

CAN

California AfterSchool Network

CONNECT. CONVENE. INSPIRE.

Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016



Letter to the Community

This is an exciting time to be connected to the **California AfterSchool Network (CAN)**. With the coming of the Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the unprecedented strategic planning work being done by the California Department of Education, the expanded learning field is poised to play an integral role in the way California's children and youth are educated and supported. Likewise, CAN is positioned to become an even stronger and vital partner to this work's success. Opportunities abound and I'm excited and honored to be the Director at this critical time.



Frank Pisi

The 2013-2016 Strategic Plan is focused on three essential areas: Program Quality, Leadership Development, and K-16 Partnerships and Collaboration. Research shows that the success of expanded learning programs lies intrinsically in their quality and their ability to provide meaningful, tangible, hands-on experiences for children and youth. In this strategic plan, we are tasked to work with our regional, statewide, and national partners to define the elements of quality and look for and highlight examples of success. As a broker of expertise and resources, we are turning an eye toward fostering the next generation of leaders. CAN is striving to strengthen the grassroots that are so important to the entire system's success by leveraging strategies and resources to support leadership development at all levels - from children and youth to program directors to Leadership Team members. CAN is also focused on highlighting models of successful partnerships between expanded learning programs and a variety of stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive program that supports student success. Be it partnerships with business and industry, local government, traditional school day programs, or colleges and universities, all stakeholders have a role in creating a seamless system of support for California's children and youth, and the Common Core and NGSS provide us the perfect frame with which to have this conversation. In 2013 and beyond the CAN is not only committed to proclaim this message, but also to show tangible examples of how it can be done.

We believe that a strong, knowledgeable field is necessary to influence and inform policy and practice at the state and national levels. To that end, CAN is engaging the field to determine needs and thoughts on all issues related to the expanded learning environment. Our 2013-2016 strategic plan is forward thinking, innovative, and focused on explicit ways that CAN will support the **whole** field.

As you review the California AfterSchool Network's Strategic Plan, I ask you to envision yourself as a partner in our ambitious work. The expanded learning field in California is as diverse and talented as the children and youth we serve in our programs. The strength and success of our Network lies in the passion and expertise of our members. When fully realized, this Strategic Plan will result in a more connected expanded learning field than we have ever had in our history. As I've stated before, I am excited to direct the California AfterSchool Network at this time, and look forward to your support, engagement, and collaboration with our efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Pisi". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Frank Pisi, Director
California AfterSchool Network,
School of Education
University of California, Davis



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Special thanks to the Ad Hoc Committee, responsible for completing the strategic plan. Without their hard work, insight, and dedication to the process, this strategic plan would not have been possible:

Diego Arancibia, Specialist, ASAPconnect

Sandra Birmingham, STEM Pipeline and Outreach Coordinator, California State University, Channel Islands

Angelina Cacioppo, Program Coordinator, California AfterSchool Network

Frank Escobar, Manager, After School Programs, Visalia Unified School District

Bruno Marchesi, Program Director, California AfterSchool Network

Renee Newton, Director of the School of Education’s Center for Community School Partnerships, UC Davis

Frank Pisi, Director, California AfterSchool Network

Esther Rosario, Director of Regional Operations, THINK Together



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Section I

California AfterSchool Network—History

In 2006, the California AfterSchool Network (CAN) was established at the University of California, Davis through a grant from the Mott Foundation. California is one of forty-one states funded through the Mott Foundation. Each Statewide Network collaborates with their state’s education agency, for CAN, the California Department of Education (CDE). The California AfterSchool Network was founded on the belief that a “network” is an effective organizational structure to achieve the scale and scope necessary to influence state expanded learning efforts and to ensure program quality. It is widely believed that networks play an important role in identifying promising strategies and courses of action and disseminating those strategies and practices to public and private organizations; networks can be a powerful way to share field and program expertise with state agencies; networks can help inform public and private philanthropy investments in expanded learning strategies; and networks provide a vehicle for participants to communicate, exchange information, and learn from one another’s experiences.

**CAN is located within
the School of Education
at the University of
California, Davis.**

CAN is located within the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. As a recognized leader in supporting the expanded learning needs of schools, districts, and community partners, CAN is well positioned to utilize the robust research, policy analysis, and school leadership resources of the University to the benefit of California’s expanded learning programs. Using an applied research model of “scholarship of engagement,” CAN and the School of Education

work closely with community and school partners to collaboratively examine the successes and challenges that inform best practices for expanded learning opportunities and family engagement. Most importantly, the California AfterSchool Network facilitates consensus development and coordinated action by diverse groups from across the state.

CAN is governed by a 30-member Leadership Team that is comprised of representatives from organizations and agencies with expertise, leadership and an investment in expanded learning programs, public education, child and youth well-being, school-age child care, students with special needs, and English Language Learners. The work of CAN is undertaken by a broad group of representatives (over 800) from across the state who voluntarily participate in collective activities through one of the AfterSchool Network’s 7 working committees: English Learners, Nutrition and Physical Education, Older Youth, Policy, Quality, Rural, and STEM. CAN’s committees are led by co-chairs who also serve on CAN’s Executive Committee, the primary decision-making



body for the AfterSchool Network. Many of the state's after school intermediary, provider, advocacy, and practitioner organizations are represented on CAN's Leadership Team and through its committees.



From its inception, CAN works in close collaboration with the CDE. Per CAN's governance document, a representative of CDE's After School Division also sits on the network's Executive Committee as an ex officio member of CAN, the Director of the School of Education's Center for Community School Partnerships.

Currently, CAN is supported through funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the CDE's After School Division, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Additionally, CAN's statewide STEM initiative (The Power of Discovery STEM²) is supported through funding from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr., Noyce, Samueli, and Packard Foundations. This funding has resulted in a collaboration of diverse California experts in the areas of programming, youth development, technical assistance, K-12 education, higher education, and child advocacy; all of whom are dedicated to the implementation of quality expanded learning experiences for children and youth. The founding of CAN corresponded with the rapid scale-up and implementation of California's After School Education and Safety (ASES) program along with the expansion of the C.S. Mott Foundation's national after school networks' initiative. Considering both the state funded ASES and Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program, almost \$700,000,000 is invested in expanded learning and summer programs in California.

For the 2012-13 school year, The California AfterSchool Network (CAN) has provided **over 16 webinars** for the field of expanded learning including the California Department of Education 21st CCLC RFA Orientation, Providing Meals in After School, and Creating Recommendations on Quality Standards. CAN has also disseminated 11 Quality Self-Assessment Tool and 5 Quality Self Assessment Rubric videos in DVD format to more than 4,400 publicly funded programs around the state. CAN sent more than 95 listserv messages and newsletters to more than 3,400 expanded learning practitioners and programs. CAN currently has over 3,400 subscribers to its electronic newsletter, connecting the expanding learning field to its web site.

The California AfterSchool Network, through its **Older Youth Committee**, hosted 3 Step-Up Older Youth conferences in 3 different parts of the state (Southern California, Central Valley, and Northern California) that had more than 1,200 participants, with the majority of them being frontline staff from local expanded learning programs. Through the Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee, 96,000 tools and resources around increasing nutrition and physical activity in programs were sent out to sites with many more downloaded straight from our website. The CAN website has been visited by more than 20,900 people with more than 58,000 pages being accessed during this time.

CAN's latest initiative, **the Power of Discovery STEM²** is designed to result in large-scale change leading to one million K-12 students in California experiencing high-quality STEM learning opportunities during expanded learning program hours. The initiative focuses on the critical out-of-school time where STEM learning approaches can expand beyond the typical methods delivered during in-school classroom instruction. Over

the past year, CAN has established five Regional Innovation Support Providers, each connecting over 125 program sites with technical assistance, staff development, and access to STEM resources and materials.

CAN was established to provide expanded learning program practitioners, advocates, and community members with resources and tools necessary to build high-quality expanded learning programs in California. Ultimately, CAN's purpose is to advance quality in expanded learning programs in California and across the country. Through our ability to convene the field, broker resources, and influence and inform program and policy decisions, CAN is a vital resource to the well-being of expanded learning programs.

Section II

Expanded Learning Programs

The after school/out-of-school time field has experienced fundamental change in recent years. With a wider and deeper research base proving what we have seen and experienced; that high-quality programs have a profound effect on all aspects of child and youth development (cognitive, social, emotional), this field is now increasingly in conversations around how to most effectively educate young people. To that end, many experts in the field, both in California and nationally, are adopting the term **expanded learning programs** to better describe the benefit that before school, after school, summer learning and intersession programs provide to schools and districts. Simply put, these programs can help to expand students' learning, allowing them the opportunity to utilize the skills and concepts acquired during the day in unique and meaningful ways. CAN has chosen to adopt the term **expanded learning program**, as we believe that this is consistent with our goal of stakeholders utilizing *all* resources available to schools and districts in the most effective and efficient means possible to create a positive and meaningful educational experience for California's children and youth.



Section III

Strategic Planning Process

Strategic Planning is a structured approach to exploring, seeing, and acting for purposeful change. The process provides a vehicle to prepare for the future in a systematic way and uncover valuable information for decision-making, aligning resources, monitoring progress, assessing results and measuring impact. It is a disciplined process that affirms past successes and identifies strengths and potential opportunities to leverage. From a governance perspective, strategic planning enables leadership to set priorities and goals to guide the Network, and provides a clear focus to the Executive Director and staff for program development and implementation.

CAN's strategic planning process started in September 2012 when the Leadership Team identified the general priority areas represented in this plan. An Ad Hoc committee that met bi-monthly via conference call created the strategic plan. On each call, members participated in a facilitated discussion about the Strategic Priority Area at hand, offering input as to how this area should be addressed by CAN. From that discussion, the facilitator created a draft of the area, which was discussed and revised at the next conference call. CAN's Executive Committee was kept apprised of the committee's progress on their monthly calls, and served as a quasi advisory for the Ad Hoc committee. Progress to date was presented to the full Leadership Team at face-to-face meetings in February and April. Leadership Team members had the opportunity to discuss the plan in more detail at the April meeting and offer suggestions for clarification or improvement. The completed strategic plan was then presented to the entire Leadership Team and all committee Co-Chairs for their approval via a Web vote.

The creation of this strategic plan is only the beginning of the process. CAN's Executive Committee and Leadership Team will consistently review and revise this plan as new initiatives and opportunities change the landscape of expanded learning programs.

This plan will serve as the 'roadmap' for our committees as they identify their priorities and create their specific work plans. All CAN committee work plans will work in concert to achieve our overall identified goals.

Section IV

California AfterSchool Network Strategic Plan 2013-2016

A. California AfterSchool Network—Purpose Statement

The California AfterSchool Network's (CAN) purpose is to **promote quality** in expanded learning programs. Utilizing its unique and effective leadership and committee structure, CAN is a **convener of the field**, able to facilitate a two-way flow of information between the field and State and National policymakers where the needs and thoughts of the expanded learning field at all levels can **influence and inform policy and policy is translated into practice**. Ultimately CAN believes that these efforts will bring **greater coherence and professionalism** to the field.

With stakes high and time precious, **CAN promotes the belief that expanded learning programs can be a robust place of learning and discovery** that supports high achievement for all students. To that end, **CAN leverages existing high-quality resources** to the field and creates high-quality resources for the field when gaps are discovered. As **a catalyst for quality**, CAN disseminates promising and emerging practices around aspects of program design, implementation, and assessment. Connecting multiple levels of program practitioners with the resources, strategies, and individuals they need to ensure the most relevant and effective program possible, CAN is committed to **fostering and supporting the next generation of leaders** in the expanded learning field.

B. California AfterSchool Network—Core Values

We Believe That:

- **High-quality expanded learning programs** have strong, positive effects on the academic, social and emotional development of children and youth.
- **Continuous quality improvement** is acquired through intentional and ongoing support to the expanded learning field.
- We are unwaveringly **child and youth-centered** in our decision-making. We align our words and our actions to the core belief that all children and youth can achieve at a high level when provided the opportunity.
- **Children and youth success** is dependent on positive growth, cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically.
- Expanded learning program staff are the heart and soul of a high-quality program and should be supported with **meaningful professional development**.
- Effective programs **create leadership opportunities** for children and youth at all ages and stages of development.
- Leadership development **must be culturally responsive and appropriate** for all stakeholders.
- **It takes an entire community** to align its resources in support of the positive development of our children and youth.
- Expanded learning is a **vital partner** in a systemic effort to support children and youth.

C. California AfterSchool Network—Strategic Priorities

1. PRIORITY: Program Quality

GOAL:

California's AfterSchool Network (CAN) will be a trusted resource for expanded learning programs, particularly around issues of quality.

2. PRIORITY: Leadership Development

GOAL:

CAN will identify and develop resources that support emerging leaders throughout the expanded learning system.

3. PRIORITY: K-16 Partnership and Collaboration

GOAL:

CAN will be an integral partner in the success of the K-16 system, creating and facilitating partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders that support positive child and youth outcomes.

4. PRIORITY: Influence and Inform

GOAL:

CAN will influence and inform the decisions of stakeholders by serving as a bridge between the expanded learning field and policy makers to improve the quality and impact of the academic, social, and emotional developmental experiences of children and youth.

5. PRIORITY: Funding and Sustainability

GOAL:

CAN will research, compete for, and secure funding for its projects and operations from a diverse array of public and private organizations. CAN will engage in projects and pursue funding that directly supports its mission, vision, and purpose.



Section V

CAN Strategic Priorities: Rationale, Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The first three Strategic Priority Areas – Program Quality, Leadership Development, and K-16 Partnerships and Collaboration – are essentially the **‘what’** of CAN’s work. These areas represent the content that our efforts and committee plans will focus on in the coming years. Resources we investigate, leverage, and develop (as needed) will be focused on these three areas. The next Strategic Priority – Influence and Inform – is the **‘why’**; this represents the reason why CAN exists, to ultimately influence and inform decisions and policies that result in high quality programs and partnerships. The last area – Sustainability – is the **‘how’**. It is of vital importance to our continued efforts. Without a logical, thoughtful plan for researching and pursuing funding opportunities, we run the risk of engaging in activities that will pull us from our core mission and values.

These Strategic Priority Areas are not listed in any rank order. Rather they are organized more along functional lines: What, Why, How.

A. Strategic Priority Area—Program Quality

Rationale

A report from the U.S. Department of Education on the 21st CCLC, **Providing Quality Afterschool Learning Opportunities for America’s Families**, states that children and youth who regularly attend high-quality afterschool programs have better grades and conduct in school, more academic and enrichment opportunities, and better peer relations and emotional adjustment.

Expanded learning programs are integral to preparing children and youth for success. Children and youth who participate in high-quality expanded learning programs receive personal attention from caring adults, receive academic support, explore new interests, take on challenging leadership roles, develop a sense of belonging to a group, develop new friendships with their peers, and build a sense of self-esteem independent of their academic talent.



Quality expanded learning programs are grounded in safety, enriched learning environments, novel and challenging activities, positive relationships, and playfulness, opportunities to belong and to develop competencies, resiliency and leadership skills. We believe that programs must have the resources and capacity to determine these needs from families, children and youth. The Quality Self Assessment Tool (QSAT) demonstrates CAN’s commitment to promote high-quality programs, and to support a culture of continuous quality improvement at the program level.



In order to meet the goals, CAN efforts must be focused in the following areas.

- Leadership:** To position CAN for the national conversation/debate about quality expanded learning programs. CAN has a responsibility to California's children, youth and beyond – to influence the debate at the National level. California is at the forefront of best practices and is looked to as a model and leader.
- Coherence.** To create greater coherence around professional development and the ministry of policy. The role of CAN is unique in addressing quality at the field level, the state level and federal levels. Due to California's size and diversity, the expanded learning programs offer the opportunity to be the catalyst and connector across all levels - grass tops to grass roots.
- Define Quality.** The work of CAN has to be centered on how expanded learning impacts schools, families, children, youth, and communities. The definition of quality has to be comprehensive and system wide and must extend beyond programs and compliance. There are many indicators of quality and standards for specific parts of the expanded learning system. Missing is agreed upon benchmarks and standards throughout the system.
- Promote Best/Promising Practices.** CAN must be integral to the collaboration among all partners (regional leads, innovation systems in the field, practitioners, families, children and youth) to review, analyze, and promote the best evidence based information as well as promising and innovative practices. In doing this, CAN may become the entity that brings a sense of order to a seemingly 'noisy' expanded learning field. There is a wealth of research, initiatives, and resources, which can be overwhelming.
- Gather the Stakeholder Voice/Input.** A benefit to the field and CDE would be a tool kit for collecting parent/family input and stakeholder input on quality programs. The stakeholder voice is crucial to the quality discussion.
- Alignment within the CAN Structure.** The role of the CAN Quality Committee is to facilitate two-way communication between the field and expanded learning stakeholders, and to inform and advise the California AfterSchool Network (CAN), the California Department of Education (CDE), and the field at large on the issues affecting program quality. All CAN Committees are critical contributors to the quality discussion.

1. PRIORITY FOCUS AREA – PROGRAM QUALITY

GOAL: California’s AfterSchool Network (CAN) will be a trusted resource for expanded learning programs, particularly around issues of quality.

OBJECTIVES		STRATEGIES
1.a.	Create clarity and consistency around program quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine and articulate the factors that impact quality throughout the expanded learning system – from the field to policy. Collaborate with CDE to reach agreement on quality standards and indicators. Utilize research resources and highlight relevant research to better inform policy.
1.b.	Become the broker of resources, information, tools and technical assistance to support and improve program quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and disseminate best and promising practices through collection and analysis of information, research and case studies on quality programs. Develop tools kits for gathering voices from the field to improve the quality of programs. Provide technical assistance as needed to support program quality. Work with partner organizations to highlight the value of high-quality professionalism as a critical component of program quality.
1.c.	Promote accountability for quality programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate existing, new and emerging assessment tools that support continuous quality improvement. Disseminate pertinent information regarding these tools.
1.d.	Embed the quality lens in all CAN Committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure CAN Committee work plans include a section describing how their efforts are promoting quality improvement in expanded learning programs.

B. Strategic Priority Area—Leadership Development

Rationale

Quality expanded learning programs can be transforming to a community and can positively impact workforce development. Expanded learning programs change lives and cultivate ‘great’ adults.

CAN must always have a vertical view of leadership development throughout the field of expanded learning.

CAN is in a prime position to focus on leadership development and to determine ways to support capacity building within the Network and throughout the expanded learning field.

This priority addresses three areas of leadership:

Youth Leadership. Youth engagement, youth leadership, and youth voice are important components of all expanded learning programs and provide young people opportunities to develop the attributes needed to be successful, such as responsibility, integrity, critical thinking, active listening, and interpersonal skills. Leader-

ship programs allow youth to develop vital life skills (time management, teamwork, planning, and program implementation) that they will take with them into the workforce.

There is growing and widespread support for the intentional, purposeful, and meaningful engagement of young people as leaders and decision-makers in their expanded learning programs. Youth are capable of making meaningful contributions. The increasing recognition of the importance of youth development and leadership for all youth holds both promise and challenge in the expanded learning field.

Program Staff Leadership. Strengthen expanded learning programs by promoting and fostering staff leadership development at the site level. One of the challenges of expanded learning programs is high turnover of staff. Programs need resources and tools to build internal capacity and maintain and sustain quality programs.

CAN Leadership. Vital to sustaining the California AfterSchool Network is building leadership from within. CAN must always be looking at the leadership team. CAN currently develops leaders within CAN committees. The opportunity is to be more intentional about finding leaders and to have a system to further develop the next level of leadership. It is happen stance now. The reach of the Network can be expanded with intentional and strategic choices.

2. PRIORITY FOCUS – LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: CAN will Identify and develop resources that support emerging leaders throughout the expanded learning system.

OBJECTIVES		STRATEGIES
2.a.	Provide resources and support to help programs to empower youth to engage as leaders and decision makers in their programs and their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strategies and resources that promote authentic youth leadership where students can develop their style and effectiveness experientially through public speaking, group facilitation, program development, and outreach opportunities.
2.b.	Become the broker of resources, information, tools and technical assistance to support and improve site leadership development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and disseminate best and promising practices through collection and analysis of the wealth of information, research and case studies on leadership development at program and site levels, on the job training and professional development. Develop or link to tools kits that support leadership development in the expanded learning field, e.g. performance potential matrix.
2.c.	Develop leadership within the CAN organizational structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the critical leadership capacities needed to fulfill CAN's mission in the next three to five years. CAN Leadership Team and CAN committees will clearly define the desired leadership quality and skills they are seeking. Develop plans and budgets to focus time and resources in leadership development. Develop a CAN leadership team and committee recruitment plan to reflect the diversity of the field.

C. Strategic Priority Area—K-16 Partnership and Collaboration

Rationale

Learning consists of all the ways that youth acquire new knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors. It happens not just in school, but also through afterschool and summer activities, time spent with the family, and increasingly, through interaction with digital media. Broadening our ideas about where, when, and how learning happens helps communities to create richer learning pathways that have the potential to:

- Include more youth development opportunities to help young people gain the skills necessary for lifelong learning and a healthy adulthood.
- Offer a seamless learning environment that can help promote school success and stem summer learning loss.
- Efficiently use resources outside of schools to help close the achievement gap.
(Cited from Harvard Family Research Project Year Round Learning).

Expanded learning programs play a critical and mutually complementary role with K-16 system in enhancing the educational experience. There are multiple pathways to connecting rigorous academic standards to real world learning experiences. All partners in the system have a role to play - when these are aligned, children and youth are better supported during their expanded learning time and accomplish improved results in academic achievement. Building relationships and sharing resources among school leadership and expanded learning staff is critical to this effort.

Expanded learning programs provide opportunities to expose children and youth to higher education options and career paths and to teach them skills that can open doors to future career prospects. The expanded learning hours offer time for apprenticeships, guest speakers and project-based activities that are not always available during a school day focused on a core curriculum. Expanded learning can pave a path to a productive future, and be an essential support toward success in higher education and careers.

CAN is well positioned to support alignment of continuous learning pathways that support positive youth outcomes. Some of the best educators are community educators. And many teachers begin their teaching careers by working in expanded learning programs. This priority area explores ways to strengthen workforce development.





3. PRIORITY FOCUS – K-16 PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

GOAL: CAN will be an integral partner in the success of the K-16 system, creating and facilitating partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders that support positive child and youth outcomes.

OBJECTIVES		STRATEGIES
3.a.	Advocate for seamless and coherent learning environments for California’s children and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and disseminate best practices and programs that promote continuity between the school day and expanded learning experiences. Identify current resources to strengthen the connection between expanded learning providers and technical schools, vocational education and college courses. Explore possibilities and develop a plan for strengthening alignment and partnering between expanded learning, technical schools, and higher education.
3.b.	Promote widespread understanding of the vital role of expanded learning to child and youth success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication and key messages to show the tangible benefits, and share case studies and stories of how expanded learning experiences contribute to positive social emotional development and to child and youth success.
3.c.	Facilitate connecting expanded learning providers to National, State, Regional and local, targeted professional development opportunities, support and resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to connect expanded learning program providers to district-based and state-led professional development with a focus on Common Core State Standards, the new state assessments, and Next Generation Science Standards. Work with partners to identify and facilitate opportunities to share resources, among school and expanded learning staff with a specific focus on STEM.
3.d.	Promote expanded learning workforce development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore partnerships with high schools, community colleges, local universities, and vocational schools to collaborate in support of developing a diverse expanded learning work force.

D. Strategic Priority Area—Influence and Inform

Rationale

“In my years researching the effects of afterschool programs on children’s social and academic outcomes, I have observed the power that high quality programs can have on the learning and development of young people.”

Deborah Lowe Vandell, Founding Dean, School of Education, University of California, Irvine

There is convincing evidence from studies and program evaluations that expanded learning programs providing both academic support and youth development activities benefit students in a variety of ways. These benefits include improving academic achievement, strengthening social and emotional skills, enriching understanding of society and culture, and boosting commitment to a healthy lifestyle.

Utilizing its role as convener, thought leader, and broker of information and resources, CAN has established itself within the expanded learning field as an influential force equipped to provide practitioners and field stakeholders valuable information around important issues affecting the field. Furthermore, CAN has developed opportunities to influence various components of the expanded learning field including policies and procedures, legislation (indirectly), professional development, community-based organizations, grass roots organizations, congregations and many others. CAN has a strong relationship with the California Department of Education (CDE) and its Division Director and is utilized as a partner by the CDE’s After School Division (ASD) in numerous capacities.

Beyond CAN’s current position within the field and its ability to influence decisions and direction, CAN’s internal structure of volunteer committees provides direct access to grantees and stakeholders. This structure supports stronger communication across all levels and promotes opportunities to focus on selected initiatives. CAN’s vision to increase the overall quality and impact of expanded learning programs is directly reflected in this priority area.

CAN recognizes the need to transmit (as well as translate) pertinent information from the state and national departments to the organizations and staff providing direct services to our children, youth and community. CAN must be mindful of the different generations coming together in the expanded learning field. We must constantly look at our message delivery. Currently program administrators receive CAN’s information. CAN must be purposeful at ensuring communication reaches beyond the program administrators to the site coordinators.





4. PRIORITY FOCUS AREA – INFLUENCE AND INFORM

GOAL: CAN will influence and inform the decisions of stakeholders by serving as a bridge between the expanded learning field and policy makers to improve the quality and impact of the academic, social, and emotional developmental experiences of children and youth.

OBJECTIVES		STRATEGIES
4.a.	Representing the voice of the field, create, drive and support initiatives and campaigns that increase the quality and impact of expanded learning programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to assess/survey the quality, needs and resources of the field through the use of technology and in person exchanges. • Seek opportunities to share the results of those assessments/surveys with the field and state and national organizations that create or influence policy and practice. • Strategically utilize the CAN committee structure to gather the voices of the field and determine local and regional efforts to support them.
4.b.	Seek opportunities for CAN to influence and inform the national conversation and direction around high-quality expanded learning programs and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to maintain and strengthen valuable existing relationships with state and national organizations impacting OST programs. • Strategically utilize the CAN committee members to identify and connect with people, processes and products that will shape the dialogue and influence practices.
4.c.	Serve as a respected source of communication for pertinent information and resources between the expanded learning field and systems of influence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a more interactive CAN website. • Improve communication processes to target dissemination of information to the appropriate staff in expanded learning programs. • Facilitate opportunities for the field to become better informed and supported on important topics within the field. • Continue to serve as a communication vehicle for the CDE's ASD and other stakeholders to share valuable information with the field.

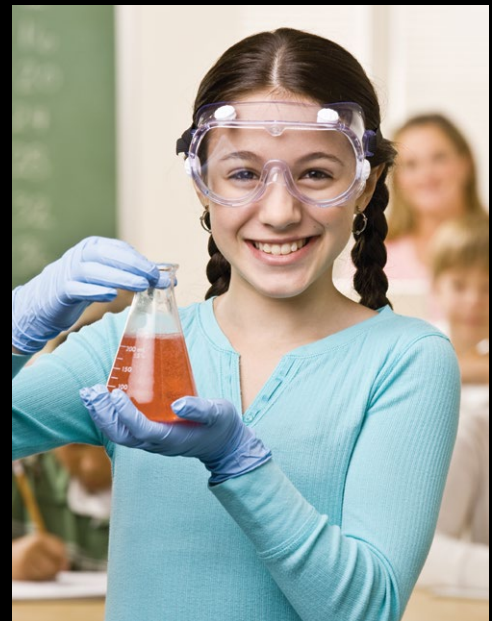
E. STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREA—FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Rationale

CAN will not be able to implement any of the strategies identified throughout this plan without diverse, sustainable funding. Consistent funding is necessary to ensure that CAN is able to provide a high level of service to the K-16 education system. Funding from a variety of public and private sources will enable CAN to remain flexible and responsive to the field.

CAN projects and operations must all be supportive of the organization’s mission, vision, and purpose, and should only pursue opportunities that meet this criterion. Without a thoughtful, intentionally planned funding and sustainability plan, CAN is susceptible to ‘chasing funding’ that can lead it in a direction not consistent with its purpose and values.

5. PRIORITY FOCUS – FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY		
<p>GOAL: CAN will research, compete for, and secure consistent funding for its projects and operations from a diverse array of public and private organizations. CAN will engage in projects and pursue funding that directly supports its mission, vision, and purpose.</p>		
OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES	
<p>5.a. Create an intentional, proactive funding and sustainability plan that identifies parameters and conditions that must be present in order to pursue a potential funding opportunity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sustainability strategy for CAN with input from the Leadership Team, Executive Committee and Committee Co-Chairs. • Develop a protocol for CAN Committees to propose projects and funding opportunities to CAN as well as a vetting process for proposals. 	
<p>5.b. Secure funding from a diverse set of organizations to support CAN activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the UC Davis School of Education, CAN’s leadership structure, and appropriate CAN committees, to seek out, apply for and ultimately receive funding to support CAN’s activities. • Explore opportunities to respond to requests from the field for services not covered by grant funding in consultation with the UC Davis School of Education and CAN’s Leadership structure. 	
<p>5.c. Ensure that CAN maintains sufficient staffing and resources to meet the needs of the field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess staffing needs as CAN investigates potential funding opportunities and projects. • When a new project requires increased staffing or resources to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet that need. 	
<p>5.d. Successfully meet the requirements and deliverables of CAN’s funders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAN staff systematically monitor deliverables from all CAN contracts and grants to ensure progress toward completion. • CAN staff provide regular programmatic and fiscal updates on progress toward completion to the Executive Committee and Leadership Team. 	



Mission

The mission of the California AfterSchool Network is to provide out-of-school time practitioners, advocates, and community members with the resources and tools necessary to build high quality out-of-school time programs in California.

California AfterSchool Network
UC Davis, CRESS Center
Davis, CA 95616

Phone: (530) 754-7422 • Fax: (530) 752-6135

<http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/>

<http://education.ucdavis.edu>



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