With the passage of the After School Education and Safety Program Act (Proposition 49) in 2002, California has made the largest public investment in expanding after school programs of any state in the country. Expansion on such a grand scale is creating an opening, while the system is in flux, to respond to the issues the expansion raises and to shape how after school programs function, both individually and as a system. Working strategically and collaboratively, after school advocates have a chance to ensure that improving youth health and wellness becomes a top priority of after school programs.

This policy brief sets out some of the issues arising from the implementation of Prop 49 and discusses health and nutrition aspects of after school programming, including how grantees of The California Endowment’s Healthy Eating, Active Communities program are implementing Prop 49 in local school districts. The brief concludes with recommendations to assist communities in creating after school programs that serve the widest constituency and provide essential nutrition and physical activity services.

OVERVIEW

Proposition 49 and the Growth of After School Programming in California

In 2002, California voters passed Proposition 49, an initiative sponsored by now-Governor Schwarzenegger that added $428 million to the state’s budget for the state-funded After School Education and Safety (ASES) Program (formerly the Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhood Partnerships Program).1 In addition to providing a considerable boost in state funding, ASES requires grantees to provide local matching funds, which will bring the amount spent on publicly funded after school programs in the state to approximately $1 billion annually. This expansion in funding is a step toward enabling access to quality after school programs for all children and youth who need them.

Under the terms of the legislation, Proposition 49 funds could not be allocated until the state’s non-education budget was at least $1.5 billion more than the prior year’s budget. In FY 2006–2007, the state budget reached this “trigger,” and the Department of Education released requests for proposals for ASES funding in October 2006. By April 2007, the Department had awarded $550 million in grants to 1,914 applicants, bringing the number of publicly supported after school programs in the state to more than 4,000.

Due to the high volume of applications, the California Department of Education gave priority for the ASES grants in the 2006–2007 grant cycle to schools in which 50 percent or more of the students qualify for the free or reduced-price school meal program. This selection process ensured that the funding was distributed in communities where the need for access to after school programs was the greatest.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

By essentially doubling the number of state-funded after school programs in California, the implementation of Proposition 49 is accelerating a number of trends in after school program delivery. Perhaps the most significant trend is that increasing numbers of after school programs are being managed by or are operating within schools, reflecting the proposition’s requirement that local school districts and other education agencies (such as county offices of education) be the fiscal agents and assume primary responsibility for oversight of the programs. After school programs are thus shifting from community-based organizations (CBOs) to school-based programs. Some school districts are contracting with outside organizations (such as Ys, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Park and Recreation programs) to manage and implement programs at school sites, while others have taken on managing and implementing after school programs entirely on their own.

The unprecedented growth in school-based programming has sparked debate about the best approaches for meeting the challenges posed by the expansion. Many of the issues center around the shift from after school programs being housed, run, and managed by community-based organizations to being developed and located on school grounds. Particular issues relate to recruiting and retaining participants, being responsive to older youth, location and program design, and attendance expectations.

**Recruiting and Retaining Participants**

CBOs and school-site programs each have advantages in recruiting youth. Proponents of community-based after school programs point out that these programs have traditionally focused more on youth development than do school-based programs and that they tend to offer a wider variety of program activities, rather than “more of the same” experiences offered during the school day. Larger-capacity non-school providers, such as Park and Recreation agencies, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Ys, have a history of being accessible to a broader cross section of their communities, giving them an advantage in recruiting youth who may be “turned off” by a school setting. They may also be more successful in reaching out to parents and other community stakeholders.

School-based programs, on the other hand, are ideally suited to provide the mandated academic enrichment component of ASES programs. In addition, they have the advantage of location: because students don’t need to be transported to a different venue, they may be more likely to participate in an on-site after school program.

**Meeting the Needs and Interests of Older Youth**

According to the Harvard Family Research Project, some of the biggest deterrents to the participation of older youth in general after school programs are family commitments or involvement in other school-based activities, such as band, organized sports, or clubs. After school programs that can offer flexible participation schedules and attendance options have often been successful in drawing in older youth. Because state after school funding comes with increased emphasis on attendance and participation, school-based programs may not be able to offer that flexibility.

**Access to Resources and Facilities**

Locating programs on school sites offers the advantages of ready access to facilities, space, and equipment and the possibility of linking with an established transportation infrastructure.

School-based after school programs may also be better positioned to leverage and manage certain resources. For example, although both community-based and school-based after school programs are eligible to receive subsidized snacks through the Child and Adult Care Food Program and the National School Lunch Program, the presence of the school district’s food services department offers school-based programs the infrastructure to support the administration of these feeding programs.

“Turf” and trust issues can arise, however, when after school programs are using resources and facilities designated for school-day functions; moreover, programs may be competing for space with school-related activities, such as intramural sports or staff meetings that take place after school.

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Program Design

Increasingly, school-based after school curricula are moving past tutoring and childcare to a broader focus and more varied offerings. A majority of after school programs now incorporate a variety of elements related to youth development, academic achievement, enrichment, recreation, and health. All ASES grantees are required to include an academic and literacy component in their regular programming—which could include tutoring or assistance with homework in core academic content areas—as well as an enrichment component. Educational enrichment is defined broadly and can include activities focused on fostering youth development, sports and recreation, visual and performing arts, music and dance, and nutrition, physical fitness, and health education.³

Attendance Expectations

ASES requirements are influencing school-based after school programs to switch from offering services on an informal, drop-in basis to encouraging—and in some cases requiring—regular attendance and participation. Eligibility for renewal of ASES grants is based on a program’s ability to demonstrate satisfactory outcomes in a number of areas, including attendance. Legislation passed in 2006, which coincided with the implementation of Proposition 49, has changed the disbursement of grants from reimbursement to direct grants.⁴ If attendance numbers dwindle, the grant amount may be reduced.

Workforce Issues

The increase in after school programs creates a need for more staff, opening up a new career path for after school workers. ASES funding requires that staff working in after school programs meet their local school district’s qualifications for the position of Instructional Aide. Although school districts can administer tests for such competencies to staff in community-based organizations, tests have not yet been standardized. For a career path to be an option, certification standards for an after school Instructional Aide requirement will need to be established.

The Need for Cooperation

The optimal outcome for youth may be for school-based programs and community-based providers to build on each other’s strengths, working together to offer the best service. School-based programs can take advantage of the many CBO-based after school programs—or program elements—that have developed both successful curriculum and experienced staff. CBO programs may also be ideal for serving students when schools are closed for vacation, summer, and inter-session. At the same time, CBOs may need the assistance of the school district in qualifying staff to meet the Instructional Aide requirements of ASES funding.

Existing CBOs may need to modify their program models and schedules to adjust to competition from the new ASES-funded programs, and they may seek to partner with the ASES programs in order to provide services not available from school-site programs.

Longer-term solutions to all these challenges in providing after school programs may require comprehensive community plans that include construction of joint-use facilities and creation of after school “zones” in neighborhoods that support a wide array of service providers. In the short term, efforts need to be made to connect CBO assets with ASES funding to provide the widest array of opportunities for youth.

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³ A description of the ASES program, including an overview of program elements and operational requirements, can be found on the California Department of Education’s website, at www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba/as/pgmdescription.asp.

⁴ Senate Bill 638 (Torlakson, Ashburn), signed into law on September 21, 2006, also raised the daily per child rate from $5.00 to $7.50, increased the grant caps, and reduced the local match required from 50 percent to 33 percent. The full text of Senate Bill 638 can be found at www.leginfo.ca.gov.
In addition to becoming a national leader in the expansion of after school programs, California is proving to be a leader in incorporating health promotion and conscientious nutrition into after school programming. Studies have shown that when youth are given regular opportunities for physical activity, their concentration improves and their academic performance benefits. Similarly, when children receive adequate nutrition, they are more ready to learn.

California has recognized the importance of nutrition and physical activity by requiring ASES-funded programs to comply with California Senate Bill 12, legislation passed in 2005 that sets minimal nutritional requirements for foods and snacks sold outside of the federal reimbursable meals program. As part of the Categorical Program Monitoring process that the Department of Education conducts to ensure program compliance, ASES-funded after school programs will be evaluated on the nutritional quality of the snacks they provide.

In addition, the California Department of Education’s After School Partnerships Office is beginning to develop guidelines for physical activity and nutrition that must be adopted by 2009.

**Partnerships to Incorporate Physical Activity and Nutrition**

To create responsive programs, many school-based after school programs have partnered with agencies and organizations that have expertise in health promotion, nutrition education, physical activity, or sports. Organizations such as Ys and Park and Recreation agencies that have experience implementing successful sports and physical activity programming are providing after school programs with curriculum, professional development, and in some cases, staff, equipment, and facilities.

ASES programs could also partner with health organizations such as hospitals, health clinics, and local health agencies, which could provide education on how to develop and maintain healthy habits, including the importance of regular physical activity and good nutrition.

Local government initiatives also present opportunities for partnership. Several cities have involved after school and out-of-school programs in their health-promotion initiatives in a number of ways, including the following:

- Facilitating partnerships among after school programs and city Park and Recreation departments, Ys, and privately owned gyms and health clubs to expand after school programs’ access to space and facilities for physical activity
- Publicly recognizing successful models of physical activity and nutrition promotion in after school programs
- Working with after school programs to develop standards for their physical activity, nutrition education, and snacks served in after school programs

**Using Tested and Proven Program Models and Curricula**

Often, the youth most in need of physical activity opportunities are either excluded from the traditional forms of organized activities offered in school settings, such as competitive sports, or they choose to avoid these options. To overcome these barriers, after school providers are increasingly offering organized physical activities that are inclusive, engaging, and adaptable for participants at all levels of physical ability, stressing activities that have a

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More information about the nutritional requirements mandated in Senate Bill 12 can be found at the California Project LEAN website, at www.californiaprojectlean.org/calculator/nutritionStandards.asp.
strong focus on skill-building. Moreover, organized physical activity is often incorporated into learning exercises in core subject areas as a way to motivate and engage youth.

Many after school programs are using after school curricula that have been tested and proven to be effective (see box on page 4).

**Extending Wellness Policies to After School Programs**

Many school and district-level policies regarding the nutritional content of snacks and foods sold on campus typically extend to just 30 minutes after the end of the school day. After school programs can adopt and apply district wellness policies and requirements to their own program practices and policies to ensure consistency in the districts’ efforts to promote wellness.

Numerous resources, including examples of policy language, guides for implementation of nutrition and physical activity policies, and tools for evaluation, are available to district administrators, school administrators, and others involved in after school programming. The Afterschool Alliance, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to raising public awareness about the importance of after school programs, has created a toolkit for after school program providers and advocates that outlines steps for getting involved in the local wellness policy process and offers links to additional resources from a variety of organizations that focus on health, nutrition, and physical activity.6

**Improving Nutrition Through Local Partnerships**

After school providers are recognizing the need to improve the quality and nutritional content of snacks served in their programs. After school leaders are now serving on school wellness councils, working with district food services departments to help inform purchasing decisions, forming partnerships with local farmers and food banks to supplement subsidized snacks, and incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into the snacks they serve.

After school programs are also using innovative ways to integrate nutrition education into snack breaks and even into academic and enrichment activities. School gardening programs, for example, often include lessons on history and literature as well as nutrition education, and after school cooking clubs reinforce math skills while teaching youth how to prepare wholesome and nutritious meals.

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6 Active Hours Afterschool: Local Wellness Policy Toolkit for Afterschool Programs can be accessed at www.afterschoolalliance.org/active_hours_ob_kit.cfm.

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**HEAC: After School Programs That Are Helping Shape the Movement**

The California Endowment’s Healthy Eating, Active Communities Program (HEAC) funds grantees who work to improve environments for healthy eating and physical activity and to create momentum for widespread changes in policy and practice.

Thirty-three schools in five Healthy Eating, Active Communities sites received initial ASES funding. These schools will be providing after school programs to at least 160 students per day in each school, and in some schools many more. See Appendix A for details of HEAC schools with ASES grants, illustrating the kind of impact ASES grants are having in low-income communities.

HEAC grantees are already actively shaping health and nutrition policies in their communities in a number of ways, such as extending school-day policies for nutrition to the after school hours, pursuing strategies to bring fresh fruits and vegetables into the programs, and engaging after school program staff, school staff, parents, and other stakeholders in the development of policies to promote physical activity and healthful nutrition in the after school programs.

HEAC after school sites will be able to offer valuable insights from their experiences implementing models and policies in their communities.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations strive to assist communities in creating after school programs that serve the widest constituency and provide essential nutrition and physical activity services.

**After School Program Development**

- Promote joint use and special design of school facilities so as to allow after school programs access to space even when schools are closed for holiday and inter-session.
- Encourage Park and Recreation Departments to establish policies that reserve facilities and space for youth activities in the hours after school.
- Move after school planning in communities from a focus on after school sites with a single program operator (such as a school or a CBO) to after school “zones” that encourage and support multiple sites with multiple operators in a more coordinated manner.
- Connect school-year after school programs and the children they serve with summer recreation and feeding programs to ensure continuity of programming.
- Focus on longer-term outcomes by emphasizing policies that change environments to support healthy behaviors and improved organizational practices rather than on short-term outcomes such as weight reduction.
- Explore how after school programs can help build a culturally competent recreation and physical activity workforce for California.

**Nutrition and Physical Activity in After School**

- Ensure that new after school nutrition and physical activity guidelines are explicit, effective, and culturally responsive.
- Create, adopt, and implement policies that set nutrition standards for snacks served in after school programs.
- Support development of new matching funding streams for nutrition and physical activities during the hours students are out of school.
- Work with school districts and cities to secure additional matching funding to support after school nutrition, nutrition education, food preparation, and gardening programs at after school programs.
- Coordinate efforts to influence state policy with allied nutrition and physical activity advocacy organizations, such as the Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments.
Appendix A: Healthy Eating, Active Communities ASES-Funded Programs

Baldwin Park, Los Angeles County
The 57th Assembly District Grassroots Nutrition and Physical Activity Team
ASES-Funded Schools (12):
Central Elementary
Charles Burch Elementary
De Anza Elementary
Ernest R. Geddes Elementary
Foster Elementary
Kenmore Elementary
Margaret Heath Elementary
Pleasant View Elementary
Santa Fe Elementary
Tracy Elementary
Vineland Elementary
Walnut Elementary

Oakland, Alameda County
San Antonio Neighbors for Active Living (SANFAL)
ASES-Funded Schools (2):
Bella Vista Elementary
La Escuelita Elementary

Santa Ana, Orange County
Healthy Eating, Active Communities
Santa Ana
ASES-Funded Schools (11):
Davis Elementary
Garfield Elementary
Margaret S. Grant Elementary
Heninger Elementary
Hoover Elementary
Kennedy Elementary
Lathrop Elementary
Frederick Remington Elementary
Sierra Intermediate
Walker Elementary
Willard Intermediate

South Los Angeles, Los Angeles County
The Childhood Obesity Brain Trust
ASES-Funded Schools (2)
Norwood Street Elementary School
The Accelerated School

South Shasta County
South Shasta Healthy Eating Active Communities Collaborative
ASES-Funded Schools (6):
Happy Valley Elementary
Happy Valley Primary
Anderson Middle
Anderson Heights Elementary
Meadow Lane Elementary
Verde Vale Elementary

Characteristics of the ASES-Funded HEAC Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEAC Community</th>
<th>Total ASES Grants</th>
<th>Students Served</th>
<th>Low Income&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>English Learners&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Ethnicity&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Baldwin Park, Los Angeles County                   | $1,350,000        | 960-1,200      | 89.3%                  | 48.5%                      | Hispanic, 91.4%
| The 57th Assembly District Grassroots Nutrition and Physical Activity Team |                    |                |                        | Asian, 3.8%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | Filipino, 1.8%          |
| Oakland, Alameda County                             | $148,500          | 160-200        | 83.1%                  | 51.1%                      | Asian, 42.6%
| San Antonio Neighbors for Active Living             |                    |                |                        | Hispanic, 32.6%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | African American, 17.2%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | Filipino, 1.1%          |
| Santa Ana, Orange County                            | $911,806          | 880-1100       | 95.2%                  | 80.5%                      | Hispanic, 97%
| Healthy Eating, Active Communities – Santa Ana      |                    |                |                        | Asian, 1.3%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | White, 0.6%             |
| South Los Angeles, Los Angeles County               | $213,750          | 160-200        | 79.1%                  | 55.3%                      | Hispanic, 84.3%
| The Childhood Obesity Brain Trust                   |                    |                |                        | African American, 14%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | White, 0.7%             |
| South Shasta County                                 | $712,500          | 480-600        | 71.6%                  | 5.0%                       | White, 67.1%
| South Shasta Healthy Eating, Active Communities Collaborative |                    |                |                        | Hispanic, 11.9%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | American Indian, 10.6%
|                                                     |                   |                |                        | Asian, 2.4%             |

Total Funded: $3,336,556

<sup>a</sup> As determined by the number of students enrolled in the federal free- or reduced-price school meal program.
Source: School Fiscal Services Division (afdc2005 11/1/06).

<sup>b</sup> Source: Educational Demographics Office, Language Census (elsch06 9/6/06)

<sup>c</sup> Source: Educational Demographics Office, data as of 3/16/2007.