



The Children's Initiative

March 9, 2022

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol

Assembly Member Philip Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol

Senator John Laird, Chair
Senate Budget Committee, Subcommittee #1
State Capitol

Assembly Member Kevin McCarty, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee, Subcommittee #2
State Capitol

Via email: SBUD.Committee@senate.ca.gov; AsmBudget@asm.ca.gov; BudgetSub2@asm.ca.gov

RE: FY 2022-23 Budget Recommendations for Expanded Learning Opportunities

Dear Honorable Budget Chairs Skinner, Ting, Laird, and McCarty:

For decades, quality afterschool and summer programs have proven their value in providing safe, supportive learning environments and enrichment opportunities that increase school attendance and academic outcomes. We are grateful for California’s historic commitment and investment in expanded learning opportunities that all students deserve. However, as proposed, the state is not on target to adequately fund LEAs to provide these opportunities. To make the best use of state resources and to support equitable access to quality programs, we propose the following recommendations for the FY 2022-23 budget:

Support the proposed \$3.4 billion ongoing increase for the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO-P) Program with key changes:

- **Increase per-pupil funding and prioritize highest-need students and schools** - [Research](#) shows that the quality of the afterschool program matters in order to improve student engagement and academic outcomes. Many LEAs, especially those without current After School Education and Safety (ASES) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs¹, will not be able to deliver programming that meets [state quality standards](#) at the rates currently proposed (\$9.65 - 11.90 per unduplicated pupil). Under the Governor’s proposal, LEAs are required to provide at least three hours of programming each school day (in addition to instructional hours) and 9 hours per day for at least 30 days during the summer/intersession. Research estimates that quality program costs range from \$14.40 to \$40.95 (depending on the region) per student per day². **It is essential for California to prioritize quality programming for students and schools by increasing the ELO-P per pupil funding rate and providing ongoing cost-of-living-adjustments, otherwise, the state is unlikely to yield the desired results from this investment.** Until there is enough funding to provide universal access to quality programs for all students, the state should prioritize students and schools that have the greatest need—California’s low-income students, dual and English language learners, and youth in foster care or experiencing homelessness.
- **Increase minimum grant amounts and provide flexibility in service requirements** - Under the Governor’s budget proposal, nearly 300 LEAs will only receive the minimum grant from ELO-P, \$50,000 a year and will not receive any After School Education and Safety (ASES) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program funding. Yet, these LEAs are still required to offer expanded learning programs to all unduplicated students (TK-6) and serve at least 50% of those students. With \$50,000 only, it is impossible to staff a quality program, especially during the 30 days of summer/intersession when programming must be offered 9 hours a day. California-specific research found that high-quality summer learning programs, at 8 hours a day, cost an average of \$37.15 per student per day, or \$185.77 per student per week, at 5 days a week³. Many rural and small school districts also lack community-based partners to help staff these programs. If these LEAs cannot meet service requirements, they will be penalized by a reduction in funding. **Please increase**

¹ Of the LEAs with 80% or more UPP, 669 LEAs have ASES or 21st CCLC, 956 LEAs with only ELO-P (540 school districts, 416 charters)

² The national [Wallace Foundation Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator](#), updated in 2021, estimates that a school year program focused on academic and enrichment at and run by a school in the Central Valley for a minimum of 15 hours a week, 35 weeks a year, to 84 students, costs between \$14-32 per student per day. A similar program in San Diego, costs between \$17.50-40.95, with higher costs in the summer.

³ Partnership for Children & Youth, [The Cost of Summer](#): An inside look at the operating budgets of high-quality summer learning programs in California, September 2016.

minimum grant amounts for ELO-P and temporarily reduce the percentage of unduplicated students that need to be served or provide flexibility in the number of hours or days of service.

When programs lack the proper funding and time to establish quality programs, students suffer.

That is why we support the Governor's proposal to extend the grace period for access requirements until 2023-24 and additional time to expend funds.

- **Ensure alignment with existing programs and sustainability planning** - The state has directed LEAs and their community partners to blend existing ASES and 21st CCLC programs and braid funding streams with ELO-P to provide a single comprehensive program. However, practitioners and stakeholders have been left out of state planning and implementation conversations. For example, many providers are asking for some flexibility in the required number of hours of summer/intersession from 9 to 6 hours of programming and care. [Research](#) shows that effective summer learning programs can be run in 6 hours a day for 4 to 5 weeks. **We encourage the state to fund AB 2501 (Carrillo) in the FY 2022-23 budget** in order to leverage the experience and data of practitioners and stakeholders to address statewide implementation and sustainability challenges that stand in the way of meeting the Legislature's and the Governor's goals of providing equitable access to quality expanded learning opportunities.
- **Increase accountability** - To ensure equitable access for the students and families who need support most now and in the future, and to protect California's investment, **the state should require the collection of more data to track ELO-P implementation and impact**, including attendance and dosage reported by student group and school, not only by LEA. Current statewide data collection efforts can be strengthened and leveraged for state and local planning, policy, and funding.

Increase rates for After School Education and Safety (ASES) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs

ASES and 21st CCLC programs typically serve 900,000 students (TK-12 grade) each year in high-need communities and serve as the foundation to quickly scale to meet ELO-P service goals. However, the number one challenge for programs is staffing. Many LEAs and community-based providers are not back to pre-pandemic staffing levels and do not have the staff to plan for and serve more students to meet ELO-P requirements. With fixed student-to-staff ratios, programs have no choice but to reduce the number of students served if they do not have enough staff. Programs cannot offer livable or competitive wages to recruit and retain their diverse and qualified workforce with \$10.18 per student, per day in state or federal funding, particularly with rising costs and inflation. Ongoing cost-of-living-adjustments (COLA) are critically needed for all publicly funded programs, especially those that serve students 7th through 12th grade, which are not prioritized to receive ELO-P funding. The Governor's budget proposal includes a COLA for LCFF and many other education categorical programs, but not for ASES or 21st CCLC. **At a minimum, please increase ASES and 21st CCLC rates to \$10.75 per student per day (as the Legislature advocated for last budget cycle) and provide a proportional COLA of 5.33% to ensure students and families can continue to receive the support they count on.** This proposed increase would cost only an additional \$84 million for ASES and \$113 million for 21st CCLC.⁴

⁴ California's FY 2021-22 only provided a daily rate increase for 21st CCLC for 1 year. This number includes a continuance of that increase for FY 22-23 plus a 5.33% COLA and an increased rate to \$10.75 per student per day.

Increase access to afterschool programs for 7th - 12th grade students

Youth ages 12 to 18 need access to afterschool and summer learning and enrichment opportunities that keep them connected to school and on track for college and career. Chronic absence and disengagement are rampant amongst teens who experienced hardship during pandemic school closures. The activities and relationships offered through expanded learning programs are a [proven strategy](#) for increasing school day attendance and graduation rates, reducing risky behaviors, engaging young people, and supporting their social, emotional, and academic well-being. Yet, only 25% of high schools receive any state or federal funding for afterschool programs. All of the funding for ELO-P (growing to \$5 billion by 2025) is prioritized for TK-6 grade students. **We encourage the state to support [AB 2507 \(McCarty\)](#) and prioritize a portion of ELO-P funds in the FY 2022-23 budget in order to support California's students in 7-12th grades.**

Hold expanded learning programs harmless for declines in ADA through 2022

Student attendance in expanded learning programs was not decreasing before the pandemic and many programs had a list of families waiting for a spot to open up. Currently, ADA is lower given the ongoing challenges such as staffing shortage, quarantining, vaccination side effects, and family work situations but it is not directly tied to declining enrollment, and is not predictive of future attendance in expanded learning programs. LEAs have greatly benefited from your action to waive financial penalties for lowered attendance through 2021. However, expanded learning programs need that same relief, at least, through 2022. Additionally, not all LEAs have extended this same privilege to community-based expanded learning providers contracted to fully or partially run their programs. When LEA contracts tie payment to attendance units during this challenging time, some community-based providers suffer significant losses in funding and thus reduce service to students and families. **Please extend the hold harmless provisions for ADA through 2022 and, by extension, ensure their subcontracted community partners are not penalized for not meeting attendance requirements for ASES and 21st CCLC programs.**

Build and retain the expanded learning and future teacher workforce

With the statewide staffing shortage in expanded learning and education in general, there are several opportunities to attract and develop a diverse workforce via expanded learning. [Workforce research](#) finds that 70% of expanded learning staff are people of color, 90% are bilingual in English and Spanish, and 78% live in the communities they serve. The majority of these staff are pursuing careers in teaching, afterschool leadership, education administration, and school counseling. **As the state develops the proposal for the education workforce from high school to college to career, the state should ensure expanded learning programs are part of the pathway.** The state should also provide funding designated for temporary bonuses for staff, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and community partners, to work on the front lines of expanded learning.

Leverage intersections of Universal Transitional Kindergarten and Community Schools

Given the intersections of expanded learning, universal transitional kindergarten, and community schools, the state and local communities have the opportunity to leverage shared planning, technical assistance, and workforce development efforts. **We recommend that the state prioritize funding partnerships for local collaboration to best meet the needs of students and families and to leverage resources.** The state should also coordinate and leverage the Expanded Learning System of Support with the system for community schools so guidance and technical assistance are clear and consistent around the common goals and practices in these initiatives.

We thank you for your consideration of these recommendations to effectively provide expanded learning opportunities that all students deserve today and for years to come. We look forward to discussing and refining these proposals with your office. Please contact Jen Dietrich at (510) 830-4200 x1615 or jdietrich@partnerforchildren.org for any questions.

Sincerely,

California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance (CA3)

A World Fit For Kids!

After-School All-Stars, Los Angeles

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Bay Area Community Resources

Boys and Girls Club, California Alliance

California Afterschool Network

California School-Age Consortium

California Teaching Fellows Foundation

Children Now

Children's Initiative

Council for a Strong America

EduCare

Envisioneers

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

LA Conservation Corps

LA's BEST

Partnership for Children and Youth

ReadyNation

Think Together

YMCA of San Diego County