



Supporting Schools and their Partners  
So **Every Child** Can Thrive.

## 2016 ASES Survey Results – Year Two

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### Background:

California's After School Education and Safety (ASES) program supports over 4,000 elementary and middle schools serving more than 400,000 students daily. These programs deliver meaningful academic and enrichment activities, keep kids safely off the streets during the prime time for crime involving children, and offer essential child care for working parents. They also provide a crucial infrastructure for STEM, summer learning, social-emotional skill development, physical activity, and leverage hundreds of millions of federal dollars for nutritious snacks and meals for California's most underserved schools. These programs operate at the highest poverty schools—those with an average of over 80% of students participating in the free and reduced-price meals program.

While the costs, demands, and expectations of ASES programs have consistently increased, the funding has remained stagnant for a decade. Since 2007, the California Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased 19%, the state minimum wage has increased 33%, and state law now requires employers to offer 3 days of annual sick leave. Over the same time period, the ASES daily rate of \$7.50 per student has not increased and there is no legal authority for a cost of living adjustment. Under the current financing structure extremely conservative site-level budget projections, including the local match, demonstrate that programs during the current year will have to operate with annual deficits of \$10,000 - 15,000 or more per program site.

Within the expanded learning field, the [California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance \(CA3\)](#) - a coalition of providers and advocates - has advocated that the flat daily rate is the most critical policy issue threatening the continued viability of these programs. This challenge is undermining the past decade of nationally recognized efforts and a \$5 billion state investment to build a system of high-quality expanded learning programs to serve low-income youth and families, and close the opportunity gap.<sup>1</sup>

While CA3 members represent the largest providers in the state, there was a need to substantiate our evidence on the impact of the daily rate from a wider and more diverse sample of the field. So in 2015, the Partnership for Children & Youth conducted a [short online survey](#) to expanded learning providers in California. The results confirmed our anecdotal evidence and practical knowledge about the impact of rising programmatic costs. ASES programs overwhelmingly reported a range of negative impacts that are compromising the quality of, and access to, these learning opportunities and services.

### Survey:

In February 2016, the Partnership for Children & Youth, with the help of partner organizations and regional networks, distributed a second online survey to expanded learning programs across the state to gain further insight on the impact of the current ASES daily rate coupled with increasing cost pressures, including the second minimum wage increase that went into effect January 1, 2016.<sup>2</sup> **676 respondents** completed the survey, 95% (631) of whose programs receive ASES funding. 72% (455) of ASES-funded respondents took the additional time to fill out descriptive responses on the specific negative impacts in their community (see page 5-8). The survey respondents represented **more than 250** school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools reflecting the diversity of the state; urban to rural

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<sup>1</sup> The Afterschool Alliance gave California its top ranking in the 2014 edition of its "[America After 3PM](#)" survey, singling the state out for both strong participation among students and high satisfaction with after school programs among parents.

<sup>2</sup> [Informal survey](#) conducted with limited population, limited response window, and response bias.

districts, multi-district to single school programs, and programs operated both by school districts and community-based organizations.

**Results:**

- 92% of ASES-funded respondents surveyed have been negatively impacted by the ASES funding formula of \$7.50 per day per student.
  - “Most teenage babysitters are requesting \$10 - \$15 per hour to care for a child. There is no expectation that the babysitter will improve the child's academic performance, school attendance, character, or physical fitness level. Yet, ASES grantees continue to receive only \$7.50 a day for three hours of care which must achieve these results.”

*Program Closures*

- 29% of ASES-funded respondents are very likely to close in the next 2 years without an increase to the ASES daily rate.
  - “We are running a deficit this year of approximately \$40,000 from the ASES sites.”
  - Respondents indicated programs in these districts were likely to close within the next 2 years: San Diego USD, Los Angeles USD, Long Beach USD, Downey USD, Glenn County COE, Baldwin Park USD, and Sacramento City USD.

*Reduced Access*

- 35% of ASES-funded respondents are now serving fewer kids: *a 46% increase from last year's survey.*<sup>3</sup>
  - “The demand for after school programs is so high and because our number of students we serve has been reduced , we got a lot of parent phone calls about how much they need the program and we don't have the ability to enroll them.”
- 64% of ASES-funded respondents cite an inability to meet the demand of students on waiting lists.
  - “We currently serve approximately 3,200 students daily with waiting lists totaling approximately 1,000+.”

*Workforce cuts*

- 64% of ASES-funded respondents have reduced staff hours: *a 28% increase from last year's survey.*<sup>4</sup>
  - “The largest impact on our programs has been a decrease in staff which has the potential for safety concerns within our programs. We do not have any staff members that are not part of the mandated 20:1 adult to student ratio. If an emergency happens on site, we do not have any staff to help facilitate.”
- 37% of ASES-funded respondents have reduced staff benefits.
  - “Our Site Coordinators used to be full time, benefited staff, but now we've had to reduce their hours and not offer health benefits.”

*Reduced Quality*

- More than 86% of ASES-funded respondents find it more difficult to attract and retain qualified staff (unable to offer competitive pay).
  - “We have had a 70 percent staff turnover rate since September, which causes inconsistency with the students, and makes it difficult to have quality staff members.”

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<sup>3</sup> The percentage of respondents reporting serving fewer students increased from 24% in our prior survey to 35% in this survey. This 11 percentage-point increase reflects a 46% increase from the prior survey (11/24=46%).

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of respondents reporting reducing staff hours increased from 50% in our prior survey to 64% in this survey. This 14 percentage-point increase reflects a 28% increase from the priory survey (14/50=28%).

- 74% of ASES-funded respondents have reduced the number of enrichment activities offered to children.
  - “We have not been able to take our students on a single field trip in over 4 years.”
- 69% of ASES-funded respondents cite a reduction in professional development.
  - “Reducing hours has made it impossible to provide necessary quality staff development in a time of changing standards and need for staff training to support California State Standards and programs like Dual Immersion.”
- 64% of ASES-funded respondents also reported a negative impact on the ability to provide quality academic supports to students.

*Funding barriers*

- Only 7.5% (45) of respondents reported that their ASES program received Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funding in the 2015-16.
- Of those that did receive LCFF funding, 14 respondents received the funding for increasing or improving ASES programs, 7 respondents received funding for sustaining current programs, and only 4 respondents (less than 1% of all ASES programs surveyed) received funding designated for staff salaries.

**Analysis:**

Our 2016 survey results further validate what we learned last year – the current ASES funding level is negatively impacting the students and families that depend on these programs each school day. With nearly 100 more respondents in 2016, the percentage of respondents reporting negative impacts rose (2015: 89%, 2016: 92%). More alarmingly, in only one year respondents are reporting a greater number of negative impacts illustrating that the strain on providers is quickly worsening without action by the State. The number of respondents reporting a reduction in staff hours is up 28%, and reported reductions in students served are up 46%. Other negative impacts surveyed remained constant or grew slightly from last year.<sup>5</sup>

Nearly two-thirds of ASES-funded programs surveyed offer students fewer enrichment activities and reduced quality of academic supports. What is often overlooked beyond the safety and homework assistance elements of these programs, is that for many low-income youth, ASES programs may be their only access to mentorship, music, clubs, sports, art, field trips, STEM learning, and more. These activities are a given for most middle and upper income families, but have often been cut out of the traditional school day. For families unable to pay for these opportunities, after school programs are a valuable and often irreplaceable resource for educational equity.

Additionally, nearly two-thirds of respondents have longer waiting lists and more than a third of respondents are now serving fewer students. This is on top of an already significant unmet need for ASES programs that will be further exacerbated: currently 2,100 low-income schools eligible for ASES funding do not receive it due to funding limits.

Research has shown that on average it costs at least \$21-24 per day/per student to operate a high-quality after school program.<sup>6</sup> With 86% of ASES-funded programs struggling to attract, recruit, and retain quality staff as a direct consequence of the stagnant ASES daily rate, newly enacted quality standards legislation is challenging to implement.<sup>7</sup> Research shows that the quality of staff working directly with students is one of the most important factors in the program’s ability to positively impact student

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<sup>5</sup> Only one negative impact surveyed decreased: Reduced enrichment dropped 1% in 2016. Six negative impacts were already above 60% and so had less room for significant change other than full closure of a program.

<sup>6</sup> [The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs](#), by The Wallace Foundation, estimates the cost of high-quality after school and summer programs.

<sup>7</sup> The California Department of Education After School Division approved [Quality Standards](#) for Expanded Learning Programs.

outcomes. Common sense and research has also shown that low-quality programs do not have positive educational and wellness impacts associated with these services. By not resolving the most basic issue of adequately financing the ASES program in order to hire and keep capable staff, the State is watering down its investment to the point of futility.

The extremely high turnover rate of staff has a downward spiraling effect on program sustainability. With high turnover, programs spend more of their limited budget on the personnel costs of recruitment and training new hires. If they cannot fill the staff vacancies, they cannot keep their student to staff ratio at or below the state limit of 20:1, and are forced to reduce the number of students that can attend the program. If the program serves fewer students, the ASES grant for that program will be reduced.

This survey demonstrates that workforce needs continue to be the most critical issue for the expanded learning field. Not only does the funding crisis negatively affect staff development, but it also threatens the robust workforce of young and diverse professionals committed to education and community-building – an enormous asset in our field.<sup>8</sup> Many young and talented workers in our publicly-funded programs learn skills and become inspired to join the teaching profession, which is currently experiencing its own recruitment shortfalls.<sup>9</sup> California's ASES infrastructure provides a critical supply of new and diverse teachers of the future – a pathway that is directly threatened.

Increasing wages and benefits – a policy the field wholeheartedly supports - was intended to close equity gaps but the survey has demonstrated once again that there are unintended consequences including a reduction of hours and benefits. Both the ASES program and increases to the minimum wage are responsibilities of the State Legislature and Administration – policymakers should ensure that the same populations these policies seek to support do not shoulder the inadvertent consequences.

The problem has clearly been identified and the survey confirms that now is the time to act – nearly 30% of ASES-funded respondents reported that they are very likely to close their programs without an increase to the ASES daily rate in the next two years. Additionally, two of the State's largest providers which serve over a quarter of all students in the ASES program have stated that their projected deficits over the next year or two will be completely unsustainable. If the State waits to take action until programs close, kids and families will lose services, jobs will be lost, and it will be far more expensive and difficult to restart programs. In the near term, we expect to see ASES programs continue to make cuts to quality and access in order to keep their doors open.

With less than 8% of respondents reporting that their ASES program received any Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) funding in 2015-16, and less than 1% receiving funding designated for staff salaries, it is apparent that individual school districts alone will not alleviate the debilitating and increasing cost pressures on programs. The state has a financial responsibility to adequately fund these programs given that ASES is one of the few state categorical programs that was not eliminated to establish and fund LCFF and as these programs are financially strained in response to state policies.

The extremely high and consistent response rate to our survey clearly demonstrates the **urgency** of this issue across all regions and levels of programs, and most importantly, the need for immediate action. CA3 and partners across the field are supporting both legislative and budget efforts to increase the daily rate to \$8.50.

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<sup>8</sup> In 2012, a statewide survey of the after school field found approximately 70% was under 29 and identified as an ethnicity other than white.

<sup>9</sup> [\*Addressing California's Emerging Teacher Shortage: An Analysis of Sources and Solutions.\*](#) By Linda Darling-Hammond, Roberta Furger, Patrick M. Shields, and Leib Satcher at the Learning Policy Institute.

## Appendix – The Real Story of ASES programs struggling

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As stated above, 455 respondents took the time to fill in individualized responses about how their programs and community have been impacted by the stagnant ASES rate: 58% cite challenges with staff wages, salaries, or pay; 29% cite reduced field trips; 25% cite reduced enrichment activities; and 24% cite student wait lists.

Please see respondent excerpts below to gain a deeper sense of what we heard from the field. While the aggregated data supports a compelling call to action, the comments we received tell the real story of the daily tenacity and struggles of committed educators and community-based organizations across the state.

### Reduced Quality

- **Safety:** “The largest impact on our programs has been a decrease in staff which has the potential for safety concerns within our programs. We do not have any staff members that are not part of the mandated 20:1 adult to student ratio. If an emergency happens on site, we do not have any staff to help facilitate.”
- **Common Core:** “Reducing hours has made it impossible to provide necessary quality staff development in a time of changing standards and need for staff training to support California State Standards and programs like Dual Immersion.”
- **Supplies:** “I will have to cut a staff member in order to replenish daily supplies for students.”
- **Supplies:** “We don't have basic office supplies, such as, carts for staff to carry supplies, pencils, paper etc.”
- **Field trips:** “We have not been able to take our students on a single field trip in over 4 years.”
- **Prep time:** “Staff is paid only for their time directly with the students causing us to take time from students to prepare for the next day.”
- **Enrichment and safety:** “The inability to contract teachers for enrichment activities (Music, Dance, Art, etc.) and to purchase supplies for existing enrichment classes makes our programs less appealing than walking home and being alone there. Lack of funding absolutely compromises the safety of children in our area.”
- **Substitutes:** “Since the minimum wage has gone up it's been very difficult to keep a staff member for a long period of time. . . getting subs to come in impacts the students' behavior a lot and it makes it hard for the student to focus and complete task. Not only does it make it hard for the site director but other staff as well because every day is a different sub and every day you need to switch up the normal routine.”
- **Professional development:** “We have no budget to get the professional development that we desperately need.”
- **Multiple grades:** “We are not able to offer diverse enrichment because each staff person is serving 20 students of multiple grade levels. Enrichment must accommodate 3 to 4 grade levels.”
- **Multiple grades:** “A lot of the kids that teachers have specified as being behind come to our program. When we only have one or two staff for thirty kids, spanning ages 5-13, we can't help all the kids that need help.”

**Staffing challenges**

- **Not fully staffed:** “We have not been able to maintain a fully staffed program for almost 3 years now.”
- **Rural:** “The salary we offer makes it very difficult to get quality people willing to drive out to our rural school for three hours a day.”
- **Career pipeline:** “Other companies offering \$10+ for full time with less responsibility is much more attractive to the new generation of young people entering the workforce.”
- **Career pipeline:** “[Staff] no longer view this as a career therefore they do not invest themselves in the lives of the students.”
- **Limited experience:** “We are forced to hire more staff who are applying for their first job or are limited in school. We are constantly catching people up to train them to meet the expectations put forth per our contracts.”
- **Retention rate:** “Our retention rate for staff has dropped from 85% to 60% over the last 4 years, and the cost of replacing staff only puts further constraints on our budgets. As a result, we operate understaffed a lot of the time, which means less dynamic programming for our students and potentially unsafe environments.”
- **Turnover:** “We have had a 70 percent staff turnover rate since September, which causes inconsistency with the students, and makes it difficult to have quality staff members.”
- **Turnover:** “Higher turnover means students lose trust with staff, resources are wasted recruiting and training up so many new hires again and it's hard to build a cohesive team.”
- **Substitutes:** “Also, entry-level vacancies are 5% higher in January, 2016 than January, 2015, and the applicant pool for substitute positions has decreased by nearly 40% over that time period.”

**Increased demands**

- **More required hours:** “The stagnancy of the daily rate does not account for the numerous weeks that we have throughout the school year that in which there are entire weeks that have minimum days (due to testing or parent conferences) in which staff have to work more hours in those weeks.”
- **More required hours:** “A particular obstacle that has arisen is that schools are taking more liberties with shortened and minimum days. By the language of the grant, we must be open from the school's closing until 6 PM, in many cases this is nearly double the amount of hours typically worked by frontline staff and appropriate planning time.”
- **Similar to full-time jobs:** “These are really full-time jobs, i.e. , 50% quality supervision and leadership during program hours, and 50% program planning, working with school day staff, completing attendance documents and supper requirements, discussing student issues with parents, evaluation of staff, meeting and planning with district leadership, parent orientation and family events, and participation in the required program improvement process.”
- **Not babysitters:** “Most teenage babysitters are requesting \$10 - \$15 per hour to care for a child. There is no expectation that the babysitter will improve the child's academic performance, school attendance, character, or physical fitness level. Yet, ASES grantees continue to receive only \$7.50 a day for three hours of care which must achieve these results.”
- **Staff requirements:** “Staff need to have good classroom management, engaging lesson plans, adhere to LIAS [Learning in Afterschool and Summer] Principles and Quality Standards, and participate in ongoing professional development in order to provide a quality program. The pay is not commensurate with the amount of time and effort required, and we are not able to offer more competitive pay in order to attract quality staff. Excessive staff turnovers have robbed students of the stability needed after school in order to create a safe and nurturing environment.”

**Reduced access**

- **Transportation:** “No longer providing transportation home for students in our programs.”
- **Wait list:** “We currently serve approximately 3,200 students daily with waiting lists totaling approximately 1,000+.”
- **Wait list:** “Our waiting list continues to grow and currently have over 250 students waiting for a program that can only accommodate 84 students.”
- **Cut students:** “We have had to cut back on the amount of students we allow in the program causing a 100 student wait list to build.”
- **Cut students:** “The demand for after school programs is so high and because our number of students we serve has been reduced , we got a lot of parent phone calls about how much they need the program and we don’t have the ability to enroll them.”
- **Stress on parents:** “We have almost as many students on the waiting list for our program as we have students in the program. For our school, this presents a problem, as many parents are attending school, working multiple or minimal wage jobs to make ends meet and can't afford outside child care, or are single working parents.”

**Funding limitations**

- **Cost of staff:** “Last year we were hiring staff with AA/AS Degrees at \$9.00/hr. and staff with BA/BS degrees at \$10/hr. Retention rate of staff is 6 mos. to a year. We just increased the \$9.00/hr. staff to \$10.00 due to minimum wage and it increased our budget by approximately \$200,000. We were not able to increase the staff with the 4 year degrees. Our school district requires that ASES staff have a minimum of an AA/AS degree, completion of 48 units or that they pass the Para Educator test at the district. It's a lot to ask of a minimum wage job. “
- **Personal funding:** “I spend \$2,000-\$3,000 of my own money each year to help provide enriching and exciting activities for the students.”
- **Personal debt:** “I myself am in debt in order to keep my position . . . as a lot of employment in my field would be during the hours I currently work. I'm having to seek out a second job not in my field so that I can continue to work with the youth I'm so passionate about serving. I'm currently a site director and would make more money working at Target or Walmart at a manager level. This is crazy to me considering the training we need to provide quality versus what it takes to be a retail manager.”
- **Volunteers:** “We are currently running our program on the minimum number of employees and relying on volunteers to help fill the gaps.”
- **Deficit:** “We are running a deficit this year of approximately \$40,000 from the ASES sites.”
- **Loans:** “We would have gone out of business by now if we had not secured loans to help us survive the financial burden we now face. There are too many kids, families, and employees to let this happen, but we have had to invest personal funds (checking, savings) to make payroll and keep our doors open.”
- **Closing doors:** “If we do not receive additional funding (LCAP, ASES, parent fees, etc) we will be unable to maintain compliance with Ed Code that governs our grant (1:20 ratio, minimum education for staff) and will be force[d] to close our 22 ASES program sites.”
- **Relinquishing sites:** “Some of our non-profit partner organizations/service providers are unable to financially sustain their programs hence, are in the process of relinquishing sites.”
- **Closing in 2018:** “As of February, we are hearing that our program will no longer exist after 2018.”

- **Recession cuts:** “We never celebrated the “stable funding” for ASES, while our colleagues in General Education suffered because of the state's economic downturn. Rather, we supported our school sites and district partners as best we could by continuing our work on behalf of at-risk students. Now that funding for education is on the upturn, we are happy that our District has been able to grant long-deserved salary increases. Unfortunately, though our ASES employees received the same much deserved salary increases, the ASES funding has not increased to cover that additional expenditure. This has pushed our ASES Program, and ASES in many other districts to the brink of financial devastation. We are now like a starving child...our body is consuming its own muscle to stay alive. We cannot thrive, nor can we live for much longer, without an increase in the ASES daily funding rate. We will literally shrink away until nothing is left.”

**Reduced coordination with school day**

- **Principals:** “Our principals are upset that we can’t over serve even because parents now have to choose what school they attend depending on open enrollment for their after school program.”
- **Weak alignment:** “Cuts in staff hours (particularly to the Site Coordinator position) has had a negative affect on our ability to maintain strong alignment w/the school day (e.g., impacting opportunities to meet w/principals & school day teachers, to participate in data reflection meetings, etc.)”
- **Weak alignment:** “We would like to send staff members into the regular day classrooms to support increased alignment, however, we are unable to pay for the additional hours for them to do this.”

**Negative spiral**

- **Grant reduced:** “We have a program that couldn't find staff so the number of students served was cut, resulting in a grant award reduction.”
- **Not fully staffed:** “Due to the inability attract and retain quality staff we have not been fully staffed once this year. Because of this, we are unable to meet the demand of students on our waiting lists and are below our target attendance which may threaten our grant. We have enough students on our waiting list to fully meet our attendance requirements but without more staff - we literally cannot fit any more students into rooms.”
- **Cycle:** “No money to pay staff= less students. Less students= less attendance. Less attendance= less money. Less money= less staff and the cycle continues. We need to stop this cycle before we are down to nothing.”