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**Florida Boosts Student Achievement by Utilizing
Afterschool and Summer Programs**
New Report Outlines Successes, Strategies Used to Improve Outcomes

FT. LAUDERDALE, FL – A new report released today in conjunction with the first-ever Florida Expanded Learning and Afterschool Stakeholder Summit, highlights the strategies that made afterschool and summer learning in Florida effective at improving student success. Based on research and on-the-ground experience, the report outlines the key program elements the state education and afterschool leaders promote in the hundreds of 21st Century Community Learning Centers across the state. The report, entitled “Inspired Programming Driving Student Success: A Look at Florida’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers,” was released by the Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project.

“This program has made an incredible difference for students in Florida, and that was not by accident,” says Joe Davis, a former Bureau Chief in the Florida Department of Education and the current Chief Operating Officer of the Florida Afterschool Network and one of the report’s authors. “The outcomes we have seen for our students are impressive, and the time we utilized after the school day was the key to our success. We wanted to share what we’ve learned so that more communities – both in Florida and throughout the country – could reap the benefits of effective afterschool programs and strong school-community partnerships.”

21st Century Community Learning Center programs provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. Florida’s 21st Century Community Learning Center program serves 80,000 young people and their families across hundreds of sites. Data from Learning Points Associates, a national research organization, shows improvement and the continuing success of Florida’s programs across the state, for example in three critical areas: attendance, behavior and course work:

- **78 percent** of regularly participating 21st Century Community Learning Center students statewide either **maintained or showed growth in math** and **79 percent maintained or showed growth in reading**, as determined by report card grades.
- **75 percent** of Florida’s 21st Century Community Learning Center students demonstrated **improvement in submitting homework on time**—a crucial skill needed for academic success in the regular school day.

- **80 percent** of students demonstrated an **increase in class participation**.

The report points to three essential components that afterschool and summer programs need to have in order to advance student achievement: **inspired programming, well-structured and diverse program offerings and a results-oriented focus**. With inspired programming, there is a major emphasis on providing students with fun, hands-on, engaged learning experiences that are tied to the regular school day. Florida's 21st Century Community Learning Centers are among the most well-structured and programmatically diverse out-of-school programs for students attending low-income, Title I, school-wide program-eligible schools. Every 21st Century Community Learning Center program in Florida must offer services for 36 weeks and a minimum of twelve hours per week. And finally, Florida's results-oriented focus enhances accountability and data-driven best practices, using extensive data tracking and monitoring procedures.

This new report follows a recent research study by Professors Joseph Durlak and Roger Weissberg that clearly demonstrates that high quality afterschool programs can help improve student attendance, behavior and course work – all critical elements to helping more of our young people keep on track to high school graduation. Educators and expanded learning, afterschool and summer programs across Florida can use the ideas included in “Inspired Programming Driving Student Success” to more effectively leverage the time beyond school to accelerate student success.

The report is co-authored by Joe Davis, Lani Lingo, Director of 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and Shelah Woodruff, Program Specialist, both from the Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Family and Community Outreach. It is being released in conjunction with the first-ever Florida Afterschool Stakeholder Summit, which is bringing together representatives from the Florida higher-education community, school board members, superintendents and educators, as well as educational policy and decision-makers from throughout the state. This report is one of more than 40 in an upcoming national Compendium on the cutting edge opportunities and potential of expanded learning opportunities and the importance of afterschool and summer programs, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

To download “Inspired Programming Driving Student Success: A Look at Florida's 21st Century Community Learning Centers,” visit http://www.expandinglearning.org/docs/davis_lingo_woodruff.pdf.

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The Expanded Learning and Afterschool Project is a 50 state initiative dedicated to helping schools and communities leverage the time beyond school to accelerate student achievement by sharing research and promising practices. The Project is led by a coalition of funders including the C.S. Mott Foundation, Noyce Foundation, David & Lucile Packard Foundation and Open Society Foundations. Visit: Expandinglearning.org.