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Private School Students and 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs

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The state Title I office is often asked the question as to whether or not students attending private schools can participate in 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) Programs operating within their public school district. This question is addressed in the US Department of Education's guidance on 21st CCLC.

F-16. Are private school students eligible to participate in 21st CCLC activities carried out in public schools?

Yes. Students, teachers, and other educational personnel are eligible to participate in 21st CCLC programs on an equitable basis. A public school or other public or private organization that is awarded a grant must provide equitable services to private school students, and their families. In designing a program that meets this requirement, grantees must provide comparable opportunities for the participation of both public- and private-school students in the area served by the grant. Grantees must consult with private school officials during the design and development of the 21st CCLC program on issues such as how the children's needs will be identified and what services will be offered. Services and benefits provided to private school students must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

Students are determined eligible for 21st CCLC if their school is eligible for Title I schoolwide status or has a poverty percentage of 40% or greater based upon free and reduced lunch. To summarize, any grantee of a 21st CCLC grant must offer its services to private school students residing in public school attendance areas where the public school eligible for Title I schoolwide status or has a poverty percentage of 40% or greater based upon free and reduced lunch.