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Media Release

Governor Schwarzenegger Signs Senate Bill 798 (DeSaulnier) Making Funding Available for Summer- Learning Programs

Legislation will provide much- needed resources for summer- learning programs for low- income children throughout California

Oakland, CA: On September 29, 2010, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Senate Bill 798 (DeSaulnier). Authored by California Senator Mark DeSaulnier and sponsored by Partnership for Children and Youth, SB 798 will provide much-needed funding to summer learning programs for low-income children throughout California. The source of the newly established summer-program funding stream is California's federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) dollars. Senate Bill 798 will help to optimize California's distribution of 21st CCLC dollars by redirecting a currently underutilized portion of the federal funds for use targeted to summer learning and enrichment programs.

The Need for Summer- Learning Programs in California and Nationwide

All children need summer learning opportunities in order to stay on course academically. Research is very clear about the negative impacts that occur when children lack learning opportunities during the months when they are not in school. This phenomenon—called Summer Learning Loss or Summer Slide—disproportionately affects low-income children and is also cumulative over time. Some researchers attribute as much as 2/3 of the achievement gap to a lack of summer learning opportunities.

In addition, research also shows that children gain weight more rapidly in the summer if they don't have access to organized recreational or physical-activity programs.

President Barack Obama, interviewed earlier this week, on September 27, for NBC's Education Nation broadcast, stressed that American students are in school about one month less than in most other advanced countries, "and that month makes a difference. It means that kids are losing a lot of what they learned during the school year during the summer. It is especially severe for poorer kids who may not be seeing as many books in their house during the summers, and aren't getting supplemental educational activities." He said that providing those activities during summer would cost money, but that it would be "money well spent" and "a good idea for reform."

Senate Bill 798 Provides Crucial Funding for Summer- Learning Programs

Senate Bill 798 will provide much-needed resources for summer-learning programs to low-income children through California's federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program (21st CCLC) dollars.

"In these economic times, it is especially difficult to obtain additional funding for education," said Sen. DeSaulnier. "As President Obama this week discussed the need to lengthen the school year, Americans are becoming more aware of the importance of summer learning. SB 798 will help assure that needed summer-learning funds are available."

The 21st CCLC program supports before school, after school and summer programs for children attending schools in low-income communities. In California, we currently dedicate half this funding to after-school programs for elementary and middle school students, and half the funding to after-school programs for high school students. However, in recent years the number of high schools seeking new funding has been decreasing while the number of elementary and middle schools seeking funding continues to be very high.

SB 798 optimizes California's use of 21st CCLC dollars by redirecting 15% of the funding currently dedicated to high school programs and dedicates it instead to summer-learning programs in fiscal years when the state's appropriation exceeds the 2008-09 benchmark. Recently the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved a \$100 million increase for the 21st CCLC program, which would allow summer program funding in California to expand under SB 798.

"This is an important step in getting to the level of resources California needs to provide enriching summer programming for low-income children across the state," says Jennifer Peck, executive director of the Partnership for Children and Youth. Ms. Peck initiated and sits on the California State Legislative Task Force on Summer and Intersession Enrichment, which is chaired by Senator DeSaulnier.

For More Information

For more information about Senate Bill 798, summer learning and enrichment, and the State Legislative Task Force on Summer and Intersession Enrichment, please visit the Partnership for Children and Youth website at www.partnerforchildren.org, or contact Jennifer Peck at 510.830.4200 x1606 or jennifer@partnerforchildren.org.

About Senator Mark DeSaulnier

Senator Mark DeSaulnier (DE-SOWN-YEA) was elected to the Senate in November 2008, representing the 7th Senate District, which includes most of Contra Costa County. Sen. DeSaulnier chairs the State Legislative Task Force on Summer and Intersession Enrichment. The Task Force seeks to build awareness about the gap in structured learning and enrichment opportunities for low-income children in the summertime, and will produce a set of recommendations in November 2010 to the Governor and the Legislature on what the state's role should be in addressing the summer gap. The National Summer Learning Association recently named Sen. DeSaulnier one of its 2010 Champions of Summer Learning for his leadership on summer learning issues in California, including his work on the Task Force.

About Partnership for Children and Youth

Partnership for Children and Youth (formerly the Bay Area Partnership) was formed in 1997 by government, philanthropy and business leaders who were concerned about the persistent poverty and ongoing difficulties faced by children and youth in specific Bay Area communities. The Partnership was created to connect schools and their community partners in these underserved communities with available public and private resources, and to improve the effectiveness of funding streams serving poor children. The primary clients of our work are those institutions that provide critical support services to poor children – including schools and school districts, community-based agencies and local governments. The ultimate beneficiaries are the children and their families. For more information, please visit www.partnerforchildren.org.