

2015 Lights On! Afterschool Talking Points

Every year in late October, after-school programs across the country celebrate “Lights On! Afterschool” to highlight how our programs keep kids safe, inspire learning and help working families. California became a leader in this field when voters passed Proposition 49 in 2002, approving a continuous annual appropriation of \$550 million to support over 4,000 after-school programs that serve students with high needs and limited resources (on average, 82% of students attending participating schools are eligible for school meal subsidy).

This year, use Lights On! Afterschool to reach out to your local and state representatives and to local media to make the case for increased state funding for after school. You can make these basic points:

- **State funding for after school, at \$7.50 per student per day, has not increased since 2006, despite higher costs from state-imposed minimum wage increases and mandatory sick leave, as well as increases in the cost of living.**
- **Stagnant funding has forced programs to reduce hours, minimize training time, eliminate support positions, and scale back the scope of their services.**
 - *(INCLUDE ANY PERSONAL STORY YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING THE IMPACT OF HIGHER COSTS.)*
- **For California to continue to be a leader in providing successful after-school programs, increased state funding is needed.**

Background

Funding for Proposition 49 triggered in 2006, and within a year over 4,000 high-poverty schools offered After School Education and Safety (ASES) Programs. These programs are required to:

- Operate from school dismissal until 6:00pm, for at least 15 hours per week (but usually closer to 20, based on bell schedules) every day that school is in session
- Provide programs based on a funding formula of \$7.50 per student, per day, with a cap of \$112,500 per elementary school (84 students daily), and \$150,000 per middle school (111 students daily)
- Maintain a supervision ratio of not more than 20 students to 1 qualified staff member
- Employ a Site Coordinator who is approved by the school principal
- Contribute matching funding, cash or in-kind, equal to at least 33% of the grant award

Programs are permitted to spend up to 15% of grant funding on administrative costs, and in most cases, the balance of 85% is spent almost entirely on site-level personnel costs, leaving very little for supplies and materials.

The funding formula for ASES programs has remained flat since 2006 because there was no cost of living adjustment built into the appropriation while program requirements that ensure quality services remain unchanged. Thus, providers are essentially operating 2015 programs with 2006 dollars. Since that time:

- The Consumer Price Index has risen 17%
- California's minimum wage has increased 25% (\$10, beginning on January 1, 2016)
- Mandatory sick leave (up to 24 hours per year) has been granted to part-time workers

The minimum wage increase was never intended to result in employee cuts and service reductions. Parents cannot afford to subsidize the shortfall and programs cannot reduce participation because grant revenue is tied to attendance levels.

Join the California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance, a network of over 20 after-school program and technical assistance providers and after-school advocates, in urging the Legislature to increase ASES funding by 13% (\$72 million) to ensure that our after-school programs continue to provide high-quality academic and enrichment services to the students who need them the most. Your voice is a critical component of this campaign. Please visit <http://partnerforchildren.org/what-we-do/policy-advocacy/sb645/> to sign up for future alerts and learn how you can advocate for our children and youth.