



December 15, 2021

Subject: California families ask you to fulfill the promise of after school for all

Attn: Governor Gavin Newsom

Cc: Ben Chida

"Teachers have classes with 30 students who need individualized support right now. We need to make tutoring more accessible to all students in case they don't understand something. If they don't understand it now, how will that affect students when they move on to the next grade?" -Cristina Sanchez, Innovate Parent Leader, Southeast Los Angeles

Dear Governor Newsom,

We are writing on behalf of [thousands of parents](#) of students enrolled in K-12 public schools across the state of California to urge you to take action to ensure that every student across California has the expanded learning opportunities and youth mental health support they need to recover and thrive.

In the 2021-22 state budget, the California Legislature committed \$5 billion over 5 years to after school programming, as well as \$4.6 billion in one-time funds for expanded learning opportunities. Now it is time to ensure this historic funding will deliver on your promise of after school for all students. Parents and community-based organizations worked tirelessly to make this happen and are now closely watching the implementation of the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program and Grants in their local districts.

Since the passing of the 2021-2022 budget, Innovate parents and families across the state have held meetings with local districts, community-based organizations, statewide policymakers and staffers in the Senate and Assembly, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, the California Department of Education, and the Department of Finance. Parents have noticed challenges in implementation and believe it is imperative that the promise of "after school for all" stays at the forefront of budget and legislative conversations. **We are very concerned that this massive investment in public funding may not result in what Californians are expecting** in terms of expanded learning for underserved children and will instead be used to fill gaps in district budgets--this will create more cynicism about the state's ability to solve problems and steward tax dollars effectively.

We are California families asking you to **prioritize the following as you plan the release of the proposed 2022-23 budget and consider policy changes that would ensure the 2021-22 funds are equitably, transparently, and effectively utilized:**

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- **After school providers across the state are struggling to hire and retain staff. These providers need a living wage.** Without these essential workers, we will not be able to expand after school for all students.
- **Expand access to after school programs to middle and high school students.** The ELO Program currently only serves TK-6 students. Middle and high school students also need this support.
- **Many students and especially low-income students and students of color are continuing to fall behind. These students need individualized support and tutoring is an effective way to help students catch up.** There is currently no dedicated source of funding for tutoring, yet high quality, high-dosage tutoring is a proven way to address unfinished learning. Next year, we need a dedicated source of funding for tutoring to help students recover and close the gap between families that can afford tutoring and families that cannot.
- **There are currently no mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of how Expanded Learning Opportunities Program funds are used.** We also learned that in many districts there is limited or a lack of community engagement in deciding how funds should be spent. Parents ask for accountability and transparency in how funds are spent to ensure funds are used effectively and reaching the kids most impacted by the pandemic.

We have an unprecedented opportunity to support students and families. As you celebrate the holidays with families and loved ones and finalize the proposed 2022-23 state budget, we hope that you will remember the needs of parents and families across California.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these recommendations in more depth with you and/or your staff. We have reached out to set up a meeting and look forward to hearing from you soon. If you have any questions, please contact Innovate's Associate Directors of Research and Policy, Joanna French (jfrench@innovateschools.org) or Jennifer Perla (jperla@innovateschools.org).

Sincerely,

Parents of the Future of California
Innovate Public School Parent Leader Teams and Partners

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