

## Family Friendly Schools Act

Throughout the United States, school schedules make life harder for working parents. According to research by the Center for American Progress, schools are shut down for an average of 29 days throughout the school year. Moreover, the vast majority of schools close at or around 3 pm, two hours short of the standard full-time work day. Summers present an additional challenge, with 3 in 4 parents reporting at least some difficulty finding child care during the summers.

This misalignment creates a significant strain on working parents and guardians, particularly mothers. While the mismatch affects all working families, it has a disproportionate impact on Black, Latino, and low-income parents, who are more likely to have unpredictable or inflexible work schedules. Schools are closed for two weeks longer than the typical American with paid leave has in paid holidays and vacation. Further, 39 percent of all workers, and 80 percent of low-wage workers, lack access to any paid vacation time. Research shows one million women with elementary school-aged children work less than full-time because of their caregiving responsibilities, costing the United States economy \$55 billion in lost productivity each year. In nearly 60 percent of families, lack of access to summer child care means that at least one parent plans to make a job change that will result in reduced income.

Simply put, aligning school and work schedules is an economic growth and child development strategy. It is time to modernize the school schedule—without requiring teachers to work additional hours—to better meet the needs of students and families.

**The *Family Friendly Schools Act* would create 500 “Family Friendly Schools” that align the school day with the work day to better support working families, and disseminate the lessons learned from these model schools to communities throughout the nation. It would also provide a much needed funding increase for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers to expand access to summer learning opportunities.**

### Family Friendly Schools

Awards five-year grants of up to \$5 million total to school districts to transform elementary schools serving a high number of low-income families into Family Friendly Schools that:

- Collaborate with community partners to develop high-quality, culturally relevant, linguistically accessible, developmentally appropriate academic, athletic, or enrichment opportunities for students from at least 8 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday throughout the school year, with no closures except for Federal holidays, weekends, and emergencies;
- Do not close for parent-teacher conferences, professional development, or any other reason without offering full-day enrichment activities free of charge for students;
- Do not increase the amount of time teachers and staff have to work unless they volunteer additional hours, and are compensated fairly for the additional hours; and
- Develop and implement evidence-based policies and practices for parent and family engagement to support working families and help better align school and work schedules.

At the end of the five-year grant period, the Department of Education will publish and disseminate a report on lessons learned from the pilot schools, including:

- Approaches taken by Family Friends Schools to align school and work schedules;
- Survey results on parent, teacher, student, school administrator, and community organization satisfaction with Family Friendly Schools;
- Changes in parental employment rates, student performance, and teacher retention at each Family Friendly School; and
- Best practices and recommendations for aligning school and work schedules, aligning school schedules and calendars among schools and school districts, and engaging parents and families.

### Family Friendly Summers

Authorizes an additional \$1.3 billion annually for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers to allow up to 1.8 million more children to access summer programming.