

California is Expanding Student Success Transcript

(Violin music)

Narrator: Success in school. Success in life. These are shared goals for children, families, and educators all over California.

Michael Funk: You know, we use the term “expanded learning” to really focus on the fact that these are opportunities to expand a young person’s horizon about what’s possible, to engage them in activities that they might not have had a chance to engage with during the regular day. It’s really a chance to help kids find their purpose and find their passion.

(music swells)

Narrator: These are challenging times, where young people must have greater capacity and sharper skills to compete in a diverse global economy. New, rigorous Common Core State Standards are changing the way we deliver instruction, with an emphasis on mastering the technology of the future. We are reshaping the way we teach and learn.

Chris Adams: It is so beneficial for kids to be connected to something. And those after-school programs, when they’re run by quality people, that’s the connection that kids need to come in and become ... A lot of times they find their destiny. They find out who they really are. Because they can be in an environment that’s again, bigger than themselves. And they’re contributing to something that can be so powerful.

Narrator: A new state funding formula for public schools puts greater authority and responsibility on local school district communities to set up and support services, programs, and approaches that meet their unique needs.

Arleen Gonzales: One of the things that occurs is that currently, we as teachers are being asked to do more and more within the 50 minutes, hour that we have, and it is obviously more academic, they want to see particular strategies and structures, just more and more is being required. And there just isn’t the same amount of time and freedom that you have to deal with the other issues, the more personal issues.

Narrator: At the same time, our society is far more complex, and students need the social skills to work individually and in groups. To use critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity, to problem solve in real-life situations. Communities are working so that every child succeeds.

Richard Carranza: School districts cannot do this alone. So the bad news is, school districts can’t do it alone. But the good news is that we have to be able to partner with great organizations, great community-based organizations. So there is an incredible opportunity.

Everybody really wants to do right by our children. But often we want to do that in a silo'd way. We don't partner with other organizations or the school district. Here's the opportunity for school districts and community-based organizations to actually partner, have conversations, set up some goals and metrics to track how are we getting there, and then the funding formula that we have calls for us, in our accountability plan (the LCAP) to actually talk about how are we working together? So the conditions, I think, are right, and I think the conditions are ripe, for school districts and community-based organizations to really do really, really impactful work together.

Narrator: Educators across the state are stepping up to meet these challenges. But they don't have to do it alone.

Monroe Howard: How that looks is, partnerships with community-based organizations, partnerships with our schools and our principals, administrators and our teachers, and dedicated professionals who every single day come here out of a love and a passion for making sure that students get what they deserve, which is an opportunity to learn, grow, and develop.

Chandler Cooper: So one of the very first things I would do is take a look at what grants are available to you in your area. Talk to your school districts, see what providers that they have. See what's already in place. Talk to your community, go around to leaders. Because there are a lot of non-profits in cities that have funding, but they don't have students. So if we can provide the students, and they can provide the service, then it's an automatic partnership. So communication with your community is going to be huge.

Narrator: These are not a simple extension of the school day. Rather, these before and after-school, summer, and intersession learning opportunities expand a child's learning experiences to complement the school day.

Stu Semigran: Well, I think one of the things that schools, I would hope they understand, that we're their partners. That there's only so much you can do through those daytime hours. But after school, summers, weekends, there's so much more time that we can really provide so much more. And so we're here to work with you, we're here to align instruction with your instruction, and then fill in some of the gaps that daytime instruction just doesn't have time or funding for.

Alisandro: Well, I like my after-school program because it really does help me a lot in school. I thought that I was doing better in fifth grade and fourth grade. I would get Cs and Bs, and I'm proud of myself because I've improved a lot ever since I got here to Liberty. And then once I started going to the after-school program I've been getting As and Bs, and then I really feel like this year I'm going to get straight-As.

Narrator: Together, schools and after-school programs are creating opportunities for expanding student success.

Michael Essien: Many of our families, if they are working they're working multiple jobs. Some of our families, when it's time for our kids to go home, there's not supervision at home. So then, what do we do with kids? How do we provide instruction for kids, where not only can they continue to learn, but they can have a safe environment and be exposed to activities that not only, maybe are not just academic but are fun and exposing them to, like, martial arts, or gymnastics, or how do you participate in a team sport? So the after-school program takes on that role. It's a safe environment where we can actually have kids spend time after school, but then when we have those kids, how do we begin to address their specific needs? Just because the bell rings at 3:30 to dismiss school, that doesn't mean that the kids' needs have actually ceased.

Richard Ramos: The students that are staying here, we've got one-third of our students. We have 900 students here, a third of them stay here daily. So what are they receiving? They're receiving robotics, they're receiving skating, they're receiving dance, the arts, they're receiving mariachi. We're the only school in this part of town that are providing those services for these students. So that relationship with Woodcraft is really a dream for me as a principal, because we want to provide them more than just tutoring after school.

(student singing)

Diana Benitez: A lot of the times parents come to me, and they personally come and talk to me. "Oh, thank you. You know, because they're staying with you, or because they're staying at Woodcraft after school, I notice a difference in the way her homework is completely finished when they get home. They turn it in on time. You know, their teachers tell me that their reading level's getting better." So it has a lot to do with letting them know that they need to finish their homework at the given time so that they can participate in mariachi.

Narrator: Expanded learning opportunities help schools and education organizations leverage additional resources and optimize collaborative efforts with partner organizations to enhance LEA goals and provide more support services for students.

Gustavo Barrientos: And it's aligned to what we want to accomplish as a school. It's part of our vision to prepare our students to be college and career ready by emphasizing 21st century skills.

Helena Silva: Well the ideal relationship between a regular school day teacher and an after-school program line staff is that there's communication constantly. It's daily. And the program, the staff are there to support what the teacher's doing in the classroom. So we need that communication there. That way we can support what the teacher is doing and help the students succeed.

Caitlyn: It's a huge thing. As well as after-school clubs, like MESA, which is Math, Engineering, Science, and Academics. They do small projects to help with STEM, as well as just robotics in

general, like, I'm learning how to run a manual mill. Which is really cool, because I went to Cal, I toured Cal Poly a couple of months ago and their students were using it. So I'm learning something in high school that most students don't learn until college, which is really cool for me.

Narrator: Expanded learning opportunities help support LCAP objectives to increase parent engagement and pupil achievement, especially for the most disadvantaged.

Stu Semigran: LCAP is a wonderful opportunity for schools and regions to really clarify their specific needs. With Educare and our focus on social-emotional learning, there's a lot of attention these days to the whole-child education. So we're looking to say, if that really matches your needs in a sense of, "Let's really educate the student in terms of all their well-being," we're here to serve in that capacity.

Michael Funk: The state of California's commitment to this expanded learning initiative is primarily to bring these opportunities to kids who wouldn't have them otherwise.

Richard Carranza: And quite frankly, that our community-based organizations are helping our students to discover the world they live in. That's really the beauty of the partnership. But now we have a funding formula that actually encourages us to do that. So more than ever, you know, there are no excuses. We should be doing this. We need to be doing this. And there's a lot of research that shows that if you can create these kinds of environments, that students not only prosper but they thrive.

Candelaria Espinoza (*speaking Spanish with subtitles*): The after school program is very important to us because we go to work knowing that our children are in a safe place where we know they are doing homework and activities that are creating opportunities for them for example sports.

Narrator: Expanded learning opportunities help keep students engaged in activities and lessons that enhance their learning capacity in the classroom.

Leslie Hu: I think the biggest impact that I've seen for our kids is school connectedness. Kids feel connected to our school community in really impactful ways.

John Grande: As a teacher, I've seen students come out of the program a lot more confident and more willing to ask questions, participate in their learning, and help others. They feel more confident knowing that the struggles they go through personally, other students have those same struggles, and they're more inclined to help each other out and communicate better with each other and with their teachers.

Jacynta Jordan: These programs are very successful. We struggle a little bit around homework because sometimes the students get it done ahead of time. So we creatively started implementing worksheets, or talking to the teachers to see what are the things that

students are actually learning in class, so that we can tap into some of that during the after-school program. So when they have test time coming they are familiar with that information and they are not just losing education time during the after-school hours.

Dan Hartzell: I think one of the biggest things is we want to plug our kids into as many things as possible, whether that's our program or other programs, and just keep these guys busy and give them as many skills and opportunities for their future.

Leslie Hu: And it's a great partnership in that way. And that's another way that we build connectedness for kids. That's how kids are successful, is when they feel connected, to not just the school day, but to after school, and that's how we build community for kids and for our young people overall.

Randy Mehrten: You know, if after school didn't exist in our community ... I'll give you one very tangible way that after school is making a difference. The young people of color that I've referenced in the past, young males, Latino males, African-American males in our community who attend after-school programs are attending the regular day an average of 17 more days than African-American and Latino males who don't go to after school. So one place that our kids are because of after school is in the regular day. They show up more, they're there for more of our traditional education. And everyone wins when our young people are in school.

Narrator: Expanded learning opportunities help schools and education organizations apply adopted quality standards designed to maximize the impact of programs, and to promote continuous improvement.

Luis Calderon-Hueso: You know, every day we can get better. Every day we strive to get better. We take things that maybe didn't work so well one day, and if we're going to incorporate them again the next day we see how we can adjust.

Helena Silva: If you see our programs, you'll definitely see the quality standards reflected. They've always been engaging for students, but now a lot of our programs are just more intentional with it.

Michael Funk: Let's come up with some theories about how our children can learn better. Let's put some new things into practice. Let's look at the way we invest our dollars to really maximize student achievement, student learning, student success. And let's figure out a way to then make our schools and our after-school programs a laboratory for learning and for new strategies. And then at the end of a year, to review that process and to see honestly how impactful we were and effective. Not to be dinged by an auditor or some test score, but in order to figure out how to make the experience even better. How to make our investments more wisely. Our north star is that California's expanded learning are an integral part of a young person's education, helping them find their path to college, career, or whatever life path they choose to success.

(music swells)

Narrator: Expanded learning opportunities prepare students to compete in a global society, offer safety nets for struggling students, and help complement student learning in a much more rigorous and demanding curriculum in instructional programming. High-caliber before and after-school activities create opportunities, and expand possibilities for student success.