



Frequently Asked Questions

Protect Quality After-School Programs by Increasing Funding for
After School Education and Safety (ASES) Programs

How are ASES programs affected by minimum wage increases, for programs already paying entry-level staff more than \$10 per hour?

Increases in the minimum wage impact ASES personnel costs in at least two ways. First, as the minimum wage increases, this creates pressure to increase the wages of entry-level positions that are paid in a similar range. For example, a job paying \$11 per hour is relatively attractive for entry-level workers when the minimum wage is \$8, but not so when it is \$10. Managing a group of 20 students in an after-school program is not a simple task that can be accomplished by an employee with limited skills and training. In order to attract qualified candidates to entry-level positions, programs must offer competitive wages. If unable to do so, positions are difficult to fill and candidates are less likely to meet minimum qualifications. Because programs are strictly bound to a 20:1 supervision ratio, vacancies lead to fewer students being served, and because ASES program revenue is based on ADA, this can result in reductions to grant awards, exacerbating the problem.

Second, the increase in the minimum wage also impacts the ability to employ full-time Site Coordinators, who can be critical to operating a high-quality program. While not commonly known, employees who are classified as full-time “exempt” (which means exempt from overtime compensation due to the professional nature of their work) are required to be paid a salary equivalent to twice the minimum wage, in accordance with California Labor Code §515. A number of ASES providers employ full-time exempt Site Coordinators who were paid a minimum annual salary of \$33,280 when the minimum wage was \$8. Now, with the minimum wage at \$10, this minimum annual salary is \$41,600. Without commensurate increases in revenue, it is nearly impossible to accommodate this salary increase, and programs have been forced to re-classify salaried employees to hourly. This practice limits employees’ availability to participate in any activity that falls outside a normal 8-hour workday (i.e., early morning staff meetings, parent open house nights, etc.) and generally depreciates the nature of their work.

Would the increase come from Prop. 98, and if so, wouldn’t it be taking money from schools?

While the additional funding for after-school programs would come out Proposition 98, it is an incredibly tiny amount of Proposition 98 funding, the funding goes to schools rather than taking money from schools, and it benefits schools in helping disadvantaged students succeed.



The actual increase in ASES funds called for represents just over 1/10 of one percent of the \$63 billion in total Proposition 98 funding projected for the K-12 system in 2016-17. Adding together the increase and existing ASES funding accounts for less than 1 percent of Proposition 98 funding for K-12 – which is still less than the 1.09% of total Proposition 98 K-12 funding that ASES represented a decade ago.

Increasing ASES funding will not take funding away from schools. ASES grantees are virtually always school districts or county offices of education (and even in the rare instances where the grantee is a city, the funding still flows to schools). In fact, this bill will actually increase resources to the highest-poverty school sites. Unlike Proposition 98 dollars in general, this funding will directly serve the lowest-income students in the state and expand their learning opportunities between the hours of 3 PM to 6 PM.

Increased ASES funding will also benefit schools because when high-quality programs work in tandem with the school day – as is happening all over the state – school officials see improvements in student attendance, behavior and academic performance.

Why not instead increase the match or increase the 20-to-1 student-to-staff ratio?

To keep quality ASES programs going, there is no realistic alternative to increased ASES funding. Increasing the match requirement would not work. There is already a sizable 33 percent match (i.e., \$50,000 for a typical \$150,000 middle school grant). Being difficult for programs to generate cash matches, the match is usually “in kind” rather than the cash contribution needed to raise staff salaries to address minimum wage increases. Increasing the existing 20:1 student to staff is also not viable. The 20:1 staff ratio is already significantly greater than the 14:1 maximum ratio in school-age child care programs. Increasing the number of students per staff would make it even more difficult to provide high-quality programs. It also would likely result in increased insurance costs that offset any savings from needing fewer staff.

What will the impact be if there isn't a budget increase for ASES?

Without a budget increase, California's most vulnerable children and families will be left without quality services, as program quality continues to suffer and eventually programs risk being forced to close their doors altogether. In the short term, programs already making cuts would offer students fewer academic supports and enrichment activities and end up with fewer qualified, stable and adequately-trained staff. And nearly 50,000 students could lose access to after-school and program hours could be reduced, making it harder for working families to get by. This adds up to more dropouts, higher crime, more of



our most vulnerable students being left behind, and fewer jobs for individuals that minimum wage and paid leave laws are supposed to benefit.

Why can't we leave it to districts to use their LCFF funding to address the minimum wage increase?

The State needs to take responsibility for the ASES program because it is a protected state categorical program that was not eliminated to help create the Local Control Funding Formula. In addition, the State increased the minimum wage and bears responsibility for helping state programs address the increase, just as it enacted similar increases over the past two years for child care and preschool programs to help sustain program quality and as the Governor proposed minimum-wage related increases this year for In-Home Supportive Services.

LCFF is not the solution because it was not intended to maintain the status quo for underserved students and simply sustain existing programs like ASES. In fact, the use of LCFF Supplemental & Concentration funds to sustain ASES programs may not be permissible because by law they must be used to “increase or improve” services for high-need students. Moreover, in practice few districts are investing LCFF dollars in ASES programs, and even those few investments don't address increased personnel costs resulting from increases in the minimum wage and cost of living. New investments are often focused on expanding access and services instead.

After-school programs are also at a disadvantage competing for limited LCFF funds because districts are far more inclined to prioritize programs with district employees, including district-operated categorical programs eliminated under LCFF, than ASES programs that are typically operated by community-based organizations.

Early education is a priority for the Legislature, so why should legislators care about after-school programs?

After-school programs and early learning help achieve the same goals. Early childhood educators have smartly taken on the goal of kindergarten readiness, with the longer-term goal that kids are reading on grade level by third grade, a critical early indicator for future success. After-school and summer programs have invested heavily in reading support and literacy enrichment with the same goal - that kids love to read, and can do so proficiently, on grade-level. The investment in early childhood is crucial but not sufficient - an equal investment in high quality after-school programs gives children the continuum of engagement they need to truly succeed.



Given that the most pressing issue in California education policy is the growing opportunity and achievement gap, how does ASES impact the growing disparities between students?

Students spend more time out of school than in and how this time is spent is critical to closing the opportunity and achievement gap. Research has shown that:

- Unequal summer learning opportunities, for example, are responsible for about two-thirds of the ninth-grade achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth;
- Higher income youth are twice as likely than their lower income peers to access enrichment and after school skill-building activities such as sports, music, and art; and
- By the time they reach 6th grade, middle class kids have likely spent 6,000 more hours learning than kids born into poverty.

Expanded learning programs (after-school and summer) are essential to closing this gap because the majority of students served in publicly-funded programs are low-income students of color. Students that are actively engaged in these programs can gain 115 additional days of learning that directly impacts the opportunity inequities. High-quality programs have proven effective in a myriad of ways which are necessary for student success including:

- Student engagement (attendance, youth voice, community involvement);
- Achievement – math and literacy;
- Social-emotional skill development such as confidence, self-efficacy, persistence, resilience, etc.; and
- Reduction in risky behaviors – juvenile crime, dropout, drug/alcohol.