

Letter of Information: Senate Bill 338
Primary and Secondary Education - Extended School Year Innovation Grant
Budget & Taxation Committee
February 22, 2023

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged young people. MOST is one of the fifty statewide networks supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and serves as Maryland's affiliate to the National Afterschool Association.

Even before the pandemic, school districts grappled with strategies to address learning loss. With increased urgency from the impact of COVID-19, extended learning models have gained increasing interest. The literature on extended learning shows some promise; however, the research clearly shows that there are specific conditions for success. Too often, added time, implemented without best practices, fails to achieve the desired result.

First, we encourage placing family and community engagement up front – not just as part of the reporting. Schools and school districts should include documented engagement and support for their extended-year model in their grant applications.

Second, the grant application should require schools and school districts to articulate a plan for meeting students' IEP and Section 504 accommodations through the extended year.

Third, the grant application should encourage the inclusion of community-based partners that can provide a valuable “second-shift” alleviating pressures on teachers and school-based staff and providing new perspectives, content, and approaches. MOST analyzed the investments made by Maryland's school districts in the Summer of 2021. The fifteen districts that utilized community partnerships had higher enrollment on average, serving 16% of their respective student populations compared to 10% for those without community partnerships.

Another overarching concern is also the support system for the Extended Learning initiatives. In addition to providing funding, the State Department of Education must have the ability to provide training and technical assistance to the grantees and be capable of monitoring and providing accountability for the grantmaking. This area has been flagged by auditors for improvement at MSDE.

Lastly, we encourage the state to invest in a comprehensive portfolio that includes expanded learning models as well as cost-effective, high-quality, and targeted afterschool and summer programming. Full school models can be difficult to sustain, and Maryland already lags behind other states in access to afterschool and summer programs.

Ellie Mitchell
Executive Director, Maryland Out of School Time Network
emitchell@mostnetwork.org

Maryland Out of School Time Network

1500 Union Ave / Suite 2300
Baltimore MD 21211 / 410 374-7692
www.mostnetwork.org