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MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Joe Davis

DATE: March 20, 2008

SUBJECT: TWELVE AFTERSCHOOL HOURS FOR 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has recently received questions concerning the requirements that all 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) operate for a minimum of 12 hours afterschool. This requirement has been established based upon careful reviews of the U.S. Department of Education's **Non-Regulatory Guidance**, national evaluation studies, state evaluation reports, and state data analysis. The results of these documents indicate that 12 hours Afterschool programming has a greater likelihood of academic and personal gains among participating students.

The U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance (Section F-11) indicates, while that statute does not mention specific hours of operation, the *"majority of community learning centers funded directly by the Department are open at least 15 hours per week. Research suggests that more time spent in engaged and sustained learning activities yields greater benefits. To ensure that children have ample extended learning time, the Department believes that, based on our analyses of 21st CCLC and other afterschool program evaluation data, centers should be open three hours a day and at least four days a week. To best serve the children of working families, centers should consider establishing consistent and dependable hours of operation. States may offer guidelines for specific hours centers must operate."*

The FDOE has interpreted this guidance to mean that 21st CCLC centers should provide services in a manner that would maximize opportunities for **sustained learning activities** for all enrolled students. Because we acknowledge the importance of before school programming, in addition to

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the sustained learning activities of afterschool programming, the FDOE encourages programs to consider adding before school programming only after achieving 12 hours of sustained afterschool operation.

The requirement that there be a minimum of four days of Afterschool service and the decision to NOT include language requiring three hours per day service allows programs the flexibility to operate five days per week (approximately 2.5 hours per day). Programs also have the ability to offer longer hours some days (e.g., early release days) and shorter hours other days.

The FDOE agrees that before school programs have added benefits to regularly participating students. However, past data collected from 21st CCLC programs across Florida indicates there are generally significantly fewer students attending before school programs than what was originally proposed in the program application to the FDOE.

Any agencies that wish to retain before school hours as part of the 12 hour requirement must (1) demonstrate that the before school component had sufficient numbers of regularly participating students, (2) demonstrate substantial and positive impact of the before school component on students attending the before school activities, (3) demonstrate that efforts have been made to recruit ALL students from the Afterschool component into the before school component, and (4) demonstrate that 21st CCLC is not supplanting the requirement of having adult supervision for students prior to school.

Please note that the 12-hour requirement is for student impact hours and must be provided so that ALL students in the program will receive 12 full hours of programming.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Lani Lingo at 850-245-0852 or via e-mail lani.lingo@fldoe.org.

JD/ll