

RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROP 49 IMPLEMENTATION

CALIFORNIA WORKING FAMILIES POLICY SUMMIT
JANUARY 24, 2003

Introduction

The passage of Prop 49—The After School Education and Safety Program—will increase funding for the major state-funded, after-school program from its current level of \$121 million to a total of \$550 million, make after-school funding permanently available for every public elementary and middle school, and open funding to after-school programs operated by community-based organizations off school grounds. The initiative builds on the state's existing Before and After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnerships Program (BASLSNPP).

The earliest that funding may begin is in Fiscal Year 2004-2005, and then only if state general fund spending for the year is \$1.5 billion higher than the highest spending level for any previous year since 2000. If this trigger is not met in Fiscal Year 2004-2005, the funding will begin in the first subsequent year that the state budget increases to that extent. As the trigger is met, up to 1.5 percent of the \$550 million—as much as \$7.75 million—may be set aside for technical assistance and evaluation. When fully implemented, Prop 49 will add up to 5,000 California after-school programs serving nearly 500,000 kids and requiring approximately 25,000 new after-school workers.

I. Building the Collaborative(s)

Background

The initiative's proponent, Arnold Schwarzenegger, raised over \$8 million for the campaign, converting many who were previously uninvolved in the issue into potential long-term after-school program enthusiasts. Arnold Schwarzenegger has consistently, publicly expressed his commitment to the effective implementation of the initiative. The bipartisan Prop 49 effort brought together the broadest coalition in the state's history. Several of the state's major foundations have been supporting after-school efforts for a number of years. Harnessing the support and momentum leading up to and built by the initiative campaign has potential to bring "world class" after-school programs to all of California's schools.

Recommendations

- A. Superintendent of Instruction Jack O'Connell should make effective implementation of Prop 49 a top priority for the California Department of Education (CDE) and be a leader/partner in pulling together a state-level collaborative that includes the initiative's proponent and interested supporters, labor, CBOs, CDE, and the Executive and Legislative branches, as well as members of the foundation community.
- B. The state level collaborative should foster local collaboratives that include school districts, other local government agencies, community-based organizations, Prop 49 supporters, the business community, seniors, churches, Boards of Supervisors, City Councils and philanthropy. These collaborative public/private partnerships will be essential to supporting local applicants in obtaining the resources and technical assistance necessary to assure the smooth transition to opening and expanding high quality, sustainable local programs.
- C. CDE and the Governor's Office of the Secretary of Education should build on the track record of the California AfterSchool Partnership, a successful public/private partnership, which has historically brought together the CDE, the Governor's Office of the Secretary of Education and the Foundation Consortium to assure that appropriate technical assistance is devoted to ensuring quality and sustainability.

II. Seeking State Support

Background

Since technical assistance dollars will not be available under the initiative until the trigger is met, resources will need to be identified to fund the process of preparing would-be grantees for the application process.

Recommendation

- A. CDE should submit a Budget Change Proposal to the Department of Finance to assure that CDE has adequate resources to support its work in the initial implementation phase of Prop 49.

III. Seeking Federal Support

Background

Since technical assistance dollars will not be available under the initiative until the trigger is met, and since even after the initiative kicks in the state funding does not ensure quality after-school for every child who needs it, additional resources will be needed.

Recommendations

- A. The collaborative(s), or members of it, should build upon existing partnerships with the federal government to make California a national model of quality after-school.
- B. The President and Congress should fund the 21st Century Community Learning Center program at its authorized level of 1.75 billion for fiscal year 2004.
- C. The federal Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services should provide resources for the training of the new workforce required for the creation of 5,000 new after-school programs. The Departments of Justice and Agriculture should expand after-school program support that reduces risk behaviors and encourages kids to lead healthy lives.
- D. All federal agencies which create or offer curriculum or educational content to schools, libraries, museums and other community educational institutions should revise that content so that it can be used in after-school settings wherever possible and should provide that content to after-school programs at no cost.

IV. Providing Technical Assistance

Background

The California AfterSchool Partnership supports a Statewide System of Field Support. This System and other players throughout the state implement effective strategies for supporting quality and sustainability in after-school programs. The Center for Collaborative Solutions, the California School-Age Consortium, Regional Learning Centers, and the California Network for Youth Development have multi-year track records working with after-school programs to: promote high quality programs; train workers; identify best practices; develop curriculum that satisfy the educational and enrichment components of the state's after-school program; develop curriculum that are exciting enough to attract and retain students and to meet their multi-cultural/multi-ethnic interests; help programs incorporate youth development principles; develop data collection methods to assure data meets the state's requirements; help programs find the resources to meet the required 50% local match; and assure the long term sustainability of the programs by identifying methods for securing local resources beyond the required 50% match.

Recommendation

- A. The state level collaborative should make its highest priority the assurance that resources are available for the technical assistance necessary for effective implementation.

V. Reaching Out Early

Background

Applicants for grants should have adequate notice to work with local collaboratives and to secure the technical assistance necessary to be prepared to start up programs that are of high quality from their first day of operation.

Recommendation

- A. CDE should give potential applicants plenty of notice of their eligibility to apply and of the requirements for successful applications.

VI. Integrating Community-Based Organizations in Implementation

Background

CBOs have a rich history of providing after-school programs on school sites under BASLSNPP. Under Prop 49, CBOs are newly eligible to provide after-school programs away from school sites, provided safe transportation is provided and the CBOs coordinate with the school's academic curriculum (schools, cities or counties will continue to be the only eligible fiscal agents).

Recommendations

- A. CBOs should be included in state, regional and local level implementation planning.
- B. CDE and technical assistance providers should identify CBOs best practices and encourage their replication.
- C. CDE should reach out early to CBOs and assure they have the assistance they need to be able to successfully participate.

VII. Working with Evaluators/Developing Site Capacity for Self Assessment

Background

Timely, effective evaluation will allow for feedback to the programs for the purpose of quality improvement and will increase the likelihood that the programs provide the academic and enrichment opportunities that are within their potential.

Recommendations

- A. CDE should identify evaluators early on so that grantees can be best informed about effective data collection methods.
- B. Technical assistance providers should develop tools and training for program self-assessment and improvement.

VIII. Tracking Obstacles

Background

Up until now a self-selecting group of schools has come forward to apply for BASLSNP grants. Under Prop 49, every elementary and middle school in the state will be eligible for grants. Some may fail to apply.

Recommendation

- A. CDE should conduct an analysis of schools that do not apply for funds. Characteristics to examine include: student ethnicity, family income, API score, rural/urban location, geographic location, school size and any other factors that may be relevant to schools' participation in the after-school program. CDE should also interview a sample of these schools to assess, in further detail, their reasons for not applying. CDE should then make recommendations to the Legislature to either make appropriate changes to the program's requirements or to allow waivers for schools that encounter insurmountable barriers to application. (Only a 50% vote of the Legislature is required to make changes to the program's requirements.)

IX. Ensuring Healthy Snacks and Physical Activity

Background

The After School Education and Safety Act encourages physical fitness and recreation and participation in snack programs. However, childhood obesity has reached epidemic levels in California. Food Security means having access, at all times, to the right type and amount of food for good health.

Recommendations

- A. The Legislature should direct the Senate Office on Research or the California Research Bureau to conduct a study to report to the Legislature within one year on current utilization of federal snack programs by California after-school programs and, through case studies and interviews, should identify barriers to the use of federal snack programs by after-school programs. The report should include recommendations to increase the use of federal food programs by after-school programs.
- B. The Legislature should require that all after-school snacks purchased with state dollars conform to the standards for healthy snacks as provided in SB 19 (Escutia) (Chapter 913, 2001).
- C. CDE should promulgate guidelines for after-school programs for nutrition education and physical activities for each grade level.

X. Preserving Existing After-School Programs

Background

The state's BASLSNPP program, newly named the After School Education and Safety Act under Prop 49, is the state's largest after-school program. Other after-school programs specially designed to serve needy populations are funded under the Latchkey Program and the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act and through state child care subsidy dollars. Because they may be under the misconception that Prop 49 fully funds the state's after-school needs, the Governor and Legislature may consider these programs likely candidates for cuts.

Recommendation

- A. The Governor and the Legislature should not cut these important after-school programs that serve low-income families and kids at risk for violence.