



February 3, 2017

California Legislative Women's Caucus

Dear Chair Garcia and Vice Chair Leyva:

We are writing to you on behalf of the California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance, which is comprised of after-school and summer program providers, technical assistance providers, and advocacy organizations from across the state of California. We encourage the Legislative Women's Caucus to make sustaining California's after-school programs one of its top priorities, through both the budget and legislation—in particular through a \$99.3 million budget augmentation for the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program in 2017-18 to raise per student daily funding from \$7.50 to \$9 and tying future increases in the ASES program to increases in the minimum wage, consistent with SB 78 (Leyva).

After-school programs are essential

ASES supports over 400,000 of California's highest-need students daily at over 4,000 low-income elementary and middle schools. These after-school programs provide underserved students with meaningful academic and enrichment activities (3 hours a day/5 days a week), keep kids safely off the streets during the prime time for crime by and against children, and offer essential child care for working parents. They also leverage substantial private and federal funding, including approximately \$100 million annually in federally-funded after-school meals that rely on the ASES infrastructure.

ASES programs struggle due to flat funding despite minimum wage increase

However, despite increases in the minimum wage (47%) and cost of living (21%), the statutory ADA rate for ASES of \$7.50 per child per day has not been raised since 2006. As a result, ASES programs have been stretched to their breaking point. Most programs surveyed in 2016 already had to reduce enrichment activities; academic supports, staff hours and/or training, and 29% are very likely to close soon without an increase in the daily rate.¹

ASES is a state responsibility

ASES is one of the few remaining state categorical programs, and the State has the responsibility to sustain it, especially because the State itself enacted increases in the minimum wage that create the cost pressures negatively impacting ASES programs. The Local Control Funding Formula is not a solution: Few districts invest LCFF dollars in ASES programs, and even those few investments generally don't address increased personnel costs, but rather focus on expanding access and services, which, while a critical need, adds to an already strained infrastructure. Districts are far more inclined to prioritize LCFF funding for programs with district employees, including district-operated categorical programs eliminated under LCFF, than ASES programs that are typically operated by community-based organizations.

Increasing ASES is consistent with other Caucus priorities such as child care

More children receive child care through ASES than through the state's child care subsidy system (400,000 vs. 360,000), including close to four times more school-age children. Sustaining after-school programs should be an essential part of any strategy to provide access to child care for low-income working families.

The Women's Caucus has successfully helped child care address the same cost pressures as after-school providers are facing. Thanks to the Women's Caucus, reimbursement rates for child care are improving, in large part in response to increases in the minimum wage—with a 22% increase overall in the decade since the ASES rate was last increased and further increases promised in the 2016-17 budget deal. We anticipate that the Women's Caucus will continue to prioritize rate increases in the child care subsidy system, particularly in light of promises unfulfilled in the Governor's recent budget proposal.

Extending these increases to after-school programs is a logical next step, and it would complement, not compete with, further child care increases, because child care is funded mainly outside of Proposition 98, the source of after-school funding.

For these reasons, we encourage the Women's Caucus to support a budget increase and SB 78 (Leyva) to keep the doors open after school for students and families who need these programs the most.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Jen Dietrich at jdietrich@partnerforchildren.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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cc: Members of the California Legislative Women's Caucus

¹ Partnership for Children & Youth. (2016). ASES Survey Results – Year 2. Retrieved from <http://partnerforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ASES-Daily-Rate-Survey-Memo-Year-2-Final.pdf>