



# California's 2011 Rural After School Summit

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On January 19, 2011, The California AfterSchool Network held its **2<sup>nd</sup> Rural Summit** at the University of California Davis with over 80 participants in attendance. The purpose of the 2011 Rural Afterschool Summit was to **educate and inform** participants on the unique rural perspectives of California program. It also highlighted the successes and challenges of rural after school programs, demonstrated the need for sustaining rural programs, and provided an opportunity for participants to **make recommendations** to strengthen rural programs.

**California leads the nation in after school funding** with its After School Education and Safety (ASES) program. The ASES program, along with the federally funded – state administered 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Program, are able to publicly fund after school programs for approximately 4,517 elementary/middle schools and 345 high schools. Funding levels for elementary and middle schools is based at \$7.50 per student per day and high schools receive approximately \$10.00 per student per day.

This level of funding for after school sites gives over 400,000 California students daily the opportunity to participate in safe, supervised, academically supportive and enrichment based programs, in addition to receiving a nutritious snack. Although a significant investment, (\$550 million yearly for the ASES Program) this funding usually comes in the form of attendance based grants and/or have a matching funds requirement. While these investments are significant contributions, **rural communities struggle** to run effective programming because of the limited scope of the grant.

The Rural Summit focused on **some of the challenges** unique to California after school programs. The morning session of the Rural Summit highlighted different rural perspectives from various stakeholders that included the California Department of Education (CDE), administrators, practitioners, youth, and policy advocates. The afternoon session gave participants an opportunity to break out into roundtable discussions by the top four priority areas as identified by The California AfterSchool Network's (The Network) Rural After School Subcommittee. **The four roundtable groups** and their recommendations are listed on the following page.

For more information on California AfterSchool Network's Rural Subcommittee, go to:

[www.afterschoolnetwork.org/rural](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/rural)



## California's Rural Students

- California's public school students rank as the 10<sup>th</sup> largest absolute rural school enrollment in the U.S.
- More than half of the state's rural students are minorities, and more than one in four is an English Language Learner.
- 85.8% of rural students in California live in poverty. This is over 20% above the National average. Only four states in the nation have higher rural student poverty rates than California. (MS, SC, AL, NM)

Report available at [www.ruraledu.org](http://www.ruraledu.org)

Source: *Why Rural Matters – 2009*  
The most current data available

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## New Rural Best Practices Website!

[www.afterschoolnetwork.org/rural](http://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/rural)

As a result of the common recommendation that came out of each of the roundtable discussion groups, The Network has created a webpage for the Rural Subcommittee highlighting best practices in the following areas:

- What works in rural settings
- Transportation solutions
- Effective dissemination of information to stakeholders, legislators, and the general public for advocacy purposes.

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## Defining Rural for After School Programs

This roundtable group explored the newly defined Rural Locale Codes from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) and recommended the following:

- The rural subcommittee should not accept the current NCES locale codes alone as currently listed on the United States Department of Education (USDE) NCES website to identify rural. It is recommended that the rural subcommittee create an ad-hoc group to further research the definition of rural and come up with various definitions similar to those listed under the CDE's Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP).

### Next Steps:

*The Rural Subcommittee will create an ad-hoc committee to explore the above recommendation and look into the feasibility of creating pilot tests with various definitions and partner with West Ed's Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) for the analysis.*

## Transportation Challenges

This roundtable group explored the challenges and significant cost of funding transportation in their rural communities and recommended the following:

- Look into the feasibility of garnering champions with existing county and local municipalities to offer transportation to youth at discounted rates or free travel in these systems. Also, look into partnering with these transportation agencies and exploring how to expand bus routes to ensure safe and effective transportation in large rural geographic regions.

### Next Steps:

*The Rural Subcommittee will identify effective strategies currently used by rural after school programs and further explore funding possibilities.*

## Advocacy for Rural Programs

This roundtable discussion group focused on the challenges rural programs face when trying to effectively advocate and educate stakeholders in order to garner champions. They recommended the following:

- Provide a training or information on the difference between advocacy and lobbying.

### Next Steps:

*The Rural Subcommittee will partner with The Network's Policy Committee to develop and/or disseminate information to rural programs on the clear difference between advocacy and lobbying. In addition, the subcommittee will identify practical strategies to advance the message of rural after school programs.*

## Allocation/Geographic Distribution of Funding

This roundtable discussion group discussed the challenges with equitable distribution of state and federal funding to rural programs and recommended the following:

- New grant funding is allocated proportionately among rural and urban sites based on additional methods of measuring poverty beyond free and reduced lunch (FRL). In addition, CDE should allow flexibility to move funds between multiple sites, beyond the current 125% CDE rule. Lastly, legislation should be considered that provides minimum grant amounts to rural grantees.

### Next Steps:

*The Rural Subcommittee will work with The Network's Policy Committee to determine from CDE if there is any room for negotiation regarding administrative interpretation of the above recommendations. The Subcommittee will also work with the Policy Committee and California Afterschool Advocacy Alliance (CA3) to weigh feasibility of pursuing legislation for minimum rural grant recommendation.*