

DRAFT

Using Practice to Inform Policy: Proposed updates to the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program in California

Background:

The [21st Century Community Learning Centers Program](#) is a state-administered, federally funded program that provides five-year grant funding to establish or increase expanded learning programs. The state currently has about \$120 million in 21st CCLC funding and \$550 million in After School Education and Safety (ASES) funding. After over a decade of state administration the field has the opportunity to look back and thoughtfully consider how to shape an effective program within the current context and policy landscape. Much has changed in the last decade; some of the shifts include but are not limited to:

- Passage and implementation of Proposition 49 that increased ASES funding to \$550 million
- New research on student learning loss during the summer months
- Vast experience implementing the grant at the state and local level
- Changes in administration and elected officials
- National conversations about extended and expanded learning time

The proposed legislation has been developed by the [Partnership for Children and Youth](#) (PCY) in partnership with the California Department of Education After School Division and practitioners around the state. Since May 2013, PCY has been conducting outreach to expanded learning experts and practitioners to get feedback on potential legislative changes. To-date PCY has engaged over 120 individuals at over 8 meetings around the state.

The guiding policy goals of the proposal are to:

- Simplify program administration.
- Support high-quality year-round programming for students.
- Strategically use federal funding to maximize impact on students.

1. Maximize 21st CCLC impact by complementing rather than mirroring ASES

Challenges: The current grant allocation percentages were set in 2006 based on the best information that was available at the time and political pressure to align 21st CCLC with ASES (then BASLSNPP). The original 21st CCLC implementation plan was focused on after school funding and provided only a small amount of funding to meet the range of student learning needs throughout the year. Currently children can receive substantial academic and enrichment benefits during the 9 months of the regular school year through after school programs, then lose ground during the 2 ½ -3 months of summer vacation.

Current Law:

- Summer programs are funded through supplemental grants, and only entities applying for or holding existing ASES or 21st CCLC base grants were eligible to apply.

Potential Solutions:

Make 21st CCLC complementary to ASES by targeting needs not covered by ASES including year-round, summer, and high school programs. Specifically:

- Priority points would be given to applicants that demonstrate that the proposed program provides year-round learning opportunities. Applicants could either apply for both after school and summer programming to access priority points, or they could demonstrate that the proposed program was filling a gap, and complementing an existing program, to create a year-round system.
- Applicants for summer (or “supplemental”) grants would no longer have to be the same entity that holds the existing “base,” or after school, ASES or 21st CCLC grant.
- Clarify that 21st CCLC programs should “coordinate” with the school day programming as opposed to “align”.
- Provide statutory definitions:
 - A **year-round expanded learning program** applicant is defined as one of the following: an applicant that operates both after school and summer programs, an applicant that offers summer programming to complement existing locally operated and funded after school programs, an applicant that offers after school programs to complement existing locally operated and funded summer programs.
 - The term **expanded learning** refers to before and after school programs, intersession and summer programs that complement school day and school year learning, and that are operated in partnership between schools and local community partners.

2. Update ASES and 21st CCLC reporting requirements

Challenges: The current accountability system in ASES and 21st CCLC law is overly cumbersome and has limited utility for CDE, programs and other stakeholders. A decade of program administration has yielded new insight on the data that is most useful to collect, technology that can more efficiently track student outcomes, and the processes that improve programming for students.

Current Law:

- Requires programs to submit annual outcome-based data for evaluation, including required outcomes of school day and program attendance, and “optional” outcomes (one must be selected) of test scores, skill development, homework completion, or positive behavioral change.
- Required the state to order an independent statewide evaluation to be submitted by 2011. This statute has expired.

Potential Solutions:

- Remove the requirements for programs to submit student level data on academic performance (test scores), skill development, homework completion, and positive behavioral changes.

- Require programs to continue submitting participating pupil data by their student identifiers including school day attendance on an annual basis and program attendance on a semi-annual basis.
- Require programs to submit evidence of a program quality improvement process, based on the Department's guidance on program quality standards on an annual basis.
- Require that CDE develop an annual report to the Legislature related to the pupils attending and the program quality of funded expanded learning programs. These data will be derived by matching statewide student identifiers with data in the CALPADS system and may include:(1) Number, geographical distribution and type of sites and grantees participating in the program, (2) Pupil program attendance, as reported semiannually, and pupil schoolday attendance, as reported annually, (3) Statewide tests and assessment scores.(4) Pupil demographics and characteristics, (5) Quality of the program, based on the Department's guidance on quality standards programs, (6) Other pupil and program data as available as determined by the Department.

3. Eliminate Family Literacy and simplify Equitable Access grant application

Challenge: The current 21st CCLC program requires additional applications for direct access and family literacy grants which add unnecessary burdens for both the applicant and CDE.

Current law:

- 10% of total funding must be allocated for Equitable Access (up to \$25,000 per site/year) and Family Literacy grants (up to \$20,000 per site/year).
- Federal law allows (but does not require) funding to be used to provide literacy services to family members of students served.

Potential Solutions:

- 5% of total funding would be available for Equitable Access grants.
- Applicants would request equitable access funding within the main body of their application, including a brief justification of their request. They would no longer have to complete a separate application.
- Family literacy activities would continue to be an allowable use of funds, but not a required program element.