

How CAN Holds Policy Work

CAN believes the **Out-of-School-Time (OST)** field, including **Expanded Learning**, plays an essential role in advancing the health and well-being of every child. To achieve this, CAN and our partners focus on fundamentally redesigning systems to expand access to high-quality programs, support and nurture our workforce, and strengthen and align resources for children, families, and communities. We advocate for policy changes that address the root causes of inequity and create a more just and equitable landscape for all children and youth.

"CAN is committed to Equity and Justice...CAN acknowledges that our current systems are designed to produce the outcomes they are producing. These systems can be redesigned. CAN applies equity design principles to how CAN works, and integrates equity-driven principles into what CAN does. CAN actively works to create a new way of being, one that is human-centered, socially just, and anti-racist. We recognize that this approach supports the success of all people, and devalues none..."

While CAN advocates and lobbies for policies supportive of Out-of-School Time (OST) access and quality, we also acknowledge that OST programs exist within a broader context that impacts the lives of the children, youth, families, and communities we serve. Therefore, we advocate and lobby for just and equitable human-serving systems including and beyond OST."¹

We recognize those most impacted by policy work are often the least likely to be engaged in the decision-making processes. We strive to build capacity and ensure access to advocacy opportunities for all members of our communities to advance policies that ensure we all thrive.

Purpose of the Policy Framework

The purpose of this framework is to set a high-level, long-term vision that guides CAN's annual priorities for advocacy and policy efforts. The goals outlined in this framework cannot be achieved by any one organization alone, and CAN looks forward to partnering with others across multiple sectors to advance this bold vision.

¹Excerpt from the [CAN Leadership Team Equity Statement](#)

²According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Out- of- School Time (OST) is a supervised program that young people regularly attend when school is not in session. This can include before-and after-school programs on a school campus or facilities such as academic programs (e.g., reading or math focused programs), specialty programs (e.g., sports teams, STEM, arts enrichment), and multipurpose programs that provide an array of activities (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs)." Reference - <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/ost.html>. California has the largest collection of OST programs in the nation consisting of federal, state, local, city, community, and fee-based programs. Each system has its own unique networks, standards, and practices.

Expanded Learning programs are a subset of OST programs in California that receive funding administered by the California Department of Education's Expanded Learning Division and are defined in the California Education Code as "before and after school, summer, and intersession learning experiences that develop the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs and interests of students. Expanded Learning opportunities should be hands-on, engaging, student-centered, results-driven, involve community partners, and complement learning activities in the regular school day/year."

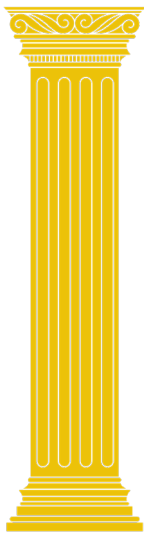
About CAN

CAN's Purpose: The California AfterSchool Network (CAN) exists to make a difference in the health and well-being of children, youth, their families, and their communities by strengthening access to high-quality Out-of-School Time (OST)² programs.

CAN's Vision: We envision compassionate communities that collaborate with OST programs to support whole children, families, and communities so that every young person, and every family is well-known, well-cared for, and prepared to thrive.

CAN's Mission: We provide the resources and support needed by the OST field and its partners across sectors to build high-quality OST programs that improve the lives of California's most vulnerable children, youth, families, and communities.

CAN's Policy Pillars

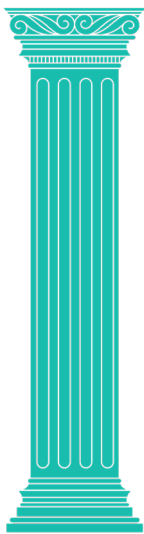


Pillar 1: Expand Access to High-Quality OST Programs

High-quality OST experiences grounded in research promote positive developmental outcomes and create conditions for thriving for the children and youth participating in them.

To ensure students have equitable access to high-quality OST programs, CAN advocates for

- **sustainable funding and resources** to ensure all children and youth in California have equitable access to high-quality OST opportunities.
- **full investment in an OST Technical Assistance infrastructure**, including the current System of Support for Expanded Learning, to enhance the field capacity to implement high-quality opportunities.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)** processes and a quality suite of tools to equip program providers to deliver high-quality experiences grounded in research that promote positive developmental outcomes.
- **equitable data collection** that showcases the positive impacts OST opportunities have on our youth and communities.
- **capacity building** of the OST field, youth, and families to advocate for these programs.

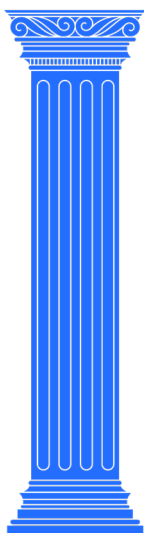


Pillar 2: Support and Nurture our Workforce

Our workforce are valued members of our society; supporting and nurturing them is crucial to sustain high-quality programming and to honor their humanity by creating supportive and respectful conditions that support them to thrive.

To ensure a high-quality workforce that is seen, heard, known, and valued, CAN advocates for

- **wages and benefits** that will nurture a high-quality and thriving life, allowing adults to focus on personal growth instead of worrying about making just enough to survive.
- **continuous staff development** that includes educational and professional mentorship, including access to higher education opportunities and eliminating barriers that prevent career advancement.
- **development of career pathways** into, within, and through OST/Expanded Learning.
- **inclusion and representation** in research and data collection to accurately highlight the significant impact of their work.
- **capacity building** of the workforce to advocate for their vision of a career that is a part of a thriving life.



Pillar 3: Strengthen and Align Resources for Children, Families, and Communities

The OST field is an [essential partner](#) in advancing cross-sector collaborations and transformative initiatives that strengthen and build cohesion amongst multiple resources for children, families, and communities.

To ensure equitable and streamlined access to supports, CAN advocates for

- **robust education funding and resources** that guarantee all students have a high-quality educational experience so they thrive in their chosen educational path, career, and life.
- **robust health and safety resources** that prioritize the physical, social, mental, and emotional well-being of communities. Community members are centered in all aspects of the design, development, and delivery of services to ensure they meet community needs³.
- **environmental justice**, ensuring all communities have equitable access to a healthy, thriving planet and environmental settings now and in the future.
- **navigation pathways** across agencies and sectors to eliminate siloed resources and services, building a “no wrong door” approach so that communities are connected to the services they need.
- **capacity building** of youth and families to advocate for their vision of healthy and thriving communities.

³ Community Needs includes culturally and linguistically appropriate, located in an accessible area, and have accessible hours.