AYS say that we have helped them gain interest in school. In a Decatur Township survey, one parent noted that "[AYS has] really helped make our lives easier and more structured... [My daughter] looks forward to going...and I know she will be safe and taken care of physically with snacks and exercise, but also mentally challenged and entertained."

We join our fellow after-school providers in calling on President Trump to reconsider redlining funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. We are proud that we can help Indiana's children learn and grow every day and want to continue to serve as many students as possible in the future.

Sincerely,

Chrystal Struben
President/CEO
AYS, Inc.

