



# Getting Back to School and Work

## Policymakers Must Invest in California's Expanded Learning

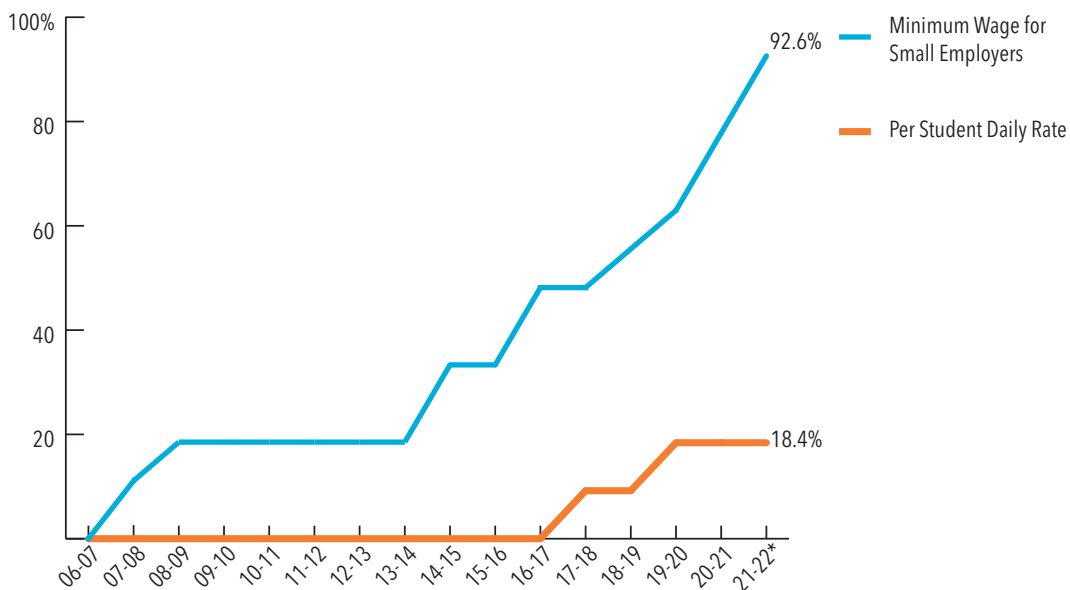
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The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted California students' and families' lives — affecting learning, upending social and emotional support systems, and creating a caregiving crisis. Students have also missed out on expanded learning opportunities, such as before and after school, summer, and intersession programs. Expanded learning programs

offer academic enrichment for over 900,000 students throughout the year. These programs serve mostly students of color and low-income students as well as English language learners and students experiencing homelessness.<sup>1</sup> Many parents rely on these programs for safe and supportive learning environments for their children while they work.

### State Funding for Expanded Learning Programs Has Not Kept Pace with Rising Staff Costs

Percent Increase to State Minimum Wage and ASES Daily Rates Since 2006-07



\* 2021-22 proposed.  
Note: "Expanded learning" refers to before and after school, summer, and intersession programs. ASES is the After School Education and Safety program. A "small employer" is defined as having 25 employees or less. Annual minimum wage increases based on employer size started in 2017.  
Source: Department of Education, Department of Finance, Department of Industrial Relations

While demand for quality expanded learning programs and the needs of the expanded learning workforce were rising even before the pandemic, state funding stalled. California’s expanded learning system is funded with state and federal dollars.<sup>2</sup> The After School Education and Safety (ASES) program provides state funds through grants that go directly to local educational agencies with priority for sites with higher percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals.<sup>3</sup> For a decade, starting in fiscal year 2006-07, annual state funding for ASES remained at \$550 million. Policymakers increased funding to nearly \$650 million in recent years, which allowed for an increase in the daily per student allocation, but that falls short of the level necessary to cover costs — largely due to the increasing minimum wage. Programs that receive ASES grants have struggled to keep their doors open with a per student daily rate that has increased by just 18% since 2006-

07, from \$7.50 to \$8.88. During that same period, the minimum wage has increased by 93%, a much-needed and long-overdue increase that helps ensure that the expanded learning workforce is supported, but that significantly increases ASES program costs at the same time.

Growing demand for ASES grants exceeds available funds, and state and federal pandemic response funds for expanded learning are one-time dollars — leaving the workforce, students, and parents uncertain about their ability to return to school and work. Given the state’s strong fiscal condition, state lawmakers should provide a cost-of-living adjustment to support the expanded learning workforce and make long-term and sustainable investments in ASES funding that can support students’ academic and social-emotional development as well as families’ caregiving needs.



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<sup>1</sup> Expanded learning programs in California are linked to improved school attendance, particularly for English learners. See California Department of Education, *Report to the Legislature, Legislative Analyst’s Office and the Governor: Characteristics of Schools and Students Participating in After School Programs 2017 Report* (December 2018), 2, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ex/documents/lrafterschoolprograms17.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> State funds support programs that serve transitional kindergarten through middle school, and the federally funded 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) serve all grade levels including high school. Heather Williams, *State of the State of Expanded Learning in California 18-19* (California AfterSchool Network, January 2020), 4, [https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/can\\_sots\\_expanded\\_learning\\_2018-2019-a11y.pdf?1582667975](https://www.afterschoolnetwork.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/can_sots_expanded_learning_2018-2019-a11y.pdf?1582667975).

<sup>3</sup> Local educational agencies are the only eligible applicants. Nonprofit organizations may apply, but the local educational agency must agree to act as the fiscal agent of the grant. “After School Education and Safety,” California Department of Education (webpage), last modified December 10, 2020, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/profile.asp?id=5572>.