

CA3 Legislative Visit Talking Points

March 2024

The following talking points are an important tool for teams during visits to ensure we have shared messaging, but we don't want teams to get bogged down by the details of the talking points/asks. The Challenge is a unique opportunity for students, parents, staff, and providers to tell their own stories and paint a picture for legislators and staffers of the impact of afterschool and summer programs.

- **Real-world examples** and **personal stories** are the most impactful and compelling
 - Use these messages to **help guide which stories and examples you might share**
 - These points help **connect personal experiences to what policy changes and solutions** could make a more significant impact.
 - Use these points to **complement** your stories.
 - Example: This funding is already making a difference and is serving tens of thousands of students across the state. In my school/district, there are xxx # of new programs, and/or xxx more students have access to programs.
-

INTRODUCTION

- We are here today with expanded learning staff, students, families, and advocates from across the state to raise awareness about expanded learning (afterschool and summer) programs, the current opportunities and challenges we're facing in our programs and the children, families, and communities affected by them. Thank you for this opportunity.
- We greatly appreciate the Legislature's and Governor's commitment to providing more access to expanded learning programs by maintaining their historic \$4 billion investment in our programs. The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) has transformed what is available for parents/families and students - more slots and lots more options and enrichment. Tens of thousands more students are being served throughout the state. The flexibility of the funding lets districts get creative in how they address their community's needs.
- Quality programs support the whole child: they boost students' reading and math performance and grades, increase school day attendance and graduation rates, reduce childhood hunger, and provide social-emotional support. They provide safe spaces and build connections to caring adults - critical for children, youth, and working parents.
- Our stories today will further bring this information to life.

MAIN MESSAGE

The Governor stated [in his budget proposal], that districts across the state are using expanded learning programs to reimagine the school day and year. These programs are improving student attendance and academic performance, providing social-emotional support, creating more jobs and educator pipelines, and so much more. The state's expanded learning programs are especially critical to families who could not otherwise afford them

CENTRAL MESSAGE: ELO-P is making an impact in numerous ways, please prioritize it!

- With ELO-P, programs are able to:
 - Serve more students and families
 - Expand programs to more sites
 - Shorten or eliminate waiting lists
 - Extend summer and intersession program length and hours
 - More days and longer hours meet the needs of working families
 - Offer higher quality programs
 - More enrichment offerings that students are interested in
 - Field trips + experiential learning
 - Engaging curriculum + project-based learning
- We're not "universal" yet - School districts and community partners need time to build and scale their programs sustainably. Staffing is still a challenge.
- Currently, the state is not collecting and compiling data on ELO-P implementation. Data would help us better understand the impact of programs and help ensure that districts are reaching the students who need it most.

Please ensure students and families in your district and across the state have access to the quality afterschool and summer programs they need and deserve.

ADD SUPPORTING MESSAGE - (No need to cover every message and bullet point below)

Supporting message #1: Investments in expanded learning reduce health and education inequities.

- Every child deserves a chance to succeed. Expanded learning is that chance, especially for those facing the steepest obstacles.
- Even before the state's ELO-P expansion, the students served by the state's afterschool and summer programs were predominantly economically disadvantaged students

(81%), students of color (90%), and English language learners (33%). 1 in 4 students experiencing homelessness in California were served by these programs, [according to CDE](#).

- By the time they reach 6th grade, upper- and middle-class students spend 6,000 more hours learning than do kids born into poverty. Of those 6,000 hours, over 4,000 are spent in after school and summer programs. This unequal access has immediate consequences for academic achievement and long-term consequences for success later in life.
- Not only are kids improving their academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being, but they're being fed, too. Afterschool programs provide nutritious meals for students—critically important, especially for low-income families.
- Our programs emphasize student engagement and connectedness—essential components to learning recovery and addressing chronic absenteeism.
- There isn't equal access to programs, only about 2% of total state funding for expanded learning is dedicated to high school programs. High school students represent at least 30% of all students. Middle schools get less than 5% of state funding. Yet, adolescent brains are developing more intensively than at any other time since early childhood.
- Research shows that middle and high school students who participate in expanded learning are more likely to graduate, less likely to become involved in the justice system, and score better on standardized tests. Expanded learning programs boost school day attendance rates for high school students even more than for younger students. On average, high school students attend 14-17 more days than their peers who are not in an expanded learning program, [according to CDE](#).

Supporting message #2: Families rely on these programs and want them to stay.

- Voters overwhelmingly support afterschool and summer learning programs.
 - 80% of voters surveyed said they wanted their newly elected federal, state, and local leaders to provide MORE funding for afterschool programs.
 - 83% said that afterschool and summer programs are an absolute necessity for their community.
- As families struggle with the costs and logistics of child care, expanded learning programs make it easier for working families to access care when school is not in session.
- Programs boost the economic mobility of students and families by keeping kids engaged in school, preparing older students for college and career opportunities, and allowing parents to work a full day and year.

- Expanded learning programs boost students' reading and math performance, increase school day attendance and graduation rates, reduce childhood hunger.
- These programs provide critical academic support and tutoring but also emphasize engagement, relationship building, and helping students find their interests and passions—skills and qualities students need, especially as schools and students are still recovering from the impacts of COVID-19.
- Expanded learning programs include before school, after school, summer, and intersession learning and enrichment programs that are meant to complement, not replicate, learning activities in the regular school day and school year.

Supporting message #3: The expanded learning workforce is talented, diverse, and essential.

- Positive staff-child relationships are the foundation of expanded learning and positively increase student learning and social development.
- Retaining staff allows students and to build trust and meaningful relationships with caring adults, helping them re-engage in school. Staff are also well-positioned to ask students and families about attendance challenges and discuss strategies for addressing them.
- Many staff are from the communities they serve, often attending the same schools they work at. Some programs have dedicated pathways for high school students who desire a career in education.
- Expanded learning programs strengthen the talent pipeline for schools, to help address the teacher shortage and teacher diversity challenges. Nationally, 78% of the staff identify as people of color, 72% identify as female, and most are under the age of 40.
- Yet, many programs are still facing staffing challenges, and ELO-P funding helps provide competitive salaries to attract and retain staff.

ASK

- 1) Will the Assembly Member/Senator keep the commitment to students and families and sustain funding for ELO-P (Expanded Learning Opportunities Program)?
- 2) Would the Assembly Member/Senator be interested in visiting an afterschool or summer program in their district?