



# High School After School Program **Start-Up**

A GUIDE WITH SPECIAL FOCUS GIVEN TO  
21<sup>ST</sup> CCLC HIGH SCHOOL ASSETS FUNDED PROGRAMS.



*Lead Strategically.  
Work Collaboratively.  
Act Intentionally.*

A Publication of the California AfterSchool Network

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# Program Start-Up

## A Practical Guide for After School Programs

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This article is for those charged with planning, implementing, and managing new after school programs. It contains critical information and addresses key issues relevant to the start-up phase.

Note: Special focus is given to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) funded programs serving older youth.

### WARNING:

**Foreword:** Every After School Program is Unique. One-size does not fit all. There is no cookie-cutter approach. Use extreme caution. Rewarding yet hazardous path lies ahead.

Planning for, starting up, and managing a new high school after school program is a comprehensive and complex task. There are many components and moving parts that must be coordinated. The use of checklists may be most useful to staff who are charged with this endeavor. It is important to note that what is presented is not intended to be a complete, all-encompassing blueprint and even if followed to the letter will not meet all of the program needs the reader may be faced with. Every program and its needs and circumstances are different and unique as fingerprints are to each human. The information and checklists are intended to provide you with a starting point for strategic thinking and intentional action.

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC High School ASSETs Program Start-Up

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

There is no doubt you may be finding yourself in a new position, with a larger scope of work than before, and it can be daunting to start a new program which will be large and have a high profile. Working in a new, collaborative environment with limited resources, no roadmap, and less structured direction than hoped for may have you asking yourself, “I said YES to WHAT?” At the same time you are probably wondering “Where do I begin?” Many have stood where you are, asking themselves the same questions. Not to worry, assistance is forthcoming.

If you are still reading this, you are likely transitioning into a new leadership role, and possibly performance role. This article is intended to help equip you with strategies and tools to get you up to speed faster and to achieve more, sooner. Use this as a roadmap for creating your action plan and guiding you through the start-up phase of program implementation.

The information and checklists presented provide a sense of the scope of planning you will need to accomplish, as well as the coordinated results you will want to demonstrate within your first week, ninety days, and beyond. Initially you will want to think in broad strokes, then enhancing each stroke with more layered detail until you have a step-by-step action plan to guide and facilitate your start-up and implementation process.



## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC High School ASSETs Program Start-Up

### WHERE DO YOU START?...

#### FROM THE BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND

Before you strike out on a journey it is always best to have an idea of where you want to go and the resources needed to set the course, as well as those that will be useful along the way. In this case, before you do anything, follow these steps:

#### **STEP 1      Get Grounded:**

*Read and have an in-depth understanding of the grant requirements as outlined by the California Department of Education (CDE) Request for Applications for Programs Proposing to Serve High School Students that pertains to your grant-awarded year.* This is your “Rules Book”. This information can be found at: [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

#### **STEP 2      Get Oriented:**

*Read and have a good understanding of your program application narrative for which funding has been awarded.* This is your “Call to Action!”

These are your first two steps, done in tandem, even if you were a part of the team who wrote the original proposal. Usually it is about three to nine months from the time a proposal is submitted, awarded, and notification of the award is posted. Be sure to reacquaint (or acquaint) yourself with the ground rules and what was outlined in the original proposal as work to be completed if the application were awarded.

#### **STEP 3      Simply said, “Do what was said you would do!”:**

This is the foundation for the work that lies immediately ahead and the pinnacle by which you will be evaluated when time comes to see how well you are progressing towards achieving program goals.

### KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS

Funding is a crucial piece for the success of after school programs. In order to ensure that the program is financially stable it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the details of the grant, including the submitted application and narrative. Ensure that you have a good grasp of the program design, staffing structure, and the grant requirements and expectations. Also, determine who will be responsible for managing specific portions of the grant requirements. Managing the grant is a continuous process that must be consistently monitored. From necessary paperwork, to attendance data, to responding to ongoing grant requirements, it is important that well outlined processes and procedures are created and maintained to ensure funding.

The following serves as a general overview of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Minimum Program Standards. Read the CDE Request for Application for Programs Proposing to Serve High School Students that pertains to your grant-year for in-depth descriptions. This information can be found at: [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

#### ■ **21<sup>st</sup> CCLC General Program Purpose**

The general purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center program is to establish or expand community learning centers that provide students with academic enrichment opportunities, and activities designed to complement the students’ regular academic program. Community learning centers must also offer literacy and related educational development services to the families of these students.

#### ■ **21<sup>st</sup> CCLC High School ASSETs Program Purpose**

California Education Code (EC) Section 8421 further defines the purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC High School ASSETs program as: (1) creating incentives for establishing locally driven after school enrichment programs that partner schools and communities to provide academic and safe, constructive alternatives for high school pupils in the hours after the instructional day, and (2) assisting pupils in passing the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) for public school programs.



### ■ **Scope of Operations**

An ASSETs Program must: (1) operate a minimum of 15 hours per week, (2) provide a nutritious snack, and (3) provide a physical activity element.

Each ASSETs program has the option of operating under either of the following modes: (1) after school only, or (2) after school and during any combination of before school, weekends, summer, inter-session, and vacation.

### ■ **Required Program Elements**

The ASSETs Program has three required elements that must be offered in every funded program: (1) academic assistance, (2) enrichment; and (3) family literacy services. The academic and enrichment elements must provide additional support for pupils and be in alignment with, but not a repeat of, the regular day academic program requirements, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials. Assessments of pupil progress must also be aligned. The family literacy services are for the adult family members of the pupils participating in the ASSETs Program.

### ■ **Required Reports**

ASSETs Program Grantees must satisfy periodic reporting and accountability requirements throughout the term of the grant. These requirements address: (1) attendance and fiscal reporting; (2) program evaluation; (3) the federal Annual Performance Report (APR); (4) the CDE Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) process; (5) annual audits; and (6) use of the After School Support and Information SysTem (ASSIST) reporting.

Program Grantees are required to submit semiannual attendance reports, quarterly expenditure reports, annual fiscal reporting and evaluation reports. Grantees are required to meet outcome measures to demonstrate program effectiveness. One required report includes the Pupil Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program test scores that are required to be reported to the CDE for purposes of the statewide evaluation and as part of the federal 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Annual Performance Report (APR).

## **KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE GRANT CERTIFIED ASSURANCES**

The applicant receiving federal funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program agrees to meet Grant Certified Assurances (see CDE Form B-4 Outcome Measures and Certified Assurances for complete and current list): [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)

Listed below are 14 of the 33 Certified Assurances that are essential to the start-up period.

1. The program will include an academic assistance element designed to provide tutoring and/or homework assistance in one or more of the content subject areas such as language arts, mathematics, and science.
2. The program will have an educational enrichment element that may include, but is not limited to: fine arts, recreation, physical fitness, and prevention activities. Such activities might involve the visual and performing arts, music, physical activity, health promotion, general recreation, career awareness and work preparation activities, community service-learning, and other youth development activities based on students' needs and interests.
3. The applicant will establish qualifications for each staff position that, at a minimum, ensure that all staff members who directly supervise pupils meet the minimum qualifications for an instructional aide, pursuant to the policies of the school district.
4. The program will maintain a pupil-to-staff member ratio of no more than 20:1. (Site Coordinator should NOT be included in this ratio. Volunteers can NOT be included in the ratio.)
5. The applicant will collaborate and coordinate with the regular instructional day.
6. The after school program will operate for a minimum of 15 hours per week.
7. The program will provide these elements that must be offered in every funded program: academic assistance, enrichment, family literacy services, physical activity, and daily nutritious snack.

8. The program will make information regarding the after school program available in a form and language that is easily understandable to all parents/guardians.
9. Safe transportation is available to transport participating students, if necessary.
10. The program will maintain an attendance level of at least 75 percent of the attendance goal as stated in the application.
11. The program will expend no more than 15 percent of funding on administrative costs, including up to 5 percent for indirect costs.
12. The program funds will be used only for allowable costs during the grant award period.
13. The program will respond to any additional surveys or other methods of data collection that may be required throughout the life of the program.
14. The program funds from the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program will supplement, not supplant, existing services and funds.

## SUPPLEMENT VS. SUPPLANT: KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE

It is important to note the definitions and applied differences of Supplement and Supplant as this is where many programs become non-compliant.

It is **OK** to supplement existing services and funds with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program Funds.

### **sup-ple-ment** (noun)

*Something added to complete a thing already in place, make up for a deficiency, make something more adequate, or extend or strengthen the whole.*

It is **not OK** to supplant existing services or funds with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program Funds.

### **sup-plant** (verb)

*To replace: take the place of and serve as a substitute for something already in place.*

In other words, the funds provided by the ASSETs Grant may not be used to pay for a program or service which was previously being funded by another entity. The purpose of these funds is to enrich and enhance a program, within the guidelines of the proposal, not to take the place of or replace existing programming or secured funding.

## An Essential Consideration

### PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

Having permanent staff is a critical factor for creating and sustaining the after school program's culture and climate. First and foremost, having an experienced, **full-time site coordinator** serves as the backbone of the program and as part of the school's leadership team: building intentional relationships with key stakeholders across the program during the instructional day and implementing the program during after school hours of operation. Additionally, the site coordinator holds responsibility for keeping accurate attendance records and timely attendance reporting. The site coordinator must be a skilled facilitator, manager, and coordinator with exceptional multi-tasking abilities, be well trained in youth development and youth leadership, and have a strong connection to the community.

**Note:** Programs that try to save money by hiring a part-time site coordinator often find it a costly choice, especially considering the workload, responsibilities, and deliverables of the position over the long-term.

## The Components of Coordinated After School Programs Start-Up

In order to lead strategically, work collaboratively, and act intentionally you will need to understand fundamental program components. The following components are essential when planning for, starting up, and managing a new after school program. It takes a coordinated approach when working with these components as each component is a vital link in the process of achieving a successful start-up. Keep in mind: planning is not an event...planning is a continuous process.

### SETTING THE STAGE

Powerful visions inspire others, ignite passion, and foster measurable impact. Knowing what your program stands for and what it provides to older youth is important. The key to your success is being able to articulate the program's vision and purpose to instructional day administrators and staff, after school staff, and key members of the community thus bringing together people of diverse interests and backgrounds with a common purpose to create and implement the program together. Equally important is that the students themselves understand the vision and the role they play in making that vision a reality. It is the combined efforts of all that is crucial to the success of your program.

### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Building partnerships and implementing a successful collaborative process takes time, energy, and dedication. You will model the way by leading strategically, working collaboratively, and acting intentionally - all in the spirit of cooperation. To collaborate effectively means providing enhanced opportunities, sharing resources, and making commitments to achieve results. This requires creating and committing to a common vision and shared goals through collaborative planning with partners. "Working together for planned success!" will be your personal mantra.

In order to maintain a consistent and cohesive connection between the instructional day and after school program, it is imperative that a strong partnership is developed with the school. You can begin building this partnership by getting to know the school site administrators, understanding how they will provide support, identifying their expectations for the program, and ensuring all school leaders are familiar with the grant.

It is important to maintain consistent communication with school leaders by scheduling regular meetings with administrators as well as attending staff and departmental meetings. Also, become familiar with the other after school clubs and programs currently in existence and begin to build relationships with the staff overseeing those activities.

Don't overlook building partnerships with key individuals, including: principal, teachers, custodian, front office staff, food services, counselors, school nurse, data processors, librarian, security officers, etc.

The key to success is engaging the school leaders, administrators, and staff from the beginning. Keep the lines of communication open and thoroughly articulate the vision and expectations for the program while listening to their expectations and considering their ideas as a part of the greater whole.

### ALIGNMENT WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY

**Alignment means** that after school program activities purposefully complement the instructional day are connected to content learning standards and help students improve achievement. This requires a partnership between the after school program staff, the instructional day staff, and any involved community-based organization staff. **Alignment does not mean** that after school programs duplicate what happens during the instructional day. Alignment is important for older youth in terms of their achievement, academic success, high school graduation and successful transition to adulthood.



## **DOCUMENTATION: FORMS, FILES, AND FACTS**

It may sound basic, but establishing clearly outlined procedures regarding securing and maintaining appropriate documentation, including creating forms, keeping records, and completing evaluations are a solid foundation for smooth day-to-day operations of your after school program. You will need forms for: enrollment, emergency contact information, participant requirements, participants' daily sign in/out, monthly attendance, behavior contract for discipline, and special incident reports. Equally important as the forms are the policies and procedures for completing the forms and who will be responsible for each item.

## **PROGRAM LOGISTICS**

Once the objectives and vision of the program have been set, plans should be created for the necessary materials, equipment, and space. Be sure to have a signed and approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement assuring adequate space for the program, participants, classes/activities, program office, and storage. Clearly identify space to conduct the program (including class rooms, library, gymnasium, auditorium, computer lab, outdoor space, etc.), a secure space to store materials and equipment (closet or mobile carts), and supplies necessary for purchase (paper, art materials, media and technology software, homework and tutoring, office supplies, curricular materials and supplies, sports equipment, books, computers, first-aid supplies, snacks, etc.)

## **SAFE SPACE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Being intentional and flexible in creating a safe space and supportive environment in which youth innovation and leadership flourishes is core to furthering their involvement/participation in the more formal structures of the after school program. With youth, facilitate the transformation of the program space into a vibrant teen center by: creating a comfortable lounge area in one corner of the room; providing a conference table where they can come together to meet and plan; ensuring adequate open space in the activity areas; decorating the walls with color and posters of leaders; posting quotes of inspiration and high expectations for their achievement; and above all, showcasing their activities and experiences in the program through their own words and pictures.

## **STAFFING**

You may know where and you may know how but do you know who? Part of the planning process may include hiring staff for the after school program. This may include recruitment as well as the hiring processes and procedures. The requirements for your staff will vary based on the type of programming being offered. Hiring staff who have a sincere interest in working with older youth, understand, can articulate, and demonstrate the skills and philosophy of youth development, and advocate for older youths' interests and needs will serve you well.

Note: In an ASSETS program there are many types of staff positions you may have working with you ranging from full-time, part-time, seasonal, specialist, coach, tutor, credentialed teacher, paraprofessional, vendor, contractor, and consultant to name a few.

In order to be in compliance with Grant Certified Assurances: all staff who directly supervise youth must meet with the minimum qualifications for an instructional aide, pursuant to the policies of the school district. Additionally, all staff and program volunteers must fulfill health screening and fingerprinting clearance requirements of the school district, private school, or agency policy. It is further recommended that all staff are certified in First Aid and CPR.

## **TRAINING**

The stage is set. The staff is hired. Training is another key element for success – initial and ongoing training. The areas of training will vary based on the programming offered and can include: training in academic areas including alignment with the instructional day, content standards, and specific subject matter areas; staff management; team building; forms; policies; procedures; youth development; youth leadership; meaningful youth engagement; classroom management; conflict resolution; emergency procedures; evaluation and continuous improvement, etc. Staff must be trained how to use positive techniques to guide the

behavior and help to develop the internal and external assets of older youth. In addition, it is essential to offer staff training that addresses the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of adolescence.

## **SCHEDULING**

The after school program is required to operate for a minimum of 15 hours per week. Hours of operation is not the only important factor when it comes to scheduling your after school program. It is equally important to coordinate the programming and schedule with the school calendar in relation to minimum days, holidays, parent conference periods, and other special events (especially when held in shared space).

It is necessary to have a program schedule clearly delineating the time, location, and topic of each activity, as well as a respective lesson plan. Based on the determined programming, it is important to consider how youth will attend and transition between activities. It is also important to remember scheduling can affect attendance and requires a balance between academic, enrichment, recreational, and other curricular activities. Be sure to keep in mind scheduling time for set-up and take-down. Copies of the schedule should be posted in the school, program area, and made available to all school staff, parents/guardians, students, and other partners.

## **PROGRAMMING**

After school programs are characterized as providing a safe environment with structured activities that help youth learn new skills and develop into responsible adults. The most comprehensive programs offer a broad array of activities that promote opportunities for skill building and mastery, in both support for academic achievement and access to enrichment, recreation, and fitness programs. Academic enrichment activities may cover topics such as technology, reading, math, science, the arts, credit recovery courses, and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) prep. In some cases, the after school program may provide participants with their first exposure to new learning opportunities such as photography, music, leadership, or organized sports. Enrichment activities and clubs introduce youth to experiences that spark their interests and expand their goals for their own learning, schooling, vocation, careers, and hobbies. Other enrichment activities may include, community service-learning, project-based learning, internships and work preparedness, tutoring, and mentoring opportunities.

## **MAKING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS COUNT**

It is crucial for success that intentional efforts are made early in the planning process to establish good relationships with key stakeholders at all levels. Determine who the decision-makers are and who you will be working with on a regular basis to ensure success. The after school program can be seen as an expansion of the students' school day and therefore it is vital that the relationship between school staff and after school staff is cultivated and maintained. Regular and comprehensive communication is key to establishing a seamless transition for the students. Also important are the relationships with key officials and members of local community and city government agencies. Additionally, it is crucial to maintain communication with the families of participating students. Last, and certainly most important, you must maintain communication with the students – your customers. The students who attend the program should feel involved, included and communicated with. All of these relationships must be maintained throughout the life of the program.

Maintaining these relationships includes: establishing regularly scheduled meetings, governance and communications structures for partnerships and with the site; custodial arrangements; planning for careful use of shared space; communicating with families; inviting school district staff to special events; promoting positive behaviors; identifying procedures for continuous improvement and evaluations; and integrating those with the regular program process.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

Youth development is an approach to working with young people that defines outcomes based on the developmental needs of youth. In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program, the concept is demonstrated by providing young people with the opportunity to participate in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the program. This effectively creates an environment that supports youth in meeting their personal needs and building the skills necessary to function successfully in their daily lives.



By providing young people with the experiences they need to succeed, we are creating after school programs that make a difference. As noted in the Youth Development Guide written by the Community Network for Youth Development, resiliency research demonstrates that young people who succeed have the advantage of three critical elements in their lives: caring relationships; high, clear, and fair expectations; and opportunities for participation and contribution.

**Note:** Additional examples of strategies, approaches, and activities that link theory and practice of youth development have been provided throughout the article (to help demonstrate the thread across components).

## DEVELOP THE CULTURE, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM

The after school program provides an ideal time and unique place to get your students excited about learning as they pursue their own interests. Additionally, they are able to develop self confidence, new skills, and talents as they engage in activities and explore new endeavors in areas that may not be directly addressed by the instructional day. Make sure the activities offered are meaningful, fun, and engaging – no matter what they are designed to teach. Help students connect their interests to continued learning and help them to understand the importance of academic achievement and setting personal goals and high expectations in the fulfillment of their passions and dreams as they progress into adulthood.

The success of the program relies on the students' sense of belonging and their meaningful participation in the program. This can be cultivated by providing opportunities for the students to give input on program design, participate in group decision making, and the learning and practice of leadership skills. In order for the students to feel motivated to attend they should be involved in the creation and ongoing implementation of the program.

### ■ Culture

Intentionally structure the program to build a positive and supportive culture based on mutual caring and respect relationships among the students as well as between the youth and adults. The staff should be knowledgeable about the program participants and create an environment based on youth development principles where students feel secure in seeking guidance and support. It is essential that program activities are directly linked to youth development outcomes that will provide the opportunity for students to learn how to successfully navigate through different settings, situations, and challenges.

### ■ Program

It is critical to provide a balance of activities for students. A successful program will offer a variety of academic support, enrichment clubs, recreation, opportunities fostering youth leadership. It is essential to remember that program activities must be directly linked to student achievement outcomes and when possible to the California Content Standards for Learning.

Program success is linked to how students perceive program activities. Older-youth gravitate towards activities that are branded as clubs and are attractive to them because they are focused on experiential learning, meet an interest, or are tied to a personal need.

### ■ Curriculum

The best after school programs are designed to align with school activities and content learning standards. Staff participate in school district sponsored training in order to understand direct links to instructional day curriculum, how to encourage student inquiry, and how to ensure that after school components like homework assistance are meaningful. Academic approaches are clearly aligned with the instructional day resulting in an increase of the students' enthusiasm for learning and improvement in academic achievement. Additionally, activities are anchored in service learning and project-based learning opportunities helping to make learning relevant and connected to the real-world.

## **INCLUDING YOUTH AS PARTNERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROGRAM**

In order to have an after school program that is meaningful and engaging for the students attending, it is very important that they are included in the many aspects of the program. This must begin at the start-up point. Think outside the box and consider how you can include and meaningfully engage youth in laying the foundation of the program. Tap into the resources available to you on campus by calling on your youth leaders and ASB leaders to put together a survey to find out the interests of the students so that their voice is included in the program offerings. Provide positive youth development opportunities and leadership opportunities to students. Include the students in creating the branding and marketing plan and carrying out the promotion of the program. Think about creating committees of interested students, or a task force or youth advisory board, that can help in all of the different areas of start up and continued program implementation. If the students are involved in the process and see that their voices are being heard they are not only more likely to attend but also to encourage other students to attend as well. Your goal should be to create a program where the students are trustees and stakeholders fully invested in its success.

## **Planning Is Not an Event - Planning Is a Continuous Process**

### **PLANNING DEFINED**

For purpose of this article, and to stretch your depth of thinking, I offer this practitioner-based definition of planning and its continuous process as a place to start from:

**Planning** is characterized as the creation of the future you intend to achieve. It is the continuous process of determining what you intend to accomplish and how you will direct resources toward established goals in the coming months.

To provide context for planning and assessment and framework by which to focus your thoughts and actions towards, I draw your attention to the [California After-School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org) (found at [www.afterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org)) as a guidepost: Section 1 – Program Design and Assessment. It states:

Quality after school programs are intentionally designed to include clearly defined and measurable goals and provide program activities and content strategically implemented to achieve its goals.

Quality after school programs conduct continuous improvement and outcome evaluations, using strong research-based designs, to determine the level of achievement of program goals and objectives and to determine the overall program effectiveness.



## SET S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

Having goals is one thing; accomplishing them is another. And yes, the devil is in the details. Goals must be S.M.A.R.T. in order to offer a benchmark against which actual performance can be measured and reviewed. To set S.M.A.R.T. Goals follow these guidelines:

- S** **specific, significant, stretching, strategic, scope-oriented**  
(Well defined; clear and easy; answer: who, what, when, where, why, which)
- M** **measurable, meaningful, motivational**  
(Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward attainment of each goal; answer: how)
- A** **attainable, agreed upon, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented**  
(Agreement with all of the stakeholders on what the goal should be; slightly stretching requiring real commitment, however accomplishable)
- R** **realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented, reinforcing**  
(You must be both willing and able to work toward the goal; you must believe it is relevant and accomplishable; not easy but do-able within the stretching principles agreed to)
- T** **time-based, timely, tangible, trackable**  
(Set a clear timeframe for accomplishing the goal; be sure it is in synch with scaffold goals and respective timelines; be sure you can experience it as tangible with one of your senses)

Everyone working with you will benefit from goals and objectives if they are S.M.A.R.T.

## GET RESULTS THAT SPEAK VOLUMES

A big part of program effectiveness is the ability to continuously improve. It's not just what you do; it's how you do it. To clarify this, success lies as much in the "intentional approach of how" as in the "specific content of what". Answering two strategic questions at the forefront of this work will help define your approach and results.

1. How will you maximize program capacity; build community; and improve student lives?
2. What must you do today, and each day, to achieve desired results?

Prepare to describe the process by which survey and evaluation results will be analyzed and used on a continuous basis to refine, improve, and strengthen the program in collaboration with local stakeholders and community partners.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

I leave you with this quote as inspiration for your ongoing work, capacity building, and planned continuous improvement.

*"It is important to remember that planning is not an event, it is the continuous process of strengthening what works and abandoning what does not, of making risk-taking decisions with the greater knowledge of their potential effect, of setting objectives, appraising performance and results through systemic feedback, and making ongoing adjustments as conditions change." (Peter F. Drucker)*

There is no "I" in TEAM, however your chief role is to "Inspire" everyone to be and do their best while working to accomplish all goals set forth for the overall achievement of the program.

Here's to you and your program's planned success! Remember to: **Lead Strategically, Work Collaboratively, and Act Intentionally** every step of the way.

## Checklists

Following are some timely and useful items to consider when preparing for Start-Up.

### BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF PROGRAM

- Familiarize yourself and have a clear understanding of the following documents: California Department of Education (CDE) original request for proposal guidelines, outcome measures and certified assurances, your grant program narrative, and the California After-School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSAT).
- Create a compelling purpose and clear vision for the program that can be shared in layman's terms.
- Be able to articulate your beliefs about older youth: their interests and needs, the role they can play in the program, and how you will incorporate their vision into a reality.
- Brand and market the ASSETs program consistently through several media sources (newsletter, posters, announcements, flyers, online, etc.).
- Clearly identify space needed for program implementation and ongoing management. Secure all keys and codes necessary to access space.
- Designate a space for the program's information board to post important program information.
- Post banners and signs clearly identifying the ASSETs program.
- Create and post a daily, weekly, and monthly program schedule clearly outlining activities/clubs, times, and locations, as well as nutritious snack items.
- Create and distribute enrollment forms.
- Be sure first aid kits are stocked and accessible.
- Outline program policies and procedures.
- Prepare job descriptions and staffing responsibilities.
- Hire and orient key staff.
- Set and post security and emergency procedures.
- Offer a program and staff orientation.
- Meet with key stakeholders and introduce yourself and present the program, i.e. principal, front office staff, custodians, teachers, other program staff, students, etc.
- Reach out/connect with your County's Regional Lead Office and the ASSETs Field Staff.
- Develop a plan for how you will include students in developing the ASSETs program.
- Connect with student leaders who can help get the word out about the program.



## THE FIRST DAY OF PROGRAM

- Be intentional about getting to know students.
- Be sure all program space is clearly marked.
- Have attendance sign-in sheets available for each activity.
- Provide a program orientation for participants.
- Be sure necessary enrollment materials are on file for each participant.
- Provide a healthy snack, today, and every day of program operation. The snack must conform to nutrition standards as established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Be sure staff members are readily identifiable (i.e., wearing staff shirts and name badges and introduce themselves to participants).
- Be sure the student to staff ratio is 20:1 and that the site coordinator is NOT figured into the ratio. Volunteers can NOT be figured into the ratio.

## THE FIRST WEEK OF PROGRAM

- Be sure the staffing structure and program design are working.
- Meet with the school administrator and invite him/her to visit the program space.
- Find out what type of information and support the school administrator would like to have from with you.
- Begin sharing with older youth your ideas about their involvement in the program as leaders.
- Be sure students know this is a program for them and their voice is important.
- Be sure all facility space is left clean and better than the way you found it, especially shared space locations including class rooms, restrooms, and open space.
- Meet with staff regularly to answer questions and provide real-time coaching when needed.
- Be available on campus to meet with and introduce yourself to teachers and counselors.
- Begin to connect with students who are interested in serving in a leadership role after school.



## THE FIRST MONTH OF PROGRAM

- Join a Local Learning Community of peers working in your field.
- Reach out to connect with other ASSETs programs and staff in your area.
- Determine how you are collecting attendance data for the start-up phase in order to comply with grant requirements.
- Get a schedule of the instructional day staff meetings and request to attend and be on the agenda.
- Identify and reach out to other student activities and clubs available on campus.
- Survey teachers and counselors to see who may have an interest in supporting and/or working in the after school program leading youth activities based on their interests or hobbies.
- Develop a student branding/marketing campaign with students participating in your program.
- Provide ample staff training on the many core subject areas, as well as topics related to program implementation and ongoing operations.
- Learn about your administrative duties: the process for purchasing and paying for program supplies and materials; how to report attendance; how to process payroll; etc.

## MONTHS TWO AND THREE OF PROGRAM

- Begin to meet regularly with the school administrator and your direct supervisor.
- Begin to offer more program activities aligned with the needs and voices of the older youth.
- Begin to meet with school counselors to identify those most in need of homework assistance, tutoring, and CAHSEE prep.
- Identify program ideas from each grade 9th – 12th to scaffold your approach to activities.
- Begin to formalize leadership opportunities for program participants.
- Identify new community partners to expand your programming.
- Begin to collect comprehensive attendance data to track program trends and to plan for the future.
- Visit other ASSETs programs to gain new ideas and make new connections.
- Attend trainings and conferences offered through the County's Regional Lead Office providing After School Technical Assistance.

## NINETY DAYS AND BEYOND

- Begin to familiarize yourself with the following documents: Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) tool, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) tool, and the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Annual Performance Report (APR) Paper Forms for Centers.
- Begin to look for additional enrichment curriculum and other high school aged learning opportunities you can incorporate into your program.
- Invite local guests to speak and present in your program on important topics to youth.
- Continue planning and start with the end in mind: get and stay organized; assess your current situation and begin to identify future possibilities and choices; form priorities and set your course, be sure to identify goals and objectives; hone and embrace your plans, secure all the approvals needed to move forward, be sure to set strategies for implementation and performance measures to know if you got there; and then implement your plans, monitor for progress, and make needed adjustments. Take pride in, celebrate, and communicate achievements, no matter how great or small, with all stakeholders.

## PROGRAM START-UP: COORDINATED COMPONENTS SUMMARY

### START WITH THE END IN MIND

- Your Mantra: Lead Strategically, Work Collaboratively, Act Intentionally
- Your Focus: Alignment (with the Instructional Day), (Improved Student) Achievement, and (Earning Program) Attendance
- Get Grounded: Know the “Ground-Rules”  
Read and have an in-depth understanding of the grant requirements as outlined by the California Department of Education (CDE) Request for Applications for Programs Proposing to Serve High School Students that pertains to your grant-awarded year.
- Get Oriented: Follow Your “Call to Action!”  
Read and have a good understanding of your program application narrative for which funding has been awarded.
- Do What Was Said You Would Do

### KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS

- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC General Program Purpose
- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC High School ASSETs Program Purpose
- Scope of Operations
- Required Program Elements

### KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE OUTCOME MEASURES

- These are the outcome measures chosen to demonstrate program effectiveness based on individual program focus and submitted data which is measured annually.
- All California-based programs must submit annually: Pupil Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program test scores (or alternative for private schools).
- Some programs may have elected to provide additional outcome measures, check your application narrative for this information.
- Design your program components intentionally to capture this information.

### KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE GRANT CERTIFIED ASSURANCES

- These are the fiscal reporting and auditing standards required by the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program, federal and state funding, legal and legislative mandates.
- 33 in total
- 14 are essential in program start-up (design and implementation)

## **SUPPLEMENT VS. SUPPLANT: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE**

- It is ok to supplement existing services and funds with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program Funds.
- It is not ok to supplant existing services or funds with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Program Funds.
- The purpose of these funds is to enrich and enhance a program, within the guidelines of the proposal, not to take the place of or replace existing programming or secured funding.

## **SETTING THE STAGE**

- Powerful visions inspire others
- Know what your program stands for and what it offers older youth
- Articulate this to all of your stakeholders
- Help students understand the program vision and the key role they have in making it a reality

## **COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

- Involve school leaders, administrators, and staff from the beginning
- Identify their expectations for the program
- Make sure all school leaders understand the purpose of the grant
- Understand how they will be involved and providing support to you and the program

## **ALIGNMENT WITH THE INSTRUCTIONAL DAY**

- Alignment means that after school program activities purposefully complement the instructional day are connected to content learning standards and help students improve achievement.
- Alignment does not mean that after school programs duplicate what happens during the instructional day.

## **DOCUMENTATION: FORMS, FILES, AND FACTS**

- Creating forms, keeping records, and completing evaluations lays the foundation for smooth day-to-day operation.
  - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
  - Enrollment
  - Emergency Contact Information
  - Participant Requirements
  - Participant Sign-in Sheets (Sign-out is optional)
  - Attendance: Daily, Weekly, Monthly
  - Incident Reports
  - Others too

## **PROGRAM LOGISTICS**

- Materials, Supplies, Office and Program Space are essential
  - Adequate
  - Clearly Identified
  - Secure

## **SAFE SPACE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

- Transform the space into a vibrant teen center
- Create a comfortable lounge area
- Provide a conference table and work space where students can meet and plan
- Ensure adequate open space in the activity areas
- Decorate the walls
- Post inspiring quotes and high expectations for student achievement
- Showcase program activities and youth experiences through their own words and pictures

## **STAFFING**

- There are many types of staff you will be working with
- Be sure staff enjoy working with older youth
- Be sure staff have a passion for youth development
- Be sure all staff meet with the minimum qualifications for an instructional aide
- Be sure all staff and volunteers fulfill their health screening and fingerprinting clearance requirements
- It is recommended staff have certifications in CPR and First Aid

## **TRAINING**

- Academic Areas including alignment with the instructional day
- Content Learning Standards and specific subject matter areas
- Team building
- Policies and Procedures
- Youth Development, Youth Leadership, and Youth Engagement
- Classroom Management
- Conflict Resolution
- Emergency Procedures
- Evaluation and Continuous Improvement
- Use of positive techniques to guide the behavior of older youth
- Physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of adolescence



## SCHEDULING

- Know what 15 hours or more the program will be in operation
- Post the schedule of activities and give it to all stakeholders
- Schedule a balance of required components and activities including:
  - Academics
  - Enrichment
  - Recreation
  - Curricular
- Coordinate programming and schedule with the school's:
  - Minimum Days
  - Holidays
  - Parent Conference Periods
  - School Special Events

## PROGRAMMING

- Offer a broad array of activities
- Promote opportunities for:
  - Skill building and mastery to support academic achievement
  - Access to enrichment, fitness, and recreation
- Academic Activities
  - Technology
  - Reading
  - Math
  - Science
  - Arts
  - Credit Recovery
  - CAHSEE Prep
- Enrichment Activities
  - Photography, Music, Sewing, Dance, etc.
  - Leadership
  - Sports
  - Service-learning
  - Tutoring
  - Mentoring
  - Financial Literacy

## MAKING RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS COUNT

- Consistent communication is essential
- Schedule regular meetings
- Set governance and communications structures
- Make custodial arrangements

- Plan for careful use of shared space
- Communicate with families
- Invite school district staff to special events
- Promote positive behaviors
- Identify procedures for continuous improvement and evaluation

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

- Youth development is an approach to working with young people that defines outcomes based on the developmental needs of youth.
- Resiliency research demonstrates that young people who succeed have the advantage of three critical elements in their lives: caring relationships; high, clear and fair expectations; and opportunities for participation and contribution (Youth Development Guide, CNYD, 2001).
- In the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program, the concept is demonstrated by providing young people with the opportunity to participate in the design, delivery, and evaluation of the program.
- This effectively creates an environment that supports youth in meeting their personal needs and building the skills necessary to function successfully in their daily lives.

## DEVELOP THE CULTURE, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM

- Culture
  - Build a positive supportive environment based in mutual respect and ownership for the program
  - Program activities must be directly linked to youth development principles and outcomes providing students the opportunities to navigate through different settings, situations, and challenges
- Program
  - Foster a sense of youth leadership
  - Provide a balance of activities focused on experiential learning
- Curriculum
  - Align with school activities and content learning standards
  - Activities are anchored in service-learning and project-based learning opportunities helping to make learning relevant and connected to the real-world.

## **INCLUDING YOUTH AS PARTNERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROGRAM**

- Youth must be included in the process at the start-up point
- Tap into school youth leaders (i.e., ASB students)
- Include participants in the branding and marketing of the program
- Create youth committees or an advisory board to assist you with planning and program implementation
- Teach students about becoming trustees and stewards of the program

## **References**

### **California AfterSchool Network, [www.afterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org)**

California After-School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool

### **California Department of Education: After School Programs Office, [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov)**

Request for Application for Programs Proposing to Serve High School Students  
Outcome Measures and Certified Assurances

### **Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD), [www.cnyd.org](http://www.cnyd.org)**

Youth Development Guide (2001)

### **Learning Point Associates, <http://ppics.learningpt.org/ppics/>**

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Annual Performance Report: Paper Forms for Center

## **Author Information**

**Michelle R. Perrenoud** has worked in the fields of youth development, organizational leadership, and after school for the past twenty years. She currently works with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in the Curriculum and Instructional Services (CIS) Division. She is the Region 11 Project Coordinator for the After School Technical Assistance Unit. Michelle serves as the Regional Facilitator for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs Local Learning Community and provides technical assistance and capacity building for more than 120 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC ASSETs funded programs throughout Los Angeles County. Michelle is a member of the California Department of Education Statewide High School ASSETs Planning Group. Michelle is also the founder and principle of Mindset Solutions: A Leadership Training, Development, and Coaching Firm.

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### Join the Network Older Youth Committee

The Older Youth Committee is committed to amplifying the needs of older youth by supporting innovative best practices among middle and high school after school practitioners. Committee membership is free, open to all, and subject to your availability and inspiration. Committee meetings happen every two months via toll free conference call. Meet with other high school practitioners, program directors, and statewide leadership and learn how to more effectively serve high school youth. [www.afterschoolnetwork.org](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org)

### Attend the Step Up High School Summit



Every November the Network hosts the Step Up High School After School Summit in San Diego. Program administrators, high school after school practitioners and high school principals are encouraged to attend. The Summit will focus on successful strategies for high school after school programs.

[www.afterschoolnetwork.org/step-up](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/step-up)

### Add your program to the Network High School Program Directory

The High School Directory is a way for high school after school programs to locate other programs to network, share promising practices with programs of similar interest areas. Add your program to the directory and locate other programs with similar focus areas or geography.

[www.afterschoolnetwork.org/hs\\_directory](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/hs_directory)



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Lead Strategically.  
Work Collaboratively.  
Act Intentionally.