



ESEA Reauthorization Recommendations: Expanded Learning Opportunities

Policy Recommendations

In 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), Title I, and other programs that support expanded learning opportunities (ELO)—

- Support an expanded learning opportunities definition that includes before school, after school, weekend, summer, and extended day and/or year programs.
- Require ELO programs to meaningfully include one or more community partners.
- Support ELO programs that expand the regular school day by offering a range of activities that activate and reinforce academics, develop skills, capture student interest (e.g., hands on science projects, the arts, planning for careers and college, use of technology) and support student engagement.
- Encourage states and districts to open the doors to data sharing between schools and community partners while protecting student privacy.
- Maintain the federal-to-state formula structure, with the state competitively granting to local partnerships.
- Support states in providing guidance on how to effectively implement all types of ELO programs; ESEA should permit communities to have the option to choose the program that works best for them.
- Ensure federal legislation and guidance does not prioritize one ELO program over another.
- Evaluate ELO programs on varying measures of success that include improved attendance, skill development, and educational attainment.

Rationale for Improvements

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers core has revolved around afterschool, but in order to best support the varying needs of students, schools and communities should be provided with flexibility to adequately address student needs. As of last year, approximately 339,293 elementary, 93,087 middle school and 62,271 high school students participate in California state-funded afterschool programs.ⁱ The need to support all types of expanded learning models and approaches (before school, summer learning, after school, extended day/year) is apparent given the wide range of ages and student demographics. When done well expanded learning opportunities can be effective strategies for engaging students and helping them achieve to higher standards thus making them college and career ready. Elements of effective programs include:

- Focus on academic enrichment and alignment to the school day
- Community partners are engaged in a meaningful partnership with the school
- Community-driven matters
- Complements the regular school day
- Students' needs are the focus
- Shared data and professional development are core practices
- Cost-effective approach with strong return on investment

California Overview

California invests an unprecedented amount of funding in after school programs, over three times more than the remaining 49 states combined.

- CA Prop 49: After School Education and Safety (ASES) program guarantees \$550 million annually for before- and after school programs with strong school-community partnerships

Such investments have yielded positive results:

- Participants in California's 21st Century High School After School Safety & Enrichment program passed both the English language arts and math portions of the California High School Exit Exam at a significantly higher rate than their nonparticipating peers.ⁱⁱ
- A statewide evaluation of California's ASES Program by the University of California at Irvine linked mathematics gains closely related to individual students' levels of participation in the program.ⁱⁱⁱ
- An evaluation of afterschool programs in California's Central Valley found that 23% of English language learners (ELLs) who attended afterschool programs in the 2006-07 school year were reclassified as fluent in English, compared to about 7% for all students in the region. The percentage of language redesignation was even higher (33%) for ELLs who frequently attended the program.^{iv}
- Evaluations of LA's BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow)—an elementary after school enrichment program—by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation^v revealed that:
 - Students' regular school day attendance improved once they began participating in the afterschool program
 - Students reported higher aspirations regarding finishing school and going to college
 - Dropout rates among LA's BEST students were significantly lower than the overall district dropout rate;
 - Participants demonstrated higher academic achievement on standardized tests of math, reading and language arts
 - Language redesignation rates favored LA's BEST students when compared with non-LA's BEST students.
- A 2000 evaluation report of the LA's BEST program found that parents and children alike found the safety of the afterschool program far superior to the safety within the neighborhood.^{vi} A 2007 evaluation report found that children attending LA's BEST are 30 percent less likely to participate in criminal activities than their peers who do not attend the program. Researchers estimate that for every dollar invested, the program saves the city \$2.50 in crime-related costs.^{vii}

ⁱ Children Now (2010). *California Report Card 2010: Setting the Agenda for Children*. http://www.childrennow.org/uploads/documents/reportcard_2010.pdf

ⁱⁱ Hipps, J. and M. Diaz (2007). *California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program: Independent Evaluation, Final Report*. http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/eval-07-02.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ University of California at Irvine, Department of Education. (2001). *Evaluation of California's After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program: 1999-2000 preliminary report*. Irvine, CA: Author.

^{iv} Central Valley Afterschool Foundation (2008). *Afterschool programs in the Central Valley Benefit Children and Youth: Evaluation Results from the 2006-2007 school year*. http://www.centralvalleyafterschool.org/pdf/CVAFFinalReport5-7-08_000.pdf

^v Huang, D., S.K. Kyung, A. Marshall, P. Perez. (2005). *Keeping Kids in School: An LA's BEST Example A Study Examining the Long-Term Impact of LA's BEST on Students' Dropout Rates*. University of California, Los Angeles: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).

^{vi} Huang, D., S.K. Kyung, B. Gibbons, Lee, C. and E.L. Baker (2000). *A decade of results: The impact of LA's BEST after-school enrichment program on subsequent student achievement and performance*. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation.

^{vii} Huang, D. and P. Goldschmidt (2007). *The Long-Term Effects of After-School Programming on Educational Adjustment and Juvenile Crime: A Study of the LA's BEST After-School Program*. University of California, Los Angeles: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST).