

EXPANDED LEARNING
OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM:
**Preliminary Provider
Data Collection
Findings &
Recommendations**

September 2023



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Methodology

The Partnership for Children and Youth (PCY) collaborated with the Sperling Center for Research and Innovation (SCRI) to conduct a set of interviews to better understand how Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) grantees are using their funding for positive program impact via data collection practices and continuous quality improvement. SCRI interviewed leadership staff from six ELO-P programs across California (one interviewee asked to be withheld from the chart/tables as they do not provide direct programming but instead technical support). While this is a small sample (see Appendix on page 12), these programs serve thousands of students, represent a diverse set of programs, and can provide early insight into how programs are approaching data collection. Staff who were interviewed held roles such as Director of Expanded Learning, CEO, Superintendent, and Site Principal. All interviewees were asked the same seven questions around how data was being collected after they received ELO-P funding, best practices on data collection, how sites were currently using their data and showing impact, and what data collection infrastructure was needed at the state level.

About Us

The [Partnership for Children & Youth](#) is an advocacy and capacity-building organization championing high-quality, equitable learning opportunities for underserved youth in California. Grounded in research and experience, we train program providers, facilitate relationships between schools and community-based organizations, and advocate for effective public policies and resources. We are dedicated to a future where all children reach their full potential through equitable access to learning opportunities and supportive, effective schools.

The [Sperling Center for Research and Innovation](#) blends practical experience with research insights to help educators and youth development professionals turn evidence into action. We meet partners where they are, helping them deepen knowledge, improve outcomes, optimize quality, and strengthen systems to achieve their goals. SCRI has unique expertise in summer and afterschool, rooted in proven approaches for equitable and engaging experiences for young people. Through a range of services with targeted tools and resources, SCRI offers evidence-based, actionable guidance and practical steps to advance partners' priorities.

Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Launched during the 2021-22 fiscal year, the [California Expanded Learning Opportunities Program](#) (ELO-P) seeks to provide all California students, especially underserved students, access to comprehensive afterschool and summer enrichment opportunities. ELO-P was conceived by the Administration, legislators and advocates to improve student outcomes, meet the needs of working families by offering full-day programming throughout the school year and during school breaks, and help offset some of the learning loss that occurred during the pandemic. The program provides funding for kindergarten (including transitional kindergarten) through sixth grade. As of July 2023, California has allocated over \$9.5 billion to local educational agencies (LEAs), putting the state on the path toward universal access to afterschool and summer programs.[1]

Building off the state’s existing “[local control](#)” education policy, and to ensure programs can flexibly meet the unique needs of the communities they serve, many ELO-P data collection decisions are left to the discretion of school districts and their partners. **Currently, there is no state-level, aggregated ELO-P data collection required by law. This examination provides a preliminary understanding of the kinds of data being collected by local programs, as well as how programs are approaching data collection practices, including the challenges and opportunities heard from interviews with program implementers.**

From our interviewees, we learned that programs:

- Are at different phases of the data collection process, depending on whether they already had expanded learning data infrastructure and tools from previous funding (After School Education and Safety (ASES) and 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)).
- Have increased their data collection as a result of ELO-P (for those programs without previous funding), moving from simple participant enrollment counts to collecting data on student behavior, attendance, academics, and parent and student voice.
- Use ongoing data collection to adapt programming throughout the year to be more responsive to student needs and interests due to ELO-P funding flexibility.
- Have a better understanding of their parents, youth, and educators needs and wants through the increased use of surveys.
- Desire a data collection process that is streamlined across funding sources, ideally with one centralized data system.
- Feel challenged by having to track data and report on “braided funding” (funding from multiple sources).
- Feel challenged by the task of separating out the data to understand which funding source is responsible for program successes, particularly for ELO-P since there are minimal tracking requirements.
- Desire more explicit data collection guidance and tools from state agencies to ELO-P grantees.
- Desire more training on data collection best practices and how to communicate the importance of data collection to their staff.

[1] California has allocated \$1.7 billion in 2021-22, \$4 billion in 2022-23, and \$4 billion in 2023-24 for ELO-P.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the ELO-P enters its third year of implementation, and given that ELO-P rules and guidance are still being shaped, this inquiry seeks to inform state and local education leaders and policymakers about how data collection infrastructure should be built and/or strengthened to improve program quality and student impact.[2]

It is clear from practitioner feedback that the state should consider:



No. 01 –
Creating a streamlined data collection process that accounts for multiple funding sources;



No. 02 –
Collecting statewide, aggregated ELO-P data to demonstrate program impact;



No. 03 –
Increasing resources and awareness for collecting data on indicators beyond academics; and



No. 04 –
Increasing communication about ELO-P data collection and its importance.

These recommendations are covered in detail on page 11.

“[One challenge is] getting LEA buy-in for the importance of collecting data.... For the past 2 years, ELO-P is this extra bucket of money, and there’s no audit. We can do whatever we want with it. Why do you need data? And getting them to see the longer term, the importance of showing change over time, data correlation between early years—that’s been a huge problem. The communications and the understanding of what ELO-P is have fallen on [program staff].”

[2] For more information on ELO-P funding and early implementation efforts, see this [resource](#).

BACKGROUND

Current Data Collection Requirements

All state and federally funded expanded learning programs in California serving elementary, middle, and high school students, including ELO-P, are required to engage in a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process based on the [Quality Standards for Expanded Learning](#). Grantees must engage in CQI that is ongoing, “data driven,” and involves a continuous cycle of assessment, planning, and improvement.

An overview of data collection requirements for the ELO-P, ASES, and 21st CCLC programs is provided on page 4.

According to the California Education Code, “Expanded Learning” refers to before school, afterschool, summer, or intersession learning programs that focus on developing the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and interests of pupils through hands-on, engaging learning experiences.[3]



[3] California Education Code (EC) Section 46120 amended by AB 181 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2022) and AB 185 (Chapter 571, Statutes of 2022).

DATA CROSSWALK

	ELO-P	ASES	21st CCLC
Program Plan	<p>ELO-P Program Plan LEAs are required to develop a plan every 3 years that must be approved in a public meeting and posted online.</p>	<p>ASES Program Plan Reviewed by the California Department of Education (CDE) Expanded Learning Division every 3 years.</p>	<p>21st CCLC Narrative Submitted as part of the requests for proposals.</p>
Audit	<p>Audit: (ASES and ELO-P) EC 41020(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage sound fiscal management practices among LEAs for the most efficient and effective use of public funds for the education of children in California by strengthening fiscal accountability at the school district, county, and state levels (from the 2023-24 Audit Guide (July 1, 2023): ASES–Section U; ELO-P–Section DZ).</p> <p>Federal Program Monitoring: (ASES, 21st CCLC, and ELO-P) The FPM Program is one of the processes the CDE uses to ensure that grantees are fulfilling their responsibility for operating programs that meet statutory requirements. Detailed information about the Federal Program Monitoring process is posted on the CDE Compliance Monitoring web page. Those funded only with ELO-P funding will not be subject to FPM. However, if the LEA, as a Grantee, has ASES and/or 21st CLCC funding, ELO-P will be reviewed during the FPM process.</p>		
Reporting	<p>At this time, attendance and fiscal reporting is not required; however, LEAs are encouraged to track student attendance for safety and CQI purposes, as well as track expenditures which would be reviewed during an FPM. The method for tracking expenditures is a local decision. There are additional reporting requirements for LEAs who contract with a third-party non-LEA site.</p>	<p>For ASES and 21st CCLC grantees to be considered “eligible” for renewal, programs must submit documentation that shows evidence of 1) their program’s effectiveness and 2) a plan for their program’s quality improvement process. To show program effectiveness, programs must submit their student participants’ school-day attendance on an annual basis and program attendance on a semiannual basis. Programs submit these data through the Annual Outcomes Based Data for Evaluation template and are monitored on CQI through Federal Program Monitoring.</p> <p>Currently, there is a data collection system called the After School Support and Information System (ASSIST) that ASES and 21st CCLC programs use, primarily for grant reporting. Currently, state law requires CDE to develop a statewide biannual report to the Legislature.</p>	
CQI	<p>Assess Program Quality: Collect data on the program using multiple strategies. Data comes from sources including self-assessments, review of program policies and manuals, interviews and surveys conducted with staff, youth, and other stakeholders, and observation of program activities.</p> <p>Plan: Reflect on program data and use data to generate and implement an action plan for program improvement. Action plans can be used to revise and refine organizational strategies, to direct resources towards areas that need improvement, and to guide professional development.</p> <p>Improve Program Quality: Implement the action plan, taking time to reflect on progress along the way. Once key goals are met, re-assess and update the action plan accordingly.</p> <p>Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California outlines what each Standard should look like in action at the programmatic, staff, and participant levels.</p>		



FINDINGS

Impact of ELO-P Funding on
Data Collection Practices

DATA SUCCESSES

Building Off of Existing Data Infrastructure

Four of the programs interviewed had data collection systems already in place prior to the implementation of ELO-P. Common metrics collected for ASES and 21st CCLC programs before ELO-P were enrollment/attendance data, demographic data, and academic data. One program uses their districtwide student information system to collect attendance and demographic data. This same program hopes to transition to using the [CALPADS Data System](#) because their student information system is already set up for reporting to CALPADS. Another site reported they were waiting for the release of an updated [Quality Self-Assessment Tool 2.0](#), building off prior iterations, that provides a framework for programmatic standards and creates a shared vision among program stakeholders.



Another example comes from a community-based provider that partners with schools to operate programs and also received public funding before ELO-P. This program did not make changes to their data collection system, but instead used their ELO-P funds to increase staff pay, decrease staff-to-student ratios, and bring part-time staff up to full-time.

“I heard we would potentially be reporting to CALPADS in the future. I would be in support of that if it changed some of the other reporting that we're currently doing. For instance, I have to go into ASSIST to report attendance on grant funding; then I report attendance again at the student level in the outcome-based data spreadsheet. My spreadsheet is somewhere around 8,000 lines long—I'm literally having to cut and paste and drop data in there from multiple site reports. The APR (annual performance review) system is very manual and labor intensive with dropdown menus for every activity at every school site that has to be entered.”

Flexible Funding & Proactive Data Collection

Programs interviewed are excited about the data they've begun collecting and are using data to show that their programs are impactful. When asked about the successes that their programs have experienced collecting data, staff reported the ability to be proactive with their program planning and to make programming changes in real time due to feedback from students, parents and teachers. Programs cite that the flexibility of ELO-P funding allows them to respond to survey feedback and make changes to programming from month to month. They also report that this is more proactive and useful than waiting to survey at the end of the year.

“Monthly we formally sit down and do the ‘‘Stop, Start, Keep, Fix!’’ which informs immediate changes for the program [based on parent survey data].”

One program reported that ELO-P funding gave them the ability to look beyond academic and enrollment data and gather an understanding of what participants were experiencing in their programs. For example, some programs are looking at student connectedness by tracking student participation as well as tracking changes in student behavior incidents during the school day.

“We've implemented a student wellness group as an enrichment, and that was based on data collected from parents wanting that type of offering. We now have proactive wellness groups rather than a reactive approach.”

Increased Surveying to Meet Community Needs

Regardless of previous funding, after receiving ELO-P funding, programs tended to collect data that focused on social-emotional learning and community voice, citing the mental-health crisis after the pandemic. Multiple programs mentioned they were better able to meet the needs of their community by surveying parents, educators, and students about which enrichments they would like to see offered.

“[ELO-P funding gave providers] the ability to survey students and parents early on to see what they enjoyed about the program, what they would like to do more of, and what would be helpful to them in the program.”

Programs said that one of the biggest benefits of surveying was the ability to better understand what kinds of programs their communities wanted offered, as well as the ability to diversify their enrichments based on that survey data. [Panorama](#), [SurveyMonkey](#), and Google Forms were cited as tools used to collect information on student behavior and parent satisfaction. Alta Loma uses a mixture of survey data combined with academic and school outcomes data for the students enrolled to gain more program insight.



More Robust Data Collection for New Programs

Programs that previously did not have public funding (versus fee-based programs) collected minimal data on students and program quality. One example is the Alta Loma School District; ELO-P enabled this program to greatly increase their data collection practices from participant enrollment only to collecting data on student behavior, attendance, academics, and parent and student voice.

The table below provides an overview of the impact that ELO-P funding has made to programs' data collection efforts:

ELO-P FUNDING DATA COLLECTION	ALTA LOMA	ARC	ELK GROVE	MT. BALDY	WOODCRAFT
ASES Grantee	✗	✓*	✓	✗	✓*
21st CCLC Grantee	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Enrollment / Attendance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Achievement / Academic Scores	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social-Emotional Learning / Student Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographics	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Voice	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Parent Voice	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Staff Voice	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Program Outcomes	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓

✗ Data not collected, or not mentioned by site during interview

* Community-based organization that partners with school districts that receive public funding

✓ Data collected prior to receiving ELO-P funding

✓ Data collected as a result of ELO-P funding

DATA CHALLENGES

Lack of Data Structure

Programs note there are several challenges within the current data infrastructure. For example, programs are expected to design their own CQI plans and decide which data to collect. According to the majority of interviewees, there is a lack of a clearly defined structure and direction due to no centralized data system, defined metrics, or requirements, which can result in inconsistent data collection.

“If we could make data collection match with what the districts are already doing that would streamline things for us, and it would make it easier for our tech teams that support us if there's an existing pathway for that data. Most of what we end up having to report out right now for expanded learning is unique to us and requires separate systems or unique set-ups. We end up requesting multiple special reports and ultimately we still end up manually manipulating spreadsheets. Cutting and pasting is not the most accurate form of data reporting. I think it would improve options for the state, too, if data was all in one bank. State agencies could pull data and sort it the way they needed to for their purposes.”

Lack of Distinction from Other Funding Sources

Programs reported confusion between the ELO-P and the [Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant](#) (ELO-G) and the differences between the two, including reporting requirements. Unlike with ELO-P, to use ELO-G funds, LEAs must apply them toward [seven grant strategies](#).^[4]

Another program emphasized the challenge of reporting for “braided-funding” (funding from multiple sources) and separating out the data to understand which funding source is responsible for program success. Some programs are working with three funding sources with different eligibility, CQI, and reporting requirements. The minimal policies in place around data collection make it difficult for some programs to demonstrate the impact of ELO-P in particular.

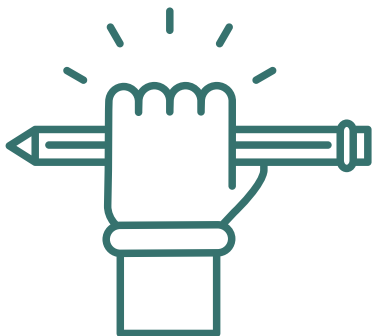
“We did close the gap substantially in math achievement for our low SES [supplemental education services] subgroup this year. And we have ideas about why that happened. But there's not an easy way to collect quantitative data to speak to the role that the ELO-P played in that. I'm still working on the best way to show the impact of the program. It's hard to isolate.”

[4] Expanded Learning Opportunities Grants Strategies. (2022, December 22). California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/he/hn/elostrategies.asp>

Need for More Guidance Around Data Collection

While there has been a significant effort from state agencies to inform LEAs and their school communities about ELO-P funding and the program structure requirements, there is less explicit guidance on data collection requirements and best practices, which can make data collection difficult.

“State agencies should communicate as much as they can up front. This year we were told what metrics were going to be reported for the Annual Performance Review after July 1st, so my programs had already started, and I had already been collecting data when I was told “this is what you’re going to need to report out on.” One of the items was a pre-/post-test on how the teacher evaluates student engagement. We had surveys, but our surveys are anonymous so I can’t do a ‘pre’ and ‘post’ match for a student, and I can’t go back in time to the beginning of the year to do a pre-assessment if you don’t tell me until the end of the year that I needed one.”



Need for More Training & Data Collection Buy-In

Programs cite the difficulties of getting their stakeholders, such as LEA administrators and staff, to see the importance of collecting data over time. Program leadership also has difficulty hiring and training new staff on data management in the midst of competing program demands. This in turn affects the continuity of data collection among staff.



“I think this year was challenging. We did bring on some new staff because we were able to do that with the ELO-P funding, but then getting those folks up to speed while also launching the new programs... [and] making sure that we have a point person at each site who’s reliable, who is a confidential employee and can have access to the student information system to make sure that they’re taking attendance. It is labor intensive getting those staff trained, getting the records to them, and making sure we are getting the information into the system. Those have been just some of the growing pains with exponentially growing the program the way we did.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations stem from what was learned from the program interviews:

1 Create a data collection process that is streamlined across funding sources and clear about what data to collect and when. Provide guidance and strategies on how to use data to show program impact.

The State has directed the field that the goal is to have one comprehensive and integrated program across the multiple applicable funding streams. Programs are asking for a 'standard' on data collection (i.e., attendance, demographics, academics, etc.), a tool that will help them self-assess program quality, and guidance on how to measure impact. Ideally, programs would like to see that the different funding streams have consistent accountability measures and centralized platforms so that programs aren't competing against each other, and would also like to reduce reporting burdens.

2 Collect statewide, aggregated ELO-P data to demonstrate impact and support longer-term sustainability.

Currently, there is no requirement for CDE and/or another state agency to collect and compile ELO-P data across LEAs to provide a statewide understanding of how this funding is being utilized. Potential indicators could include enrollment and attendance data, demographics, expenditure reporting, programmatic trends, and more. While LEAs each develop an ELO-P program and CQI plan, these are qualitative reports to be used locally, and currently there is no plan to aggregate these plans statewide. A downside to collecting plans versus actual actions and expenditures is that plans often can and do change over time. (See Public Policy Institute of California's [recent report](#) on district recovery spending.) In addition, there are no state-level baseline requirements for expenditure tracking and reporting, as this information is kept locally unless there are findings that trigger an audit.

3 Increase resources and awareness for collecting data on indicators beyond academics, including student connectedness, mental health, and well-being.

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and a renewed focus on student and educator mental health, some programs are interested in tracking connectedness between students, programming, and their schools. Programs would like to know if an increase in connectedness and student wellness leads to a decrease in behavior incidents and believe this is an opportunity to focus on student wellness; they are interested in more guidance and support on which tools and surveys to use.

4 Increase communication and resources from state agencies around future ELO-P funding, as well as around the importance of and best practices for data collection, in order to build staff buy-in and capacity.

Programs would like increased transparency from the Legislature around what ELO-P funding will be available in the future to make staffing and programming decisions for the upcoming year. Programs also noted that high staff turnover and no required data collection plan makes it difficult to explain to new staff about the data findings from the previous year and makes continuous program improvement a challenge.

APPENDIX

The table below summarizes the six program demographics, if they had received ASES or 21st CCLC funding prior to ELO-P, and the data collection tool that was used, or going to be used, by each program.

Program	County	Demographics	Prior Funding	Data Collection Tool/s
Alta Loma School District	San Bernardino	10 schools, 96% students of color, urban setting, 33% eligible for free & reduced-price lunch	None	Quality Self-Assessment Tool (CA AfterSchool Network) and self-made surveys
arc After School	San Diego / Los Angeles / Imperial	105 schools (80 w/ ELO-P funding), 95% students of color, urban/suburban/rural setting, 85% eligible for free & reduced-price lunch	ASES & 21st CCLC funding as a subcontractor of district funding	CQI process using the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California and internal tools such as surveys and focus groups
Elk Grove Unified School District	Sacramento	68 schools, 84% students of color, urban/suburban setting, 42% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	ASES & 21st CCLC	District Wide Student Information System
Mount Baldy Joint Elementary School District	Los Angeles	1 school, 59% students of color, rural setting, 29% eligible free or reduced-price lunch	None	Self-made spreadsheet, Panorama is used for survey data
Woodcraft Rangers	Los Angeles	120 schools, 95% students of color, urban and suburban setting, 95% eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	ASES & 21st CCLC	CQI process using the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California, internal attendance management system, focus groups, and self-made survey data