

OPEN BADGES IN AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER STATEWIDE PILOT PROJECT

California AfterSchool Network

PROPOSAL

Introduction

If the expanded learning movement is to continue to prosper, its programs must be recognized as important places of learning. The use and awarding of digital badges to recognize the learning that takes place within these programs represents an excellent strategy to accomplish this. The California AfterSchool Network (CAN) and its partners believe that by using digital badges to acknowledge the learning of staff and youth participants, these programs will benefit in the following ways:

- Because program leaders must think through and explicitly state what learning will take place in program activities or clubs that are to be recognized by a digital badge; this specificity raises the bar for learning accountability and promotes a competency-based approach.
- The awarding of digital badges defines the learning that goes on within a program for outsiders, which is vital if expanded learning programs are to be recognized as important places of learning. Badges can become important, visible evidence that expanded learning programs take learning seriously and apply rigorous standards to learning outcomes.
- The adult program staff members often acquire important knowledge and skills through professional development and years of experience. Youth acquire valuable skills and knowledge through their participation in specific expanded learning activities. Both deserve an artifact that documents their learning and—importantly—can be shared with peers, future employers, and those allowing admittance to higher education.
- Finally, we believe that because digital badges are relatively new to the expanded learning environment in California, it is important that we take steps to educate stakeholders and increase their understanding and valuing of digital badges.

State Context and Readiness

The State of California provides the largest public investment for afterschool and summer programs in the country. Over 4,400 K-12 afterschool programs leverage state and federal funds to provide expanded learning programs for nearly 450,000 children and youth daily in California. Many of the programs receive funding for summer learning activities. Thousands more city and county funded programs operate through community-based youth serving organizations, parks and recreation facilities, museums, libraries, and elsewhere. Great support exists in the state for youth programs outside of the classroom, as indicated by the number one ranking that California received in the report recently released by the Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3pm: Afterschool Programs in Demand*. The funding of afterschool and summer programs by the state is very secure due to Proposition 49, passed by California voters in 2002. This proposition provided for the yearly distribution of program funds at a consistent level.

While some organizations are awarding digital badges, this is relatively new to organizations that serve youth. Few youth participants or adult staff receive any kind of visible acknowledgement of the learning and skill acquisition that happen within afterschool or summer programs. The two organizations best known for promoting the use of digital badges are Temescal Associates and the Beyond the Bell Program of Los Angeles Unified School District.

The general understanding and valuing of digital badges to acknowledge learning in afterschool and summer programs is relatively low. But from our experience, once advocates and organizations have an awareness of the digital badge movement, they are very interested in how they could be involved. The need for “awareness building” among afterschool and summer program leaders can be successfully implemented because of the sophisticated networks related to afterschool and summer programs.

Temescal Associates has launched a number of digital badge projects for multiple audiences, described below. Working with Temescal gives CAN the confidence that the training and technical aspects of these pilots can be replicated.

To address the primary barrier, the lack of understanding and valuing of digital badges to acknowledge learning, CAN will partner with others to launch an educational campaign targeting afterschool and summer advocates and providers. CAN is already a member of a coalition of organizations focused on building awareness of digital badges.

A second barrier is funding. We believe that the proposed project will demonstrate effectiveness of awarding digital badges, and thereby provide the data to raise funds to expand this work.

Network Capacity

CAN is well equipped to manage the Digital Badges in After School and Summer Programs Pilot Project. Two recent examples illustrate that CAN has a demonstrated record of accomplishment in project implementation and management. One example is the creation of Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs in California and the second is CAN’s implementation of the largest STEM Learning initiative in the nation with a focus on after-school and summer learning programs, the Power of Discovery: STEM².

The Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California were developed in two distinct phases (Phase I and Phase II) through a partnership between the California Department of Education After School Division and CAN’s Quality Committee. The first phase began in the fall of 2012 through a collaborative field-based process with representatives of the field, CAN, evaluation specialists, and the California Department of Education with a strong emphasis on public input. Over both phases of the project, over 450 stakeholders informed the development of the Quality Standards and Standards in Action. In early 2014, CAN’s Quality Committee convened a work group to advance phase II of the project, which established Standards in Action and a *Crosswalk Between the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning and Quality Assessment Tools* (Crosswalk). The work group submitted its final recommendations on the Standards in Action and the Crosswalk in June 2014. CAN’s work on the Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California demonstrate that CAN has a strong capacity to engage the field in complex, iterative processes with demanding timelines resulting in powerful products.

The Power of Discovery: STEM² initiative illustrates CAN’s ability to convene and empower diverse stakeholders to achieve powerful impact at a large statewide scale. In October 2011 CAN

implemented the JumpStarting STEM pilot, connecting 17 programs at 280 sites in all 11 regions of California to curriculum and professional development to support STEM learning. CAN was simultaneously convening multiple stakeholders and work groups to develop the STEM in OST Strategic Plan, ultimately supported by a variety of funders resulting in the Power of Discovery: STEM² initiative. From 2012 – 2015 CAN has worked with statewide partners and leaders to establish 5 Regional Innovation Support Providers that have worked within their regions to engage over 600 expanded learning programs, directly impacting over 11,000 youth with quality STEM learning opportunities. Additionally, CAN developed a variety of tools and resources to support STEM learning, including the www.powerofdiscovery.org website. Project evaluations have surfaced positive results for programs, staff, and youth participants and the project is being sustained after three years with public and private investment under the leadership of the California Department of Education. The Power of Discovery: STEM² demonstrates CAN's ability to empower the field to advance an unfamiliar concept (STEM) with positive impact on quality and practice.

CAN staff and the CAN Leadership Team will provide oversight and support for this project. CAN will use its influence to educate and build awareness of the value of digital badges. Temescal Associates will serve as lead consultant and leader of field activities to complete the deliverables. In its role, CAN staff will participate in strategic meetings and the CAN Leadership Team will provide ongoing guidance to the project, based on regular communication from Temescal Associates. CAN will provide communicate regularly with the field about how to leverage digital badges to maximize measurable impact on students and demonstrate skill building for staff. The purposes of such communications will be to educate the field about how to engage with digital badges and to offer examples and promising practices surfaced in the Open Badges in Afterschool and Summer Pilot.

About Temescal Associates

In light of its experience in competency-based learning and digital badges, Temescal Associates (TA) is uniquely qualified to lead this work. TA is a consulting firm dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education, youth development, and expanded learning programs. TA will serve as the primary content expert and provide on-the-ground training and support for the badge pilots. TA has a long track record of collaboration as shown by their leadership of the Learning in Afterschool & Summer Project (<http://www.learninginafterschool.org/index.htm>) and the Expanded Learning 360/365 Project (<http://www.temescalassoc.com/db/el/>), which is dedicated to promoting practices that help young people develop their social emotional skills.

TA has launched a *Center for Digital Badges* (<http://www.temescalassoc.com/db/>), which offers information, resources, and tools on digital badges. TA has also built the capacity of several organizations that are now awarding badges to adults, afterschool youth participants, and exemplar afterschool programs. These organizations include the California School-Age Consortium, the YMCA of Greater Long Beach Youth Institute and its replication sites, and the Central Valley Digital Badge Project. The latter is a collaborative of several Central Valley afterschool stakeholders, which TA helped to form. Stakeholders include the Tulare and Fresno County Offices of Education, the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation, California Teaching Fellows Foundation, and an advisor from the After School Division at the California Department of Education. TA also formed the *Committee on Digital Badges in Expanded Learning*, a group of organizations across California that are working together to educate afterschool stakeholders and advocates on understanding and valuing digital badges to recognize learning that takes place outside of school.

Advancing digital badges is in alignment with all three of the goals of the Mott Statewide After School Networks. The Digital Badges in After School and Summer Program Pilot Project will advance systems that ensure high quality by creating new ways for expanded learning programs in California to demonstrate student learning and staff capacity. By demonstrating student and staff capacity, badging efforts will create new platforms to demonstrate the impact of expanded learning programs and thus, new ways to advocate for investing and sustaining expanded learning. In order to do so, the project will establish and leverage a variety of partnerships.

The California AfterSchool Network is eager to advance this project in partnership with Temescal Associates and its Center for Digital Badges because it aligns with CAN's strategic priorities. The project is supportive of CAN's strategic priority of advancing program quality by creating new ways for programs to measure and demonstrate student skill development as well as specific outcomes and impacts for students. Another relevant strategic priority for CAN is leadership development. Digital badges provide a new and innovative platform to measure staff development and specific skills developed by expanded learning program staff. CAN, like Mott, also seeks to increase partnerships in support of expanded learning programs and influence policies that support and sustain expanded learning programs. Therefore, this project has strong alignment with CAN's strategic priorities.

While CAN has successfully engaged the expanded learning field and many of its stakeholders and partners, one thing CAN lacks is strong expertise and experience with Digital Badges. Therefore, Temescal Associates is a perfect partner to advance this statewide effort.

About California AfterSchool Network's Fiscal Sponsor: Foundation for California Community Colleges

The Foundation for California Community Colleges (Foundation) has been fiscal sponsor to dozens of projects since 2000. Its fiscal sponsorship services allow charitable education projects, both nonprofit and governmental, to focus on program activities and leverage additional support while the Foundation provides efficient back office support to manage grants, contributions, and earned income. With a full-time staff of approximately 130, the Foundation is a fully professionalized organization with expertise essential to full-service fiscal sponsorship. Fiscal, administration, human resources, technology and grant management services are standard to the Foundation's fiscal sponsorship. With a budget of over \$30 million, the Foundation has the capacity to manage millions of dollars of funding. Grants and contracts currently managed by the Foundation range from \$10,000 to well over \$1,000,000 a year, and include federal, state, corporate and foundation funders. A full-time finance team managed by a chief financial officer has extensive experience managing complex budgets, grants, and reporting requirements.

The Foundation is also directly involved in digital badging and has a strong interest in the project. In partnership with Linked Learning Alliance, it has created a work-based learning system called LaunchPath. Initiated by a \$1.2 million investment from JPMorgan Chase, LaunchPath is designed to connect employers, educators, and students to close the skills gap by scaling quality work-based learning opportunities in priority industries for high school and community college students. Specific elements of the program include a matching algorithm to identify intern candidates, digital badges to capture evidence of learning, human resource services that simplify the process of hosting a paid internship, and a resource library to highlight best practices. LaunchPath utilizes digital badging to certify student achievement. These micro-credentials were developed using the Mozilla Open Badging Framework to allow students to share their earned badges across their online environment. LaunchPath is primed to scale its nascent badging ecosystem by badging the complete work-based learning continuum, industry-specific certifications, a broader set of soft

skills, and other student experiences inside and outside of the classroom. By expanding the types of badges on LaunchPath, the system will be able to better match students with appropriate career opportunities and serve as a more credible certifier of career readiness.

Strength of Partnership

The partners cited below have a wide range of expertise including technical, education, professional development, and afterschool programming. Note: Competency-based education is not about time—it is about what you know and are able to do. These digital badges used with our partners will have descriptions and criteria as part of the badge meta-data. In addition to Temescal Associates and the Foundation for California Community Colleges, project partners include:

Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE): FCOE’s mission is to support strong academic programs, career technical education, and visual and performing arts as they work to create a culture-rich environment where the whole child is important. The Department of Safe and Healthy Kids prides itself in being a catalyst for student success by designing various programs with a deep understanding that young people deserve the opportunity to contribute in real and meaningful ways. Through successful grant development and contracts for services to districts, the department has grown into a \$30 million campaign connecting youth to the school system and community by providing young people genuine opportunities to contribute to their well-being. FCOE will work alongside the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation to organize a “Fresno Summer of Learning” initiative, which will pilot the awarding of digital badges to young people who complete summer learning activities in expanded learning programs. FCOE will also assist efforts to build awareness by convening and leading orientations on digital badges to other provider organizations in the Central Valley.

Central Valley Afterschool Foundation (CVAf) supports high-quality afterschool programs through training, communications, funding partnerships, and public awareness initiatives benefiting nearly 40,000 children and youth in a six-county region. CVAf will work alongside FCOE to organize a “Fresno Summer of Learning” initiative, which will pilot the awarding of digital badges to young people who complete summer learning activities in expanded learning programs. CVAf will also assist in efforts to build awareness by convening and leading orientations on digital badges to other provider organizations in the Central Valley.

Children’s Creativity Museum in San Francisco (CCM) is an interactive art and technology museum for kids. Their mission is to nurture the 3C’s of 21st-century skills – Creativity, Collaboration and Communication – in all youth and families. They believe that the ability to think critically, collaborate broadly, communicate effectively and generate and prototype multiple solutions, is the core of a 21st-century education. CCM will pilot the awarding of digital badges to young people who complete learning activities sponsored by the Museum. CCM will also assist in efforts to build awareness by convening and leading orientations on digital badges to other museums in the Bay Area that sponsor programs for young people.

YMCA of San Francisco – Chinatown (Chinatown Y) is dedicated to building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities by enriching the lives of all people in spirit, mind, and body. Over the past 103 years, Chinatown Y has instilled a legacy of volunteerism, community service, and youth development by providing after school programs, free fitness in three neighborhood schools, teen center, mentoring, art and ballet classes, family programming, and summer programs to those who pass through its doors. The Chinatown Y will pilot the awarding of digital badges to high school youth who complete a curriculum-based youth leadership project related to health. This project

includes Chinatown Y working with a doctor from the Chinatown Hospital to learn about health issues for kids and leading workshops for younger youth. The Chinatown Y will also assist in efforts to build awareness by participating in orientation workshops and sharing its use of digital badges with other organizations.

Alternatives in Action (AIA) is a non-profit organization with the vision of creating and implementing programs that enhance the quality of education and community life for children and youth in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Their accomplishments include the development of “The Home Project” in Alameda, Bay Area School of Enterprise (Charter School), and Alternatives in Action Charter High School. AIA will pilot the awarding of digital badges to high school youth in its “youth worker readiness” program and its Summer Bridge program. AIA will also assist in efforts to build awareness efforts by participating in orientation sessions on digital badges for other organizations.

The California School-Age Consortium (CalSAC): CalSAC’s vision is that out-of-school time will be a public priority throughout California, and that through its leadership, out-of-school time professionals and programs will be valued — like teachers and schools — as an essential service supported by government, business and community resources. Since 1982, CalSAC has worked to support and advance professionals and organizations in providing quality and affordable out-of-school time programs. For this project, CalSAC will seek to expand their current awarding of digital badges by incorporating five new digital badges to recognize adult staff who complete new trainings. Badges will be designed in partnership with Temescal Associates.

Public Profit specializes in program evaluation, data books, surveys and assessments, with emphasis on services for programs reaching children and their families. Public Profit understands the common constraints youth organizations face, and honor their commitment to serving the greater good. Public Profit leads teams through important discussions about what kinds of data are meaningful, and how to use information to make stronger organizations. Public Profit will compose a report that documents the impact of this project and explore the qualitative, process-oriented components of the work.

After School Division at the California Department of Education (ASD/CDE) provides leadership, guidance, training, and resources that support opportunities for students to become healthy, productive, and lifelong learners. This division oversees the funding of and the support for the After School Education & Safety (ASES), After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs), and 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) programs. ASD/CDE will serve as a critical advisor on all aspects of this project.

Work Plan and Expected Outcomes

The goals of this project are to:

- Raise the awareness of digital badges and their value to expanded learning programs.
- Pilot the use of digital badges with several partners in California.
- Prepare a report citing the impact of this project and lessons learned that will be of use to the broader field.

The outcomes of this project are:

- Increased awareness and valuing of digital badges in expanded learning programs to acknowledge the learning that takes place. This will be accomplished by presentations (3) and outreach to expanded learning stakeholders (large-scale providers, school districts, afterschool conferences). This will also include distribution of formative evaluation, blog

posts, and other electronic means. Audiences will include policymakers, funders, large-scale providers, local children’s museums, and community-based youth programs. This work will be organized and conducted by members of the Committee on Digital Badges in Expanded Learning.

- Five different pilots in expanded learning settings (ASES and ASSETs afterschool programs, community-based YMCA programs, charter high school, and museums that offer youth programs) that demonstrate the use and effectiveness of digital badges within expanded learning programs.

Temescal Associates will use a process proven successful to train and prepare providers to institute the awarding of digital badges. In this process, several questions will be addressed:

1. **Ask “why?”:** The first step for an organization is to provide an orientation to staff to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of what digital badges are and the benefits that they can provide to those who receive them. All program leaders should meet to discuss the reasons to introduce digital badges. Is the aim of introducing badges to acknowledge learning, motivate recipients, or other reasons?
2. **Determine which activities will be included in the first round of digital badges:** It is useful to start with those activities or clubs that have clear learning goals and products to demonstrate acquired skills. Digital badges can also be awarded solely based on attendance, where there is no final product or demonstration required. A good example would be a training or outing.
3. **Determine the specifics - learning goals, criteria, and evidence:** It is important that the badge issuer think through the learning goals (knowledge and skills that will be acquired). The badge issuer also needs to cite the criteria that must be met in order for a participant to earn the badge, and evidence of meeting that criteria.
4. **Determine how the badges will be awarded and managed:** There are several web-based software applications that have been developed to award and manage digital badges. Factors to be considered in choosing a badge application are cost, ease of use, the system’s ability to “push” badges to a social media site and the Mozilla Foundation’s “digital backpack”, and compliance with local, state, and federal digital privacy laws.
5. **Determine who will create and how the badges will be created:** Badges can be created by program staff or youth using online badge creation software, or by an outside organization.
6. **Design the badge by considering image, shape, color, etc.:** In designing badges, one can choose from a number of traditional badge shapes. The look and feel of digital badges can carry a wealth of information for badge recipients and for organizations that will view and ascribe value to the badges.
7. **Deliver the digital badge to the recipient using a “digital backpack”:** In order for people to receive their badges, they must create a Mozilla “digital backpack”. To create your backpack, visit <http://backpack.openbadges.org>.
8. **How recipients can make use of the digital badges:** Once a badge recipient “pushes” an earned digital badge into a Mozilla backpack, a link to that badge can easily be shared with others via social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), placed on a résumé, or included with applications for higher education. One can also share a badge’s metadata, which cites who issued the badge, what was done to earn it, and sometimes links to digital evidence such as a video, sound, or image file that demonstrate learnings and skills.

Below is the work plan for each of goal.

GOAL: Raise awareness of digital badges and their value to expanded learning programs

Activity	Date Range	Who Will be Involved
Expand the <i>Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning</i> , a work group to promote the awareness and valuing of digital badges	Fall 2015	California AfterSchool Network, After School Division at CDE, Badge Alliance, CalSAC, Central Valley Afterschool Foundation, Youth Institute (YMCA of Greater Long Beach), Fresno County Office of Education, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Temescal Associates, Alternatives in Action, the Children's Creativity Museum in SF, Chinatown YMCA of SF, and Public Profit.
Identify the organizations and influentials to contact	Fall 2015	Above
Develop and distribute educational materials	Winter 2015	Above
Conduct orientation workshops (3) on digital badges for afterschool and summer programs including those offered by Bay Area museums that sponsor youth programs	Winter 2015 through Spring 2016	CAN, Temescal Associates, and Carol Tang, Executive Director of Children's Creativity Museum.

GOAL: Pilot the use of digital badges with several partners in California

Activity	Date Range	Who Will be Involved
Pilot the awarding of digital badges with Alternatives in Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for this pilot with AIA staff Training and orientation with AIA staff Award digital badges to AIA youth participants 	Fall and Winter 2015	Temescal Associates/Center for Digital Badges and program leaders from AIA
Pilot the awarding of digital badges with Chinatown YMCA of SF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for this pilot with Chinatown YMCA staff Training and orientation with Chinatown YMCA staff Award digital badges to Chinatown YMCA youth participants 	Winter 2015	Temescal Associates/Center for Digital Badges and program leaders from Chinatown YMCA of SF
Pilot the awarding of digital badges with Children's Creativity Museum, SF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for this pilot with Children's Creativity Museum staff Training and orientation with Children's Creativity Museum staff Award of digital badges to Children's Creativity Museum youth participants 	Winter 2015	Temescal Associates/Center for Digital Badges and program leaders from Children's Creativity Museum in SF

Pilot the development of a “Summer of Learning” initiative with the Central Valley Afterschool Foundation (CVAF) and Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE), culminating with the awarding of digital badges: Plan for this pilot with CVAF/FCOE staff Training and orientation with CVAF/FCOE staff Award digital badges to CVAF/FCOE youth participants	Fall 2015 through Summer 2016	Temescal Associates/Center for Digital Badges and program leaders from Central Valley Afterschool Foundation and Fresno County Office of Education
Expand the use of digital badges by CalSAC by incorporating five new digital badges to recognize adult staff who complete new training offerings. Badges will be designed in partnership with Temescal Associates.	Winter 2015	Temescal Associates/Center for Digital Badges and program leaders from CalSAC

GOAL: Prepare a report citing the impact of this project and lessons learned that will be of use to the broader field.

Activity	Date Range	Who Will be Involved
Collection of project data	Fall 2015 through Summer 2016	All organizations involved in our badge pilots, CAN, Temescal Associates, and Public Profit.
Develop a report on project’s impact and learnings	Summer 2016	CAN, Temescal Associates, and Public Profit.
Sharing of evaluation findings with others, including other state afterschool networks through distribution of the report and blog posts on the findings	End of project: Summer 2016	CAN, Temescal Associates, and Public Profit.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Project Expenses	Grant Amount	Narrative
Consultant - Temescal Associates	\$30,000	Includes co-leadership of the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning, orientations and preparations for partner organizations to issue digital badges, design of badges, work with Public Profit on the evaluation.
Consultant – Public Profit	\$3,000	Will collect needed data and information, and draft final report.
Travel	\$5,150	Travel for in-person meeting of the advisory group, and travel of trainers to conduct orientations for stakeholders to raise awareness.
Event Costs	\$750	This will cover the rental of needed space for project and educational convenings.
Telephone and Fax	\$0	These costs will be provided in-kind.
Printing	\$2,000	Printing of briefing papers, handouts for digital badge/pilot providers, project evaluation report, and other outreach articles to raise awareness.

Postage and Delivery	\$1,000	Outreach mailings of briefing papers and other outreach materials to raise awareness among expanded learning stakeholders.
Office Supplies	\$1,580	This will cover the cost of general office supplies.
Other direct costs	0	These costs will be provided in-kind.
Indirect - 15%	\$6,520	Fiscal sponsorship.
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$50,000	

In-Kind	Amount	Narrative
Temescal Associates	\$4,000	Preparation of outreach materials for the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning, staffing for outreach mailings, and development and leading digital badge workshops to raise awareness. Also, this in-kind covers the cost of preparing and managing the digital badge pilots not covered above.
Children's Creativity Museum	\$1,500	Participation in the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning and participation of staff in planning and orientation meetings for digital badge pilot projects, and collection of data/participation with evaluator.
Fresno COE/Central Valley Afterschool Foundation	\$1,500	Participation in the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning and participation of staff in planning and orientation meetings for digital badge pilot projects, and collection of data/participation with evaluator.
Alternatives in Action	\$1,500	Participation in the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning and participation of staff in planning and orientation meetings for digital badge pilot projects, and collection of data/participation with evaluator.
Chinatown YMCA, SF	\$1,500	Participation in the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning and participation of staff in planning and orientation meetings for digital badge pilot projects, and collection of data/participation with evaluator.
CalSAC	\$750	Participation in the Committee for Digital Badges in Expanded Learning and participation of staff in planning and design of digital badges, and collection of data/participation with evaluator.
TOTAL In-Kind	\$10,750	