



Paving the Way: Developing Pathways for Expanded Learning Educators into Teaching

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Final Report Brief

As schools and educators return to in-person instruction and teacher shortages persist, California is in great need of well-prepared and diverse teachers. Many California expanded learning educators — which includes anyone who works in a before or after school program, in a summer program, or in any out-of-school-time program (OST) — have the necessary characteristics, experiences, and competencies that position them well to become the kinds of teachers California's students need. However, work is needed to coordinate across systems at the local and state levels to provide this workforce with access to high quality teacher preparation pathways.

Between March and August 2021, the California AfterSchool Network (CAN) and its partners explored potential pathways for expanded learning educators to become credentialed teachers, with a particular focus on bilingual expanded learning educators.

[The final report on which this brief is based can be found here.](#)

The Opportunity

California would be well-served to tap into the expanded learning educator workforce to address teacher shortages for the following reasons:

- There are over 30,000 expanded learning staff that work in publicly funded expanded learning programs at 4,500 schools across California, serving over 900,000 students. (For more information, see [section 3 of the full report](#))
- This workforce is growing significantly especially since every local education agency (LEA) will have an Expanded Learning Opportunity Program (ELO-P), growing the opportunities for Teacher Pathway programs for this workforce to become systemic in California.
- The expanded learning workforce is highly representative of California’s students and are often from the same community they serve. (For more information, see [section 3 of the full report](#))
- Expanded learning educators possess essential teaching competencies and many see their experience in expanded learning as stepping stones to becoming teachers. Commonly used expanded learning educator competency standards are well-aligned with the California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). (For more information, and a crosswalk of commonly used expanded learning educator competencies and the TPEs, see [section 4 of the full report](#))

Characteristics Of An Effective Pathway

To address the state’s teacher shortage and support equity-driven student outcomes, teacher preparation pathways for expanded learning educators should utilize some unique strategies to assure their effectivity. CAN and its partners explored potential models for high quality teacher preparation for the expanded learning workforce with a particular focus on the teacher residency model. (For more information, see [section 5 of the full report](#))



At minimum, teacher preparation pathways for expanded learning educators should include the following (For more details, see [section 6 of the full report](#)):

- Flexible schedules to accommodate continued work in expanded learning settings
- Recognition of prior expanded learning experience
- Supervised clinical practice/on-the-job training, with opportunities for some of this practice to take place in expanded learning settings
- Fair wages that compensate candidates for the time they spend teaching
- Mentorship and coaching provided by compensated experienced teachers
- Wraparound supports to assist expanded learning teacher candidates

Community of Practice Spotlights

LA’s BEST

LA’s BEST Afterschool Enrichment Program (LA’s Best) provides afterschool education, enrichment, and recreation programs to students across the Los Angeles region.

Using the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California, LA’s BEST provides robust training and professional development to their expanded learning staff. The team provides training on leadership; behavioral management; meeting the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of students; and caring for students who may face particular challenges in school or at home. Staff are also trained to help children build self-esteem and guide students to set and achieve goals. A unique part of the staff development includes teaching staff how to explore their students’ interests and then create programs that reflect those interests and choices.

LA’s BEST expanded learning educators mirror the demographics of the expanded learning workforce in California. Over 90% of their staff are people of color and many are from the same community they serve. One in four LA’s BEST staff were also part of the program as young people. Additionally, according to a 2021 Staff Survey conducted by the Claremont University Evaluation Center, 45% of LA’s BEST staff are interested in obtaining a pre-K–12 teaching position after their employment with LA’s BEST and 70% of staff stated that LA’s BEST has significantly shaped their interest in teaching as a career.

California Teaching Fellows Foundation (CTFF) and Partners

Through strategic relationships with community colleges, public universities, and private colleges, CTFF recruits college students to work in afterschool and expanded learning programs as part of a pipeline strategy to support the development of potential new teachers.

CTFF is part of a larger “grow your own” pipeline that begins training students from the community to work with students in expanded learning programs and then supports them to enroll in the newly launched Rural Teacher Residency Program. The Rural Teacher Residency Collaborative is a partnership between CTFF, California State University Fresno, the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, and local school districts. Upon completion of the program, new teachers get hired in a nearby district, often in the same one where they completed their residency.

The demographics of the teacher residents mirror those of the districts and their students. Many of the teacher residents are students of color and first generation who are going back into their communities to teach. Additionally, 53% of the mentor teachers are teaching in the district they attended for their K–12 education. One partner district reported that 100% of their mentor teachers were formerly K–12 students in their district.

Recommendations

The following strategies can be implemented to create pathways for Expanded Learning professionals into the teaching profession. They can also be employed to create “grow your own” approaches to other workforce challenges including the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten, Community Schools, and other education and social service careers. Such strategies can help California pave the way for a strong and lasting workforce supporting the success of California’s children, youth, and families.



Recommendations for Local Partnerships

Local partnerships must consider the needs, past experiences, and competencies of expanded learning educators when designing programs and curriculum. Local partnerships should implement the following strategies to support expanded learning teacher pathways:

- Conduct targeted outreach and recruitment to expanded learning educators
- Design programs to respond to the unique needs of the expanded learning workforce
- Identify opportunities and test approaches for candidates to demonstrate competencies developed through previous expanded learning experience, with opportunities for candidates to earn credit for prior learning
- Identify opportunities and test approaches for some supervised clinical practice to take place in high quality expanded learning settings
- Document and communicate this work to support replication and scale



Recommendations for State Systems

State systems should convene to discuss and advance opportunities for strengthening alignment and coordination across systems and supporting development of expanded learning teacher pathways throughout the state. Leaders of these state systems should implement the following strategies to support expanded learning teacher pathways:

- Support the development and strengthening of local partnerships between Teacher Preparation Programs, Local Educational Agencies, and Expanded Learning Programs
- Coordinate information sharing between agencies and systems about priorities, initiatives, and other opportunities related to growing a diverse teacher workforce
- Strengthen data collection on the expanded learning workforce
- Consider opportunities to leverage the expanded learning workforce for current and planned educator preparation investments

Recommendations for Intermediary Organizations

Intermediary organizations play a critical role in supporting expanded learning teacher pathways. Intermediary organizations should consider the following strategies:

- Provide the expanded learning field with information and resources
- Educate stakeholders about teacher pathway funding opportunities; provide technical assistance to apply and use funding
- Raise awareness and understanding about the Expanded Learning workforce
- Document and communicate information about model pathways, programs, bright spots, and lessons learned
- Support the replication and scaling of promising programs
- Support collaboration at state and local levels; convene state system leaders to discuss opportunities for strengthening alignment
- Explore opportunities to leverage funding streams to help sustain high-quality teacher pathways, i.e. registered apprenticeship program
- Leverage existing networks or programs to provide holistic supports for expanded learning staff to become teachers
- Pursue partnership with philanthropic organizations and state systems leaders to support these efforts