

**California 21st Century High
School After School Safety and
Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs)
Program**

**Independent
Evaluation**

Interim Report

January 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002, the California Legislature established the 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program (*California Education Code* sections 8420-8428 and 8484.8(h)) as part of the California 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program. The 21st CCLC Program was initiated as a federal program in 1996. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 transferred authority for the 21st CCLC Program to the state departments of education. California is unique among the states in having earmarked a small portion of its 21st CCLC Program funds specifically for the design, development, and evaluation of high school after school programs.

This report of the ASSETs Program is submitted as part of the independent evaluation called for in *Education Code* (sections 8425, 8428, and 8484.8(h)). It is shaped, in part, by questions developed for the evaluation by the California Department of Education (CDE) and contained in the RFP for the evaluation of the High School ASSETs Program (California Department of Education 2004), which are as follows:

- What is the impact of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program on participating schools, and what benefits do participating students receive?
- To what extent do ASSETs projects address and integrate a youth development approach within the program design and implementation?
- What factors contribute to the effectiveness of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program as measured in relation to Questions 1 and 2?
- What unintended consequences have resulted from the implementation of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program?

Since 2003, CDE has awarded 43 grants under the ASSETs Program, grants that support after school activities at 57 high schools in the state. Each grant is awarded for up to a five-year period and comprises five one-year grants. Eligible grantees include local education agencies (LEAs) for high schools, city and county governments, county offices of education, non-profit community-based organizations, public or private entities (which could include faith-based organizations and private schools), and a consortium of two or more of these agencies, organizations, or entities. In addition to meeting

federal guidelines for school eligibility for these funds, priority is given in California to projects that serve students who attend schools ranked in the lowest three deciles of the Academic Performance Index (API).

The ASSETs Program is part of a statewide effort to address the underachievement of California youth by providing opportunities to become well-adjusted adults and constructive citizens of the state and nation. California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, remarked that 1.7 million high school students are not reaching academic levels needed to succeed, in the workplace, in college, or as effective citizens. "We can no longer limit the adult opportunities for our students because of our failure to provide them both challenges and support in high school. There is an urgent need to improve, regardless of limitations placed upon us by the budget" (O'Connell 2004).

Program Evaluation and Stakeholder Input

WestEd developed a multi-year, mixed-methods evaluation of the ASSETs Program that is grounded in the requirements of the federal legislation for the 21st CCLC Program, the California *Education Code* for the ASSETs Program, and the research literature on after school programs. We adopted an approach that asks questions appropriate to the stage of program development that Cohort 1 grantees were in during the ASSETs Program's initial years of implementation, 2003-05. During this time frame for the Interim Report, we focused on data about the characteristics of these after school programs for high school students.

The focus of the Final Evaluation Report (January 2007) will include student data from the 2005-06 year. We will expand our focus and give greater consideration to the impacts that these after school programs have on their participants compared to similarly situated students who are not involved with ASSETs projects. We will include in the Final Evaluation Report data that measure both students' academic achievement and youth development outcomes.

WestEd collaborated with CDE, ASSETs Program grantees, and their local evaluators to ensure that the information requested of grantees was feasible, understandable, and significant. WestEd and CDE received feedback via email exchanges and at ASSETs Program Learning Community meetings. Stakeholder input helped inform and shape the developing evaluation reporting system, which includes the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*. We augmented data from this reporting system in two ways. First, we conducted site visits to Cohort 1 grantees during

spring 2005. Site visits allowed us to speak with school administrators, teachers, after school project staff, and students. Second, we drew attendance data for the 2004-05 program year from the federal data reporting system that 21st CCLC grantees use to report data for the U. S. Department of Education.

Key Findings

All grantees had projects in place for high school youth, albeit at varying stages of development. While some grantees remained committed to their initial programming focus, many modified their earlier plans as a result of challenging or failed attempts and pooled resources to begin anew. The majority of projects primarily focused on providing services in the face of operational challenges that included staffing turnover, student recruitment and retention, and working with community partners.

The Executive Summary highlights the key findings about efforts by Cohort 1 grantees' to implement their high school after school projects. Relevant key findings are also found at the beginning of each sub-section of the Evaluation Findings section of this report.

School and Participant Demographics

- The ASSETs Program funded projects at small (fewer than 600 students), medium (900 to 1,200 students), and large high schools (over 1,600 students) in northern, southern, and central California.
- Demographics of projects largely reflected the demographics of the 15 high schools that hosted them. Hispanic and African American were the largest ethnic groups of students both enrolled at each ASSETs Program high school and participating in after school activities.

Project Attendance

- Cohort 1 projects served over 6,350 students in 2003-04, 25 percent of students enrolled at participating high schools, and 8,700 students in 2004-05, 32 percent of enrolled students.
- Projects attracted over 50 percent of student populations at three schools in 2003-04 and seven schools in 2004-05, with

smaller schools attracting higher percentages of student participants for both program years.

- The percent of students attending 30 days or more increased from 24 percent in 2003-04 to 32 percent in 2004-05.
- From 2003-04 to 2004-05, overall participation increased at 11 schools, and the percent of students attending 30 days or more increased at 11 schools.

Assessed Needs and Grantee Goals

- Identified needs and goals were consistent across grantees and covered four areas: academic achievement, student behavior, college attendance, and community partnerships.
- Needs and goals highlighted improving student academic performance, an area consistent with 21st CCLC Program priorities.
- Individual grantee goals were not always matched with their stated needs.

Program Activities

- Grantees provided 152 activities in 2003-04.
- The average activity length was 26 weeks; however, activities ranged from three and 37 weeks.
- All grantees offered activities focused on academics, social services and community development, and vocational development. Most projects also had activities related to health and safety.

Staffing

- All grantees employed both paid and volunteer staff members. Most used a majority of paid staff.
- Grantees used teachers more than any other staff type.
- Summer staffing reflected school year staffing trends in the program.

Links to the School Day

- Grantees used four strategies to link after school projects to the regular school day: principal engagement and communication; teacher involvement; formal academic links; and strategies involving the site coordinator.
- School teachers and site coordinators were instrumental in connecting the after school projects with the school day by attending all staff meetings and having regular contact with site administration.
- Some sites provided credit for after school academic activities.

Collaborating Organizations

- Grantees most commonly developed collaborative relationships with community-based organizations and national non-profits.
- Most collaborative partners contributed to projects by delivering services to students.

Youth Involvement

- ASSETs Program youth provided feedback, were formal advisers, influenced project policy and design, held leadership positions, and recruited other students.
- Students were involved in projects by providing feedback about programming, by serving in leadership roles, and in helping to recruit students.
- Youth ran two projects and made decisions about activity offerings, policy, staffing, and snacks.

Youth Development

- Grantees found multiple ways to support positive youth development in eight areas: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community efforts.

- All grantees provided physical safety for youth in structured and supervised environments.
- Adults and youth in the program believed that the after school projects provided students with supportive relationships where adult staff members cared about student success.

Student Benefits

- Students primarily cited academic support as a benefit of participating in the after school project. In receiving support, youth had access to school resources, such as computers, and exposure to career choices beyond high school.
- Projects strengthened youths' sense of belonging to the school community, with like peers in the project, and with adult staff members who gained their trust in providing academic and enrichment activities.
- Youth and adults believed their increased life skills such as critical thinking, learning to ask questions, and managing multiple tasks would facilitate a healthy adulthood.

Professional Development

- Most grantees trained staff members in after school programming and academic content areas, and some trained staff members in youth development. Since the majority of staff members were school teachers, many grantees relied on district and school-provided professional development focused on academic content.
- The majority of professional development service providers were school districts, county offices of education, and community-based organizations.

Family Literacy

- Six grantees provided a family literacy component that included training on how to be partners in education and age and grade-appropriate strategies to use with youth.
- Family literacy activities were courses for adults or extended library hours open for adults.

Advisory Group

- ASSETs Program grantees are beginning to leverage their resources to continue after school programming beyond the funding period.
- LEAs are tapping into district-funded programs while non-LEAs are regrouping to expand their options for funding.
- All grantees have plans to develop sustainability plans in the upcoming academic year.

Sustainability

- Grantees are working with a variety of agencies, including their districts, to solicit monetary and in-kind contributions that will support sustainability.

Next Steps

ASSETs Program grantees made important strides in developing and implementing programming to serve students in need of academic assistance and enrichment opportunities. However, focusing on a few key areas including the following could strengthen projects:

- Support for grantees and projects in areas such as:
 - Aligning needs and goals;
 - Using data to inform programming;
 - Expanding professional development for staff; and
 - Recruiting and retaining students;
- Better integrating academics into grantee activities; and
- Linking after school programming to high school reform efforts.

In January 2007, WestEd will provide the Final Evaluation Report about the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program. That report will allow us to provide further data in addition to addressing key areas discussed in this Interim Evaluation Report. We plan to incorporate data into the Final Evaluation Report about the following areas:

- The impact of the ASSETs Program on participating schools;
- The impact the ASSETs Program has on students in the following areas:
 - Academic performance such as scores on the California Standards Tests, CAHSEE, and course completion;
 - Student behaviors including school attendance, bullying, and the use of alcohol and drugs; and
 - Youth development outcomes such as feeling safe, connections to adults, and opportunities for skill building.
- How outcomes compare for ASSETs Program participants and “similarly situated” students.

Key Definitions

The following key concepts, values, and terms associated with the ASSETs Program are referenced throughout this document. They are defined below to provide necessary clarification and establish a common understanding.

Grantee: Refers to the fiscal agent that received an ASSETs Program grant from CDE. A grant supports comprehensive after school services for students from at least one eligible high school.

Project: Refers to the site where activities funded by the ASSETs Program take place for the students from the eligible high school(s). This is usually a high school campus where programming occurs. Multiple projects for multiple eligible high schools may be associated with a single grantee.

After school program: Refers to the program of scheduled services and activities that occur after the regular school day.

Community learning center: the term community learning center is defined in federal law as an entity that: (A) assists students in meeting State and local academic achievement standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics, by providing the students with opportunities for academic enrichment activities and a broad array of other activities (such as drug and violence prevention, counseling, art, music, recreation, technology, and character education programs) during nonschool hours or periods when school is not in session (such as before and after school or during summer recess) that reinforce and complement the regular academic programs of the schools attended by the students served; and (B) offers families of students served by such center opportunities for literacy and related educational development.¹

¹ *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Title IV, Part B. Section 4201.

I. INTRODUCTION

The California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program (ASSETs Program²) is part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) Program. Since the launch of the federal 21st CCLC Program in 1996, more than \$4.6 billion in 21st CCLC Program funding has helped to establish community partnerships to provide community learning centers at school sites across the nation to keep children safe in the after school hours, and to provide academic enrichment, homework centers and tutors, family literacy services, and a range of cultural, developmental, and recreational opportunities.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 transferred administration of the 21st CCLC Program to individual state education agencies and focused the program's emphasis on academic achievement. Additionally, it expanded state and local accountability and flexibility. Shaped by the California *Education Code* (sections 8420-8428 and 8484.8(h)), the ASSETs Program has a broad, overarching goal: "to create incentives for establishing locally driven after school enrichment programs that partner schools and communities to provide academic support and safe, constructive alternatives for high school pupils in the hours after the regular school day."³ This report of the ASSETs Program is submitted as part of the independent evaluation called for in *Education Code* (sections 8425 and 8428).

While the federal 21st CCLC Program has funded activities at high schools since its inauguration, California is unique among the states in that it has earmarked a small portion of the funds it receives from the federal 21st CCLC Program specifically for the design, development, and evaluation of high school after school programs. Grantees are required to provide three components to support high school students:

- An academic assistance component to include academic enrichment activities to support students meeting and exceeding the state academic standards such as tutoring, homework assistance, preparation for the high school exit examination, and college preparation;

² In this report, we will refer to the California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens Program as the "ASSETs Program." Each school or site where ASSETs Program activities occur will be referred to as a "project."

³ California *Education Code* section 8421.

- An enrichment activities component that may include an array of areas including community service, service learning, opportunities to mentor and tutor younger pupils, career and technical education, job readiness, computer and technology training, arts, physical fitness, and recreation activities; and
- A family literacy component.

Furthermore, grantees are to embed their program components within a developmental framework that supports the acquisition of personal and social assets that promote adolescent well-being and a successful transition to adulthood. This is a significant point and shows the ASSETs Program recognizes that high school students are developmentally distinct from elementary and middle grades children. As a result, effective after school programs that target high school students must take their interests, needs, and the developmental tasks of early to mid-adolescence into consideration (Partee 2003).

The California Department of Education (CDE) awarded grants to three cohorts of projects based on budget authority during three fiscal years (FY) since FY 2002-03. Eligible grantees included local education agencies (LEAs) for high schools, city and county governments, county offices of education, community-based organizations (CBOs), public or private entities (which could include faith-based organizations and private schools), and a consortium of two or more of these agencies, organizations, or entities. Priority was given to programs that served students who attend schools whose scores on the Academic Performance Index were ranked in the lowest three deciles (California *Education Code* section 8422(a)). The California 21st Century High School ASSETs Program grant is awarded for up to a five-year period and comprises five one-year grants subject to annual reporting requirements.

CDE has awarded 43 grants under the ASSETs Program through three competitions, beginning in the 2002-03 school year. ASSETs Program grantees serve students attending 57 high schools located in central, northern, and southern California. Table 1 provides data showing the number of grantees in each of the three cohorts, the type of organization receiving funding, and the number of high schools supported by the ASSETs Program.

The first cohort of nine grantees provided funds for six LEAs, one county office of education, and two public entities that included a city agency. Together, these grantees have operated activities at 15 high schools since the 2003-04 school year. The second cohort of ASSETs Program grants commencing in fall 2004 had fewer LEAs and more

private entities as grantees. Cohort 3, whose funding began in January 2005, contains the largest number of grantees with 16 LEAs of high schools, one county office of education, one public entity, and six private entities that included CBOs.

Table 1

Type and number of organizations receiving ASSETs Program funding by grant cohort

Grant Cohort and Type of Organization	Number of Grantees	Number of High Schools
Cohort 1		
LEA of High School	6	8
County Offices of Education	1	4
Public Entity (city/county govt., higher ed.)	2	3
Private Entity (CBO, FBO, private education)	0	0
Cohort 2		
LEA of High School	3	4
County Offices of Education	2	3
Public Entity (city/county govt., higher ed)	1	2
Private Entity (CBO, FBO, private education)	4	4
Cohort 3		
LEA of High School	16	20
County Offices of Education	1	1
Public Entity (city/county govt., higher ed)	1	1
Private Entity (CBO, FBO, private education)	6	7
Total	43	57

Source: California Department of Education

A. High School ASSETs Program, Cohort 1

This section provides a brief description of the first cohort of nine grantees funded under the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program serving students at 15 high schools. The nine grantees in Cohort 1 are: the City of Richmond, the Fresno County Office of Education, Long Beach Unified School District, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, San Bernardino Unified School District, San Diego Unified School District, the San Diego State University Foundation, San Francisco Unified School District, and Sweetwater Union High School District. Each grantee serves from one to four high schools.

Grantee data for 2003-04 were gathered from CDE's DataQuest Web site, the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*, and proposals grantees submitted for ASSETs Program funding. Descriptions of grantees are below.

- **The City of Richmond** received ASSETs Program funding to provide programming at Richmond High School, a large urban high school that enrolls about 1,800 students, and Kennedy High School, a smaller school than Richmond High that enrolls about 1,000 students. At Richmond High, about 20 percent of students are African American and 65 percent are Hispanic. Kennedy High is divided almost equally among African American (47 percent) and Hispanic students. Like many urban communities, there are concerns about crime in Richmond. The city's mayor sought ASSETs Program funding as a part of her effort to bridge the gap between the city and the school district and bring after school programs to every school in Richmond. The City of Richmond also received a second ASSETs Program grant in Cohort 2, which has allowed expansion of after school programming at Richmond High School.
- **The Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE)** received an ASSETs Program grant that enables four school districts in the county to provide after school services: Central Unified School District – Central High School; Caruthers Unified School District – Caruthers High School; Mendota Unified School District – Mendota High School; and Washington Union School District – Washington High School. The program represents a unique configuration of four independent districts, all with varying needs, all operating site-level after school projects under an umbrella of countywide goals. FCOE covers a large track of land that is predominately rural. In 2001 Fresno County ranked as one of the five counties in most need of assistance in California in eight areas including high school dropouts. The four high schools represent a range of school sizes (570-2,900 students) where the majority of students qualify for free/reduced-priced meals. FCOE received two additional ASSETs Program grants (both Cohort 2), to expand services to three additional high schools, each in separate school districts that have not previously participated in the High School ASSETs Program.
- **Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD)** contracted in 2004 with the Conservation Corp of Long Beach to serve as the agency for the ASSETs Program grant providing after school activities at Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo High School. Cabrillo High enrolls 3,500 students. More than half (58 percent) of the

students are Hispanic and 27 percent are African American. Approximately 58 percent qualify for free/reduced-priced meals and 26 percent are English learners. Spanish is the home language for 89 percent of English learners. LBUSD also operates an after school project at a second high school supported by a Cohort 3 ASSETs Program grant.

- **Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD)** received an ASSETs Program grant to operate an after school project at Watsonville High School, home to both suburban and rural families. Of 3,000 students at Watsonville, there are 1,800 identified English learners and a large migrant population. Hispanics make up 78 percent of the community of Watsonville. PVUSD was able to expand after school services to a second high school when it received another grant under the High School ASSETs Program (Cohort 2).
- **San Bernardino City Unified School District's (SBCUSD)** San Bernardino High School is the oldest of five comprehensive high schools. Of 2,500 students, over 60 percent are Hispanic, 19 percent African American, and 11 percent White. Approximately 78 percent of students qualify for free/reduced-priced meals and 20 percent are English learners. There are no parks or libraries within 1.5 miles of the school.
- **San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD)** is the lead agency for after school projects operating at two high schools: San Diego High School and Kearny High School. The district's School-to-Career office coordinates the after school programs. San Diego High is in the heart of San Diego and has a student population of about 2,700. Hispanics make up 71 percent of the students, African Americans 14 percent, and Whites 12 percent. Approximately 38 percent of students are English learners and 60 percent are eligible for free/reduced-priced meals. Kearny High is in a residential zone with approximately 1,600 students. Hispanics comprise 34 percent of students, Asians 21 percent, African Americans 20 percent, Whites 17 percent, and Filipinos six percent. About 25 percent of students are English learners and 62 percent are eligible for free/reduced-priced meals. In 2004-05, SDUSD implemented smaller learning communities at their high schools. The Kearny High School Complex was transformed into four smaller high schools while San Diego High School became six small high schools.
- **San Diego State University Foundation (SDSUF)** entered a partnership with San Diego Unified School District to assume management authority over the high school, middle school, and

elementary school in the City Heights area. Students at Hoover High School receive services under the ASSETs Program, the only youth center dedicated to high school-aged youth in the community. The school's student population of 2,100 is diverse with 65 percent Hispanic, 16 percent African American, and 14 percent Asian. Hoover High has the highest level of poverty among the city's high schools with 99 percent of students qualifying for free/reduced-priced meals.

- **San Francisco Unified School District's (SFUSD) School Health Programs Department** coordinates the after school programs at John O'Connell High School and the International Studies Academy (ISA), both of which are smaller high schools. O'Connell High enrolled approximately 900 students, 71 percent of which are Hispanic, 11 percent Asian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino, and ten percent African American. ISA enrolled about 470 students with a slightly different ethnic composition: 32 percent Hispanic, 30 percent Asian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino, and 26 percent African American. Both schools partner with CBOs to provide programming services after school. Since receiving a Cohort 1 grant, SFUSD expanded after school programming to three additional high schools with support from two other ASSETs Program grants (Cohort 3).
- **Sweetwater Union High School District's (SUHSD) School-to-Career office** managed after school programming at San Ysidro High School. The school opened in 2002 to grades 9-10 in this border city where the median income is \$27,943 and 60 percent live 200 percent below the poverty level. Approximately 89 percent of the city's population is Hispanic. Since its inception, San Ysidro High has filled each grade level. As a result of their increased population, CDE awarded the district three additional grants in Cohort 3, which allowed the expansion of after school activities to five additional high schools. SUHSD now convenes collaborative meetings for after school site coordinators.

Table 2 presents data on the percent of students who qualified for free/reduced-priced meals and the 2002 statewide Academic Performance Index (API) ranking of the Cohort 1 schools. With two exceptions, over 40 percent of students were eligible for free/reduced-priced meals in 2001-02 when these schools applied for ASSETs Program funding. The exceptions were the International Studies Academy in San Francisco and Central High School in Fresno where 37 percent and 20 percent of students, respectively, were eligible for free/reduced-priced meals.

Table 2 includes API data indicating each Cohort 1 school's ranking statewide. The API score, which may range from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000, summarizes data from

Table 2
Grantee data on free/reduced-priced meals and statewide API ranking

Grantee	High School	Percent Free/Reduced- Priced Meals, 2001-02	Statewide API Rank, 2002
City of Richmond	Kennedy	54%	1
	Richmond	72%	1
Fresno County Office of Education	Caruthers	64%	2
	Central	20%	4
	Mendota	79%	1
	Washington	81%	2
Long Beach Unified School District	Cabrillo	72%	1
Pajaro Valley Unified School District	Watsonville	42%	Not available
San Bernardino City Unified School District	San Bernardino	67%	1
San Diego Unified School District	Kearny	70%	44
	San Diego	65%	2
San Diego State University Foundation	Hoover	97%	1
San Francisco Unified School District	International Studies Academy	37%	2
	John O'Connell	45%	2
Sweetwater Union High School District	San Ysidro	84% ⁴	Not available

Source: Education Data Partnership, www.ed-data.k12.ca.us

various assessments administered annually to students attending California's schools, including the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE). Schools statewide are

⁴ The free/reduced-priced meals statistic for San Ysidro High School is for 2002-03, the first year the high school was open.

ranked on the basis of their API scores in ten categories of equal size (deciles) from one (lowest) to ten (highest).⁵ The Cohort 1 API scores indicate how ASSETs Program high schools compared to other California high schools. Most ASSETs Program schools had a statewide rank of one, two, or three. Only Central and Kearny High Schools had higher statewide rankings, each having rank of 4. These results are consistent with the priority the High School ASSETs Program gave to funding grantees serving schools whose API scores ranked in the lowest three deciles (California Department of Education 2002).

Organization of the Interim Evaluation Report

The Interim Evaluation Report is organized into several sections. The following section describes the evaluation approach and methodology that WestEd used with the High School ASSETs Program to prepare the Interim Evaluation Report. Next, we present our findings. Following, we conclude with a summary of next steps that recommend strengthening the ASSETs Program. Our discussion of next steps includes a review of areas that we anticipate will be included in the Final Evaluation Report due in 2007.

⁵ Further information about API scores may be found at the CDE website, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/api0304.asp>.

II. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

WestEd developed a multi-year, mixed-methods evaluation of the ASSETs Program that is grounded in the requirements of the federal legislation for the 21st CCLC Program, the California *Education Code* for the ASSETs Program, and the research literature on after school programs. We adopted an approach that asks questions appropriate to the stage of program development that Cohort 1 grantees, the focus of the Interim Evaluation, were in during the ASSETs Program's initial years of implementation, 2003-05.

The Interim Evaluation Report drew on multiple data sources including the following: qualitative data such as document reviews, individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys; and quantitative data related to implemented activities such as participation rates and the number of staff members and community groups participating with grantees. The goal in drawing on these multiple sources was to gather sufficient data to understand how the High School ASSETs Program is being implemented and the outcomes of grantee activities. Furthermore, grantees were asked to provide data already collected as a part of California's accountability system.

This section of the report discusses our evaluation approach to the High School ASSETs Program. We drew on evaluation questions developed by CDE, the California *Education Code*, and the growing research and evaluation literature on after school programs to structure our work. Each of these resources was important to ensuring an evaluation that was timely, responsive to the program's stakeholders, and appropriate given the first cohort of ASSETs Program grantees was launched during the 2002-03 school year. After discussing the evaluation approach, we will review our evaluation methodology.

A. Evaluation Approach

The California *Education Code* (section 8428) calls for an independent evaluation of the High School ASSETs Program with interim and final evaluation reports due to the California Legislature after years two and three of the program, respectively. In response, CDE contracted with WestEd to work with the ASSETs Program. Designing the evaluation required taking several factors into consideration:

- Questions developed for the evaluation by CDE and contained in the RFP for the evaluation of the High School ASSETs Program (California Department of Education 2004), which are as follows:
 - What is the impact of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program on participating schools, and what benefits do participating students receive?
 - To what extent do ASSETs projects address and integrate a youth development approach within the program design and implementation?
 - What factors contribute to the effectiveness of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program as measured in relation to Questions 1 and 2?
 - What unintended consequences have resulted from the implementation of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program?
- The California *Education Code*, which calls for the evaluation to consider outcomes for students who participate in the High School ASSETs Program compared to “similarly situated” students; and
- The research and evaluation literature about after school programs, which discusses the features of quality after school programs and cautions about focusing on student outcomes too early in the life cycle of an after school program.

After school programs have a developmental cycle that begins with program design and extends through the continuing operation of a stable, ongoing program. The nature of this cycle is such that it takes time to develop a stable program, a process that includes initial implementation and is facilitated by formative evaluation data. While California’s efforts to establish after school programs for high school students are not unique (Birmingham and White 2005), the state is moving into relatively uncharted territory because there are so few after school programs targeting high school students. As a result, grantees within the ASSETs Program cannot simply adopt models that others have developed previously. ASSETs Program grantees developed their initial programs and then, once in operation, modified and fine-tuned them in response to the experience and feedback from students and other stakeholders.

The Interim Evaluation of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program focuses on the grantees in Cohort 1, which began operating during the 2003-04 school year. We shaped the Interim Evaluation based on the recognition that these grantees were in an early developmental phase and needed time to mature. As a result, in evaluating these grantees, it is important to ask questions that are consonant with their developmental status. Chung and Hillsman (2005), for instance, suggest caution when initially evaluating after school programs. They observe that it is important not to ask about long-term outcomes too soon, noting:

Long-term outcomes should be assessed only after the program has had the opportunity to implement its activities with qualified staff and resources, which may take two or three years.

Chung and Hillsman recommend looking at a program's short-term outcomes during its initial implementation phase, instead of looking at long-term outcomes.

Kane (2004) at UCLA also suggests using short-term indicators when evaluating after school programs that are in their initial phases of development. In his analysis of the evaluations of four after school programs, he discussed measuring whether after school programs have statistically significant impacts on academic achievement. He noted that nationally normed standardized achievement tests may not be sensitive enough to detect increases in student performance related to participation in after school programs. As an alternative in evaluation, he noted, "identifying intermediate outcomes on the road to student achievement—including parental involvement and homework completion, as well as other outcomes, such as teacher perceptions of student engagement—may be all we can expect" (p. 4).

WestEd drew upon the comments of researchers like Kane, Chung, and Hillsman when structuring the Interim Evaluation of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program. We recognized that it was too soon in the program's life to examine whether ASSETs Program grantees were achieving their longer-term outcomes. Instead, we followed Kane's (2004) suggestion and structured the Interim Evaluation to focus on intermediate outcomes that we would expect grantees to achieve as they progressed towards longer-term objectives such as boosting student achievement and supporting positive youth development. We derived these intermediate outcomes from the research and evaluation literature on after school programs. This literature discusses areas associated with quality after school programs. The areas include the following:

- Coordinating the regular school day and after school programs (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2000; Reisner and others 2004; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2005);
- Having quality after school staff members (Birmingham and White 2005; Rublin, Douglas and Halverson 2004; McComb and Little 2003; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2005);
- Establishing linkages between the after school program and community organizations (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2000; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2005); and,
- Creating environments that support positive youth development (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002), which is fostered by multiple elements including:
 - safe places (Hall and others 2003; U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2000);
 - caring relationships with adults (National Institute for Out-of-School Time 2004);
 - high expectations (Education Trust-West 2004); and
 - youth feeling that they matter (Pittman 2002).

The Interim Evaluation uses practices for quality after school programs as interim indicators that an after school program is on track to meet the long-term goal of achieving positive outcomes for participating youth. Data from the Interim Evaluation will help pinpoint where grantees need assistance to strengthen their practices so they will be able to support students' academic and personal development.

We deferred gathering data on student outcomes to the Final Evaluation Report due in January 2007. The Final Evaluation Report will discuss student outcomes and examine how the ASSETs Program has impacted participating students compared to "similarly situated" students who are not involved with projects.

The Final Evaluation Report will also include data from the After School Program Survey (ASPS) that will contain a subset of questions from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) and after school specific questions. CDE has been working with the CHKS contractor to create an evaluation data system that will allow comparing ASPS data from students participating in the ASSETs Program to other students at their

schools.⁶ Grantees will administer the ASPs to ASSETs Program participants in early 2006 to obtain baseline data. Then, students will provide data about their experiences in projects in May 2006.

B. Evaluation Methodology

Data for the Interim Evaluation Report came from multiple sources. The Cohort 1 ASSETs Program grantees were the primary source of data. They completed the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04* for the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program prepared by WestEd under contract to CDE. Then, WestEd staff conducted site visits in spring 2005 to each Cohort 1 grantee. We supplemented data from the guidebook and site visits with information on high school enrollment available from CDE's DataQuest Web site⁷ and data that grantees reported to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) about their 2003-04 and 2004-05 program years through the federal data reporting system for the 21st CCLC Program.

ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04

WestEd began working with CDE in 2004 to develop a reporting system for ASSETs Program grantees to annually report on their activities, participants, and outcomes. The California *Education Code* governing the High School ASSETs Program, CDEs data needs, and the literature on after school programs helped shape the system. The *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*, included in Appendix C, is one element of the system, collecting information about grantee characteristics related to quality after school programs, and asking for comprehensive information about grantees. Specific areas covered in the guidebook included:

- **Student Data** (demographics and level of participation)
- **Program Data** (assessed needs and goals, activities linked to goals and standards)
- **Grantee Activities** (extent of school year, summer, and infrequent activities)

⁶ The reporting system will also include the California Healthy Kids Survey module for after school projects. For further information, please see:

www.wested.org/pub/docs/chks_21st.html (WestEd 2005).

⁷ <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>

- **Links to Regular School Program** (link from program to school-day curriculum)
- **Program Staffing and Administration** (characteristics of staff and class sizes)
- **Professional Development** (training of staff for after school programming)
- **Family Literacy Component** (extent of parent/family services and participation)
- **Institutional Capacity** (systems in place to institutionalize programming)
- **Youth Involvement** (extent of youth program leadership and decision making)
- **Youth Development** (physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social)
- **Advisory Group** (implementation of external support structure)
- **Sustainability** (approach to sustain programming beyond funding period)
- **Collaborating Organizations** (partnering agencies and services provided)
- **Evaluation Narrative** (challenges, supporting data, next steps)

In Spring 2005, CDE sent each Cohort 1 ASSETs Program grantee the guidebook and asked them to report on the program experience during the 2003-04 school year. This version of the guidebook served two purposes: to gauge the extent of grantee programming and, as a field test, to allow fine-tuning of the guidebook for future use. This report will discuss grantee programming in detail. However, it is important to discuss a few of the shortcomings with the data received to provide context for the reader.

The data submitted in response to the guidebook were inconsistent. Some grantees provided extensive data submitting several pages to a section, while others submitted scant data, a sentence or two to a section. Further, there were gaps in the data that some of the grantees provided. For example, some grantees did not complete each section of the guidebook. As a result, we have data from seven or eight grantees instead of all nine grantees on some areas. Grantees were also asked to provide data

about each student who participated in their program during the 2003-04 year. We received student data from all but one grantee. Additionally, grantees that provided data did not give all the requested individual student data for each of their participants. For instance, we did not receive accurate information about the ethnicity of all students.

Site Visits, Spring 2005

In May-June, 2005, WestEd evaluators conducted site visits to each Cohort 1 grantee. One or two evaluators, depending on the size of the grantee, conducted visits that lasted one to two days. Site visits provided WestEd evaluators the needed opportunities to interact with project staff members and gather data about the 2004-05 project year. Additional in-depth data collection was made possible from speaking with key stakeholders of the after school project at each ASSETs Program site. Questions asked of interview and focus group respondents focused on the following areas: grantee goals, enrollment, programming, activities, staffing, links to the school day, sustainability, and challenges/successes of the grantee. The site visits allowed us to gather more in-depth data about these areas. Additionally, we were able to speak with students using a focus group format to learn their perspectives. Copies of the protocols used during the site visits are found in Appendix A.

Findings from site visits are included in this report to substantiate data from the guidebook and provide in-depth and multiple perspectives of after school programming. In all, WestEd evaluators interviewed nine project directors, 14 project coordinators, 30 project staff members, 11 principals, 151 students (101 participants and 50 non-participants), five local evaluators, and five collaborative partners. All interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded, with permission from the respondents. WestEd evaluators prepared a summary of each site visit to facilitate data analysis.

Federal Data Reporting System

In 1999, ED began asking each grantee that received funding under the 21st CCLC Program to submit an annual report. Each report included data on students participating in a 21st CCLC Program grant, grantee activities, staffing, links to community organizations, links to the regular school program, and student achievement. The federal annual reporting system is formally known today as the *21st CCLC Profile and Performance Information Collection System*. It is managed for ED by Learning Point Associates.

Eight of the nine ASSETs Program grantees reported data using the federal reporting system for both their 2003-04 and 2004-05 program years.⁸ CDE provided WestEd a copy of these grantees' federal data. We used these data to validate the enrollment data that grantees submitted to CDE for the 2003-04 year and obtain enrollment figures for 2004-05. Using these data helped us to examine changes in student participation between 2003-04 and 2004-05.

⁸ Due to a clerical error at CDE, no data about ASSETs Program grant operated by San Bernardino City Unified School District were available.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

We begin our presentation of what we learned from the Cohort 1 ASSETs Program grantees by focusing on the characteristics of the students attending the schools that hosted projects and the participating students. Then, we will discuss attendance patterns, the identified grantee needs and goals, and many aspects of program implementation. To assist the reader, we begin each section with a brief description of “Key Findings,” which summarizes the major points in the section. A discussion follows the summary of key findings.

A. School and Participant Demographics

Key Findings:

- The ASSETs Program funded projects at small (fewer than 600 students), medium (900 to 1,200 students), and large high schools (over 1,600 students) in northern, southern, and central California.
- Demographics of projects largely reflected the demographics of the 15 high schools that hosted them. Hispanic and African American were the largest ethnic groups of students both enrolled at each ASSETs Program high school and participating in after school activities.

The ASSETs Program funded projects at small, medium, and large high schools in northern, southern, central California. The diverse populations of these urban, suburban, and rural communities are largely reflected in the demographics at the schools and the participants of the after school projects. The projects reflect California *Education Code* Section 8423(a) criteria for equitable distribution of grants to awardees. This section examines demographics of participating ASSETs Program schools, then compares these to those of ASSETs Program participants.

School Demographics

Each of the high schools participating in the ASSETs Program has a student body comprised mostly of minority ethnic groups. We obtained demographic data about the schools from CDEs DataQuest website. Additionally, 14 of the 15 grantees in Cohort 1

provided demographic data on each of the ASSETs Program participants when they completed the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*. School enrollment and ASSETs Program participant data are presented together in Table 3.

School enrollment of the high schools with ASSETs Program grants in 2003-04 ranged from 476 students to 3,081. However, we can readily group them on the basis of their size:

- Three schools had enrollments under 600 students;
- Four had 900 to 1,200 students;
- Three had 1,600 to 2,200 students; and
- Five had over 2,500 students.

The two large high schools served by the SDUSD grant, Kearny (enrollment of 1,663 students) and San Diego (enrollment of 2,776 students), became smaller learning communities in the 2004-05 academic year. The Kearny High School facility now holds four smaller schools and San Diego High has six. As a result, the total enrollment figure for each of these school facilities does not accurately depict the learning environment for students at those two sites.

Although the ethnic composition of the ASSETs Program high schools varied, there were some general trends in enrollment. Hispanics were the largest ethnic group (32 percent to 99 percent) at all but one school. At one school, African Americans were the largest ethnic group. At four schools, African Americans were the second largest ethnic group. Some schools had significant enrollments of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino students, although none exceeded 30 percent. Five schools had over 15 percent of students from these groups and two schools enrolled more than 25 percent. Representation of White students followed a similar pattern. Four schools identified 15 percent or more of their students as White (not Hispanic). Two of those schools had greater than 20 percent enrollment of White students and none had more than 30 percent White students.

Participant Demographics

Participant demographics of the after school projects largely reflected those of the host schools. There were a few schools where the proportion of students from a specific ethnic group who were involved with after school activities differed from that group's

representation in the school by more than ten percentage points. At Kennedy High School, African American students were over-represented among ASSETs Program participants compared to the percent of African American students attending the school. Conversely, a smaller percentage of Hispanic students attended Kennedy's after school project than were represented at the school as a whole. Data from San Diego High School indicated that Hispanic students were more likely to participate in after school activities at that school than other ethnic groups.

It was difficult to reach definitive conclusions about participation rates at Caruthers and Washington High Schools. Hispanic students appeared to be under-represented among ASSETs Program participants, given the level of their enrollment at both schools. However, this finding was likely because project administrators at both schools identified the ethnic group of many after school participants at both schools as "Multiple or No Response," designations these students did not appear to have when schools reported enrollment data to CDE.

Table 3
Student demographics by grantee and school, 2003-04

Grantee	High School	School	Number	African American, Not of Hispanic Origin									
				Hispanic or Latino	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Islander and Filipino	Asian, Pacific	White	Not Hispanic	Multiple or No Response			
City of Richmond	Kennedy	School	1,003	43%	<1%	8%	2%	0%					
		Participants	109	28%	0%	8%	1%	0%					
Richmond	Richmond	School	1,814	65%	0%	13%	3%	<1%					
		Participants	787	66%	0%	12%	3%	<1%					
Fresno County Office of Education	Caruthers	School	580	70%	0%	7%	22%	0%					
		Participants	471	39%	0%	2%	10%	48%					
Central	Central	School	2,901	43%	1%	17%	28%	1%					
		Participants	388	No data were available regarding the demographics of participants at Central High School									
Mendota	Mendota	School	572	99%	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%					
		Participants	238	92%	0%	0%	1%	6%					
Washington	Washington	School	1,103	55%	1%	11%	16%	3%					
		Participants	420	18%	<1%	5%	2%	69%					
Long Beach Unified School District	Cabrillo	School	2,658	55%	<1%	17%	3%	0%					
		Participants	458	46%	6%	3%	2%	3%					
Pajaro Valley Unified School District	Watsonville	School	3,081	90%	<1%	2%	7%	1%					
		Participants	148	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%					
San Bernardino City Unified School District	San Bernardino	School	2,516	66%	1%	2%	13%	<1%					
		Participants	337	59%	0%	1%	17%	3%					
San Diego Unified School District	Kearny	School	1,663	34%	<1%	28%	17%	0%					
		Participants	41	32%	0%	32%	10%	0%					
San Diego State University Foundation	Hoover	School	2,776	71%	<1%	3%	12%	0%					
		Participants	25	92%	0%	0%	0%	0%					
San Francisco Unified School District	International Studies Academy	School	2,160	65%	<1%	15%	5%	0%					
		Participants	1,857	64%	<1%	15%	4%	<1%					
John O'Connell	John O'Connell	School	476	32%	1%	30%	9%	2%					
		Participants	337	30%	1%	28%	8%	10%					
Sweetwater Union High School District	San Ysidro	School	932	71%	1%	11%	7%	1%					
		Participants	443	70%	1%	10%	6%	4%					
All Grantees	All Grantees	School	1,157	92%	<1%	4%	2%	0%					
		Participants	293	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%					
All Grantees	All Grantees	School	22,491	64%	<1%	11%	10%	<1%					
		Participants	6,428	56%	1%	10%	5%	12%					

Source: School enrollment: DataQuest, California Department of Education, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
Participant demographics: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04 and federal data reporting system, 2003-04

B. Project Attendance

Key Findings:

- Cohort 1 projects served over 6,350 students in 2003-04, 25 percent of students enrolled at participating high schools, and 8,700 students in 2004-05, 32 percent of enrolled students.
- Projects attracted over 50 percent of student populations at three schools in 2003-04 and seven schools in 2004-05, with smaller schools attracting higher percentages of student participants for both program years.
- The percent of students attending 30 days or more increased from 24 percent in 2003-04 to 32 percent in 2004-05.
- From 2003-04 to 2004-05, overall participation increased at 11 schools, and the percent of students attending 30 days or more increased at 11 schools.

This section of the Interim Evaluation Report presents data about project attendance patterns. We drew attendance data from two different sources. For the 2003-04 project year, our sources of data were the completed guidebooks that each grantee submitted to CDE. Grantee responses included information about each student who participated in the project and the number of days the student attended.⁹ We supplemented grantees' data files with the responses they provided to ED using the federal data reporting system for the 21st CCLC Program for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 project years. Included in these data were counts of the total number of students attending each high school, the total number of students who attended the project, and the total number of students who participated for 30 days or more.

Our review of attendance data considers three different issues:

- The number of students at each high school participating in the ASSETs Program;

⁹ We did not receive data about students from Central High School when the Fresno County Office of Education submitted 2003-04 student data.

- The percent of enrolled students participating in the ASSETs Program; and
- The percent of participating students who attended the ASSETs Program regularly.

We begin with a review of attendance during 2003-04 followed by a review of data for 2004-05. Lastly, we compare attendance data for 2003-04 with 2004-05 data.

2003-04 Attendance

Table 4 presents data for 2003-04 about overall enrollment at the ASSETs Program high schools and student participation in after school activities. High school enrollment and project participation data are also presented in Figure 1. Overall, ASSETs Program grantees served 6,351 students during the 2003-04 school year, 25 percent of the 25,392 students attending the host high schools. Generally, projects served fewer than 500 students at each school, with two exceptions, Richmond and Hoover High Schools, where total after school attendance was 787 and 1,857 respectively.

The percent of a school's students attending a project might be a more important figure than the total number of students served at a school since total school enrollment sets an upper limit on the number of students that may participate in a project. The data included in Table 4 show as few as one percent to as many as 86 percent of students attended projects at their schools. Eight of the 15 projects served 25 percent or fewer of the students at their schools. Four projects involved between 26 and 50 percent of the school's students. Three projects had over 50 percent of students from the high school involved in activities supported by the ASSETs Program. The project at Hoover High School involved the highest percentage of a school's students, 86 percent of enrolled students. This high percentage reflects the decision of the school's administrators to closely integrate after school activities into the school's reform efforts.

Table 4

School enrollment and project attendance, unduplicated count, 2003-04

High School	School Enrollment	Number of After School Participants	Percent of Enrollment Participating	Percent of Participants Attending 30 Days of More
ISA	476	337	71%	11%
Mendota	572	238	42%	39%
Caruthers	580	471	81%	47%
O'Connell	932	443	48%	2%
Kennedy	1,003	109	11%	76%
Washington	1,103	420	38%	1%
San Ysidro	1,157	293	25%	26%
Kearny	1,663	41	2%	0%
Richmond	1,814	787	43%	7%
Hoover	2,160	1,857	86%	35%
San Bernardino	2,516	336	13%	Not available
Cabrillo	2,658	458	17%	1%
San Diego	2,776	25	1%	0%
Central	2,901	388	13%	6%
Watsonville	3,081	148	5%	95%
All Schools	25,392	6,351	25%	24%

Source: School enrollment: DataQuest, California Department of Education, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
Number and percent of after school participants: Completed ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04 except for Central and San Ysidro High Schools whose attendance data came from the federal data reporting system, 2003-04
Participants attending 30 days or more: Federal data reporting system, 2003-04

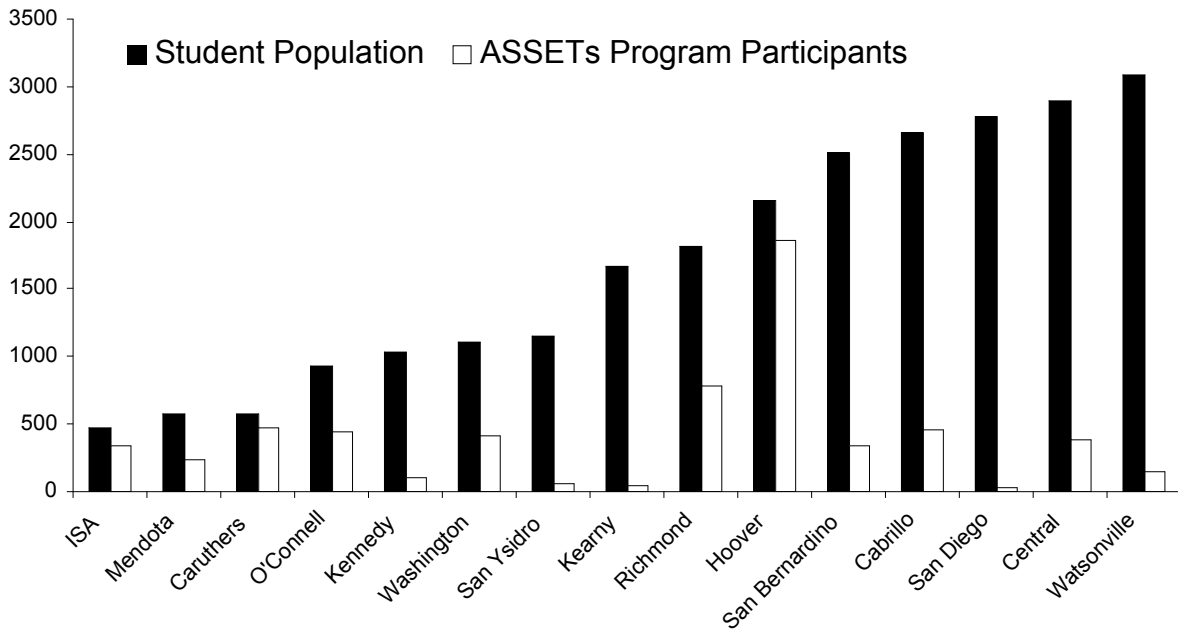
See Table 3 for a complete listing of grantees and high schools.

During 2003-04, projects at the smallest schools had greater success attracting students than projects at larger schools. All four schools with enrollments under 1,000 students drew more than 40 percent of students to their after school projects. Only two of the 11 larger high schools had over 40 percent of students attending after school activities.

Table 4 includes data from the federal data reporting system for 2003-04 on the percent of after school participants that attended a project for 30 days or more. Frequency of attendance is an important issue since outcomes for youth improve as their level of participating in after school programs increases (Chaput,

Figure 1

School enrollment and project attendance, unduplicated count, 2003-04



Source: School enrollment: DataQuest, California Department of Education, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
 Participation: Completed ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04 except for Central and San Ysidro High Schools whose attendance data came from the federal data reporting system, 2003-04

Little, and Weiss 2004). Overall, 24 percent of participants attended a project for 30 days or more with wide variations from project to project in attendance patterns. At eight schools, fewer than 15 percent of the students involved with the after school project attended for 30 days or more with up to two percent of students attending 30 days or more at five of those eight schools. There were six schools where over 25 percent of participants attended ASSETs Program activities regularly. Of these six, two schools, Kennedy and Watsonville High Schools, had over 50 percent of participants attending 30 days or more.

Currently, we cannot clearly indicate why participating students did not attend projects for a greater number of days. For example, we do not know the criteria that projects used to count a student as having participated in project activities. Did a project count a student as having attended if he/she were present for a project-sponsored assembly? Was attendance low because students were not interested in the activities that were available after school? We hope to

explore attendance issues more completely when we collect data for the Final Evaluation Report.

2004-05 Attendance

Grantees provided project attendance data for 2004-05 through the federal data reporting system for the 21st CCLC Program, with data available for eight of the nine ASSETs Program grantees. Table 5 and Figure 2 present data for 14 of the 15 ASSETs Program high schools¹⁰ and indicate that 8,700 students attended projects, 32 percent of the students attending the host high schools. Project participation increased from 2003-04. That year, only two schools had over 500 students participating in activities funded by the ASSETs Program. For 2004-05, over 500 students participated in projects at eight high schools.

The percent of a school's students involved with the ASSETs Program during 2004-05 ranged from as little as six percent to as much as 88 percent of the student body. Four of the 14 schools served fewer than 25 percent of their students. Three projects involved between 26 and 50 percent of the host school's students. Seven projects had over 50 percent of students from their school participating in activities, with Caruthers High School attracting the highest percentage of students, 88 percent of enrolled students.

As in 2003-04, smaller high schools enrolled a greater proportion of students in after school activities. However, the distinction between small and large schools was not as pronounced as it was in 2003-04. Four of the five schools with enrollments under 1,000 students drew more than 50 percent of students from their host schools. Three of the ten schools with enrollments over 1,000 students, Washington, Richmond, and Hoover High Schools, involved over 50 percent of the school's students in activities. During the 2003-04 project year, Hoover was the only school with an enrollment of over 1,000 students whose project attracted more than 40 percent of the school's population.

¹⁰ Data were not available for San Bernardino High School.

Table 5*School enrollment and project attendance, unduplicated count, 2004-05*

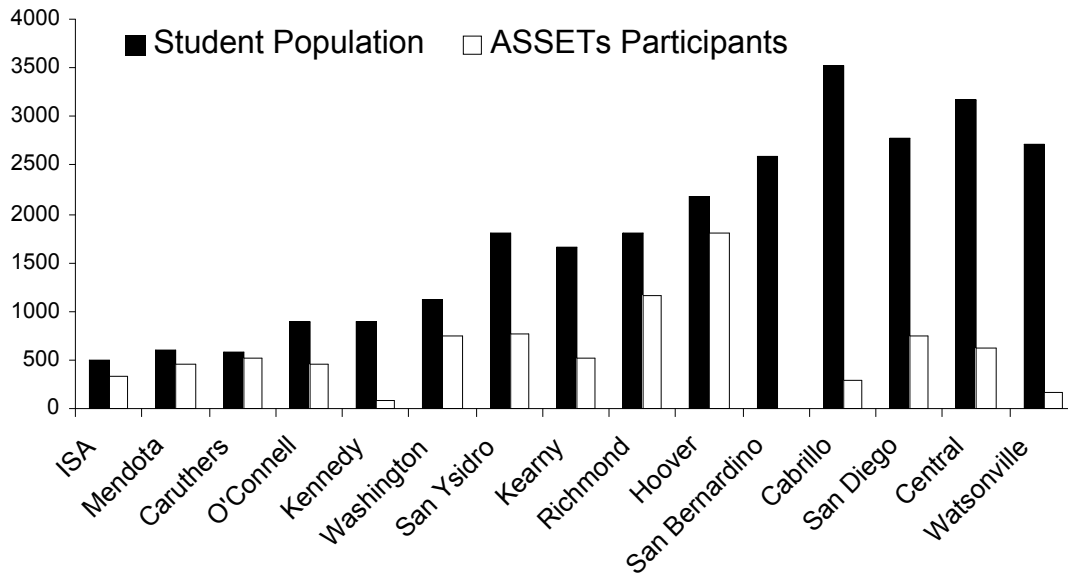
High School	School Enrollment	Number of After School Participants	Percent of Enrollment Participating	Percent of Participants Attending 30 Days of More
ISA	489	339	69%	12%
Mendota	591	465	79%	52%
Caruthers	584	516	88%	53%
O'Connell	899	457	51%	3%
Kennedy	899	82	9%	1%
Washington	1,127	750	67%	17%
San Ysidro	1,804	765	42%	16%
Kearny	1,663	525	32%	76%
Richmond	1,794	1,164	65%	9%
Hoover	2,182	1,797	82%	37%
San Bernardino	2,585	Not available	Not available	Not available
Cabrillo	3,523	291	8%	6%
San Diego	2,776	750	27%	73%
Central	3,171	627	20%	7%
Watsonville	2,712	172	6%	87%
All Schools	26,799	8,700	32%	32%

Source: School enrollment: DataQuest, California Department of Education, <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
 Participation: Federal data reporting system, 2004-05

Table 5 includes data on the percent of students who participated in a project for 30 days or more. Overall, 32 percent of student met this level of participation, up from 24 percent in 2003-04. There were six schools where fewer than 15 percent of participating attended for 30 days or more, two schools having less than five percent of participants attending this frequently. There were six schools where over 25 percent of participants attended activities for 30 days or more, with five of these six schools reporting at least 50 of participants as such regular attendees.

Figure 2

School enrollment and project attendance, unduplicated count, 2004-05



Source: School enrollment: DataQuest, California Department of Education,
<http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
 Participation: Federal data reporting system, 2004-05

Program Growth in 2004-05

In this section, we examine how attendance changed from 2003-04 to 2004-05 using the data submitted to CDE by the grantees and the information they provided ED using the federal data reporting system for 2003-04 and 2004-05. Comparing attendance data from these two years, as seen in Table 6, we found 11 of the 14 schools with available data had more attendees during the 2004-05 school year than in 2003-04. Total attendance increased by 37 percent (2,349 students), exceeding growth in school enrollment, which was up only six percent. The overall percent of students attending projects increased from 25 percent in 2003-04 to 32 percent in 2004-05. Furthermore, the percent of students who attended 30 days or more increased between 2003-04 and 2004-05 from 24 percent to 32 percent.

These statistics show positive growth in overall attendance and suggest that projects have been better able to attract students and keep them engaged in programming. We cannot judge whether these increases are due to more effective recruitment strategies, offering activities that students find more

Table 6
Total attendance and percent attending 30 days or more, 2003-04 and 2004-05

Grantee	High School	Total Attendance		Attended 30 days or more			
		2003-04*	2004-05	Percent Change	2003-04 Number	2004-05 Number	Percent Change
City of Richmond	Richmond Kennedy	787	1,164	48%	58	110	9%
		109	82	-25%	83	1	1%
Fresno	Washington Central	420	750	79%	5	128	17%
		388	627	62%	24	41	7%
	Mendota	238	465	95%	93	240	52%
	Caruthers	471	516	10%	221	273	53%
Long Beach	Cabrillo	458	291	-36%	5	17	6%
Pajaro Valley	Watsonville	148	172	16%	141	149	87%
San Bernardino	San Bernardino	Not available	Not available	N/A	96	Not available	Not available
San Diego	Kearny	41	525	1180%	0	400	76%
	San Diego	25	750	2900%	0	550	73%
San Diego State	Hoover	1,857	1,797	-3%	643	661	37%
San Francisco	O'Connell	443	457	3%	10	14	3%
	ISA	337	339	1%	38	39	12%
Sweetwater	San Ysidro	293	765	161%	76	123	16%
All Schools		6,351	8,700	37%	1,493	2,746	32%

Source: Total Attendance, 2003-04: Data provided by ASSETs program grantees in the ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04 except for San Ysidro High School whose attendance data came from the federal data reporting system, 2003-04

Total Attendance, 2004-05: Federal data reporting system, 2004-05

Attendance 30 days or more, 2003-04: Federal data reporting system, 2003-04

Attendance 30 days or more, 2004-05: Federal data reporting system, 2004-05

appealing and engaging, or a combination of factors. We anticipate exploring this topic more completely in the Final Evaluation Report.

Attendance dropped as much as 36 percent and increased as much as 2,900 percent at individual schools. The median after school participation rate during the 2003-04 school year was 25 percent, and projects attracted more than 50 percent of students at three schools. In 2004-05 the median after school participation rate increased to 47 percent, and projects attracted more than 50 percent of students at seven schools. The greatest changes were at Kearny and San Diego High Schools. In 2003-04, these schools offered only a six-week summer program that met 29 times and involved a limited number of students. Activities at these schools expanded in 2004-05 and included activities during the school year that involved over 500 students at each school.

The number of students participating 30 days or more increased from 2003-04 to 2004-05 at 13 schools. In some instances, such as at Cabrillo High School in Long Beach and O'Connell High School and the International Studies Academy in San Francisco, the increases were very small, although in terms of percent increase, they appeared quite large. There was a drop in the number of regular attendees at only one high school, Kennedy High School in Richmond, which suffered the loss of a program coordinator and hiring delays.

C. Assessed Needs and Grantee Goals

Key Findings:

- Identified needs and goals were consistent across grantees and covered four areas: academic achievement, student behavior, college attendance, and community partnerships.
- Needs and goals highlighted improving student academic performance, an area consistent with 21st CCLC Program priorities.
- Individual grantee goals were not always matched with their stated needs.

The following section discusses the assessed needs and goals ASSETs Program grantees identified for their projects. First, we present the needs that grantees identified. Then, we proceed to review the goals of the grantees. Table 7 presents data on both of these areas.

CDE required ASSETs Program grantees to identify the needs in their school community that drove their applications for funding. The guidebook asked grantees to identify the initial assessed needs and goals from their 2002 grant applications for ASSETs Program funding and indicate to what extent they had changed.

Assessed Needs

Eight of the nine grantees submitted data on their identified needs and goals. Reviewing their responses, we identified four general areas of need the grantees sought to address:

- Low academic achievement;
- Problematic student behaviors;
- Low college entry rates; and
- Too few partnerships with their community.

ASSETs Program grantees pinpointed low academic performance as an important need to address through their activities. This finding is consistent with federal requirements for the 21st CCLC Program that restrict funding to schools that are eligible for Title I Schoolwide Programs, which include the requirement that at least 40 percent of students are eligible for free/reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Program. The indicators of academic needs that grantees identified included low scores on national, norm-referenced tests (California Achievement Test, Sixth Edition-CAT/6), the California Standards Tests (CST), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT); low passing rates on the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE); and low Annual Performance Indicator (API) scores.

Grantees identified areas of student behavior where they felt after school activities would benefit participants. These areas of need include low student attendance at

Table 7
Grantees' assessed needs and goals

Area of Need	Goals
Academic achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low English/Math scores in CAT/6, CST, CAHSEE, and SAT • Low API scores 	Academic goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students passing the CAHSEE, CAT/6, and CST • Linking programming to curricular standards
Student behavior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low student attendance • Poor attitudes about self and school • High drop-out rates • High suspension rates 	Behavioral goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce absenteeism • Increase student motivation • Reduce behavior problems (violence, drug use)
Low college entry rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low numbers of students meeting UC/CSU requirements • High rates of remedial courses in college 	Post-secondary/career goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a college-going culture • Provide students opportunities for career development
Too few partnerships with community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interagency collaboration • Insufficient parent communication with and involvement in school • High number adults in community without high school degree • High unemployment rates 	Community goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for parents to go to school for increased involvement • Involve community partners in planning, implementing, and sustaining program

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

school, the poor attitudes students have about themselves and school, and high dropout and suspension rates. Needs related to college preparation referred to low numbers of students meeting entrance requirements for the University of California and California State University systems. Furthermore, among students who do attend college, grantees sought to address the high numbers of students needing to take remedial courses when they began their undergraduate studies.

Grantees identified a number of community-related needs. These needs included low levels of partnerships between schools and outside agencies, limited interagency collaboration, insufficient communication with and involvement of parents, a high number of adults without a high school degree, and high rates of unemployment.

Grantee Goals

The guidebook asked grantees to indicate their goals established for the 2003-04 year and whether their goals had changed during programming. Their goals generally were consistent with the overall areas of identified need. Grantees addressed academic, behavioral, post-secondary/career, and community goals. These goals also are consistent with three of the four overall goals for after school programming identified by the C.S. Mott Foundation Committee on After School Research and Practice (2005) as examples of how to develop successful after school programs:

- Academic and other learning goals;
- Social and emotional goals;
- Community engagement goals; and
- Health and safety goals.

Each Cohort 1 grantee identified academic goals for their programming, which included students passing the CAHSEE, improved achievement on the CSTs, and linking programming to the curricular standards. Grantees' post-secondary goals included building a college-going culture and providing students opportunities for career development. Behavioral goals sought to reduce absenteeism, increase student motivation, and reduce behavior problems like violence and drug use. The community goals specifically focused on increasing parent involvement with the school. Grantees also planned to involve community partners in planning, implementing, and sustaining the after school program.

Some grantees noted changed goals since their 2002 ASSETs Program proposal submissions; however, the extent of changes was minor. Changes to goals were not structural. They reflected improved wordsmithing or the use of more specific language. For example, a grantee changed their original goal of "increasing achievement" to read, "increased math achievement."

In reviewing grantee needs and goals, we noted many statements that were unclear. Grantees often presented too many concepts in a single statement. Clearly, there are abundant needs in schools and communities that school administrators and community organizations would like to address. However, grantees that amalgamate several needs into one statement appear unfocused. In the same way, including

multiple goals in one statement communicates a lack of clarity in thinking about meeting assessed needs.

While ASSETs Program grantees identified needs and goals in the same four areas, individual grantee goals were not always closely matched with their stated needs. A couple of sites identified, for example, low student skills as a need; yet, their goal that participants taking CAHSEE prep classes will pass at higher rates than previous years said little about how students' low skills would be targeted for improvement. Grantees will benefit from revisiting their needs and goals to assess how to clearly communicate them. Additionally, the development of priorities and clear, succinct, and measurable goals would be an appropriate focus of technical assistance for the grantees.

D. Program Activities

Key Findings:

- Grantees provided 152 activities in 2003-04.
- The average activity length was 26 weeks; however, activities ranged from three and 37 weeks.
- All grantees offered activities focused on academics, social services and community development, and vocational development. Most grantees also had activities related to health and safety.

Activities are the primary means by which programs accomplish their goals. Grantees arranged a number of activities designed to address a variety of goals. The activities and the balance between activity types dictate the flavor of a school's program and affect student interest. This section provides an overall summary of the number of activities grantees provided, discusses the duration of activities, and explores trends in activity types among the eight grantees who provided data about their 2003-04 activities.

Number of Grantee Activities

The guidebook asked grantees to provide comprehensive information about their activities including the following:

- Activity category;
- Number of hours offered in a typical week;
- Number of weeks offered;
- Whether the activity was offered in the fall, spring, or summer;
- The approximate staff to student ratio; and
- The approximate average daily attendance.

As a whole, grantees provided a rich mix of activities for students. Table 8 presents data on the number of activities each grantee provided. Grantees offered a total of 152 different activities. Both the number of schools funded by a grant and the goals of the grantee influenced the number of activities provided. For instance, the City of Richmond who served students at two schools offered the most activities (38 activities). In contrast, SDUSD offered two activities because their program focused on providing summer internships and preparing students for the CAHSEE. Most grantee activities occurred after school. However, three grantees also had before school programming, two grantees offered activities on the weekend, consistent with California *Education Code* Section 8422(d). All but one grantee offered activities during both the fall and spring semesters. Activities at the one grantee were available only in the spring; and one grantee offered activities only during the summer.

Table 8
Number of activities offered per grantee

Grantee ¹¹	Number of Activities
City of Richmond	38
Fresno	28
Long Beach	14
Pajaro Valley	9
San Bernardino	17
San Diego	2
San Diego State	22
San Francisco	22

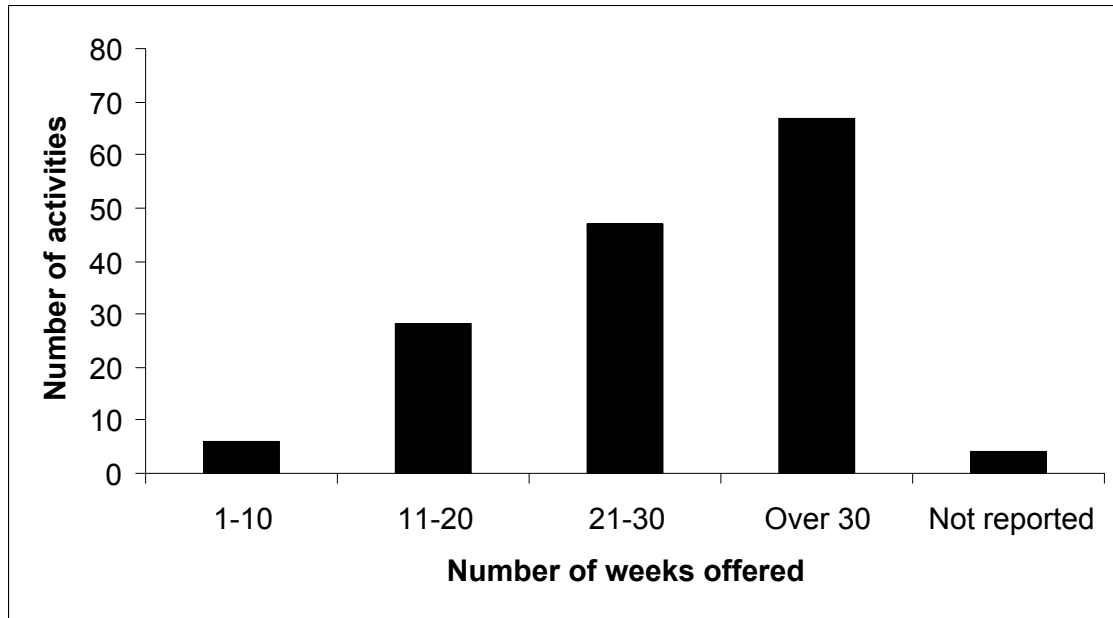
Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

Activity Duration

Grantees offered activities for as few as three weeks and as many as 37 weeks, with the average activity offered for just under 26 weeks (Figure 3). Additionally, the average activity was offered about six and a half hours per week. One grantee reported offering two of their activities (a computer lab and a fitness center) all 37 weeks of the school year. That grantee and three others reported activities available to students for 36 weeks. Grantees provided 75 percent of activities for at least 20 weeks, and 44 percent of activities were at least 30 weeks in duration. Individual activities were available from one to 26 hours per week (Figure 4).

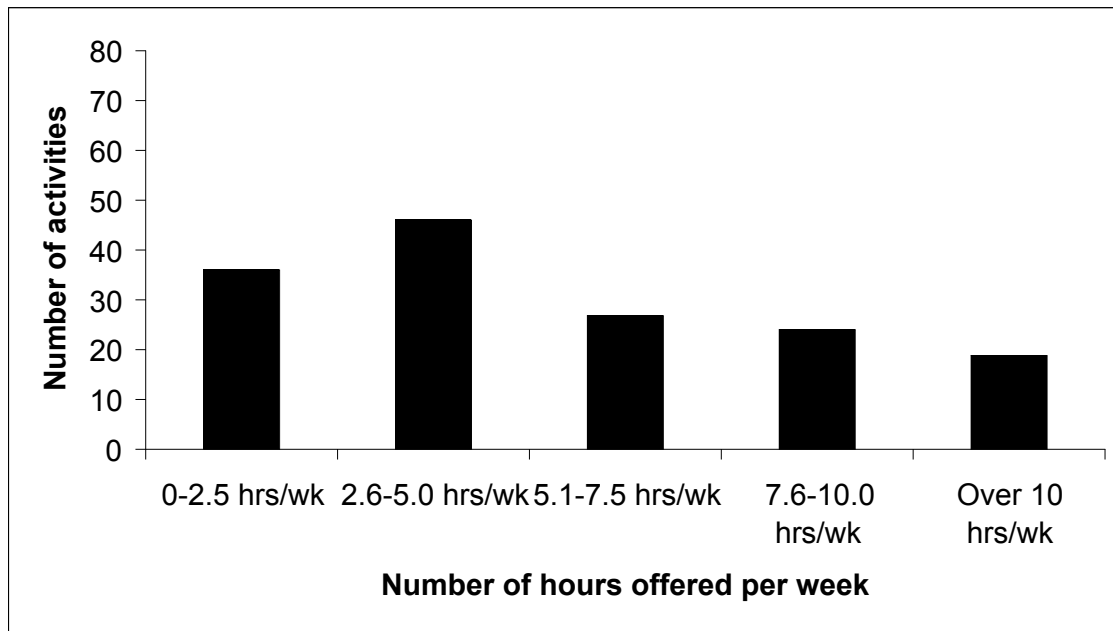
¹¹ Information was not available for Sweetwater Union High School District.

Figure 3
Number of weeks activities offered, 2003-04



Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

Figure 4
Number of hours per week activities offered, 2003-04



Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

Activity Types

The High School ASSETs Program focuses on increasing students' academic skills through academic assistance and educational enrichment components that are to be coordinated with their regular school day. Academic activities, including homework assistance, target improving student academic achievement, whereas enrichment activities draw students to the program, stimulate learning, and provide students opportunities to become more well-rounded. Ideally, a grantee balances these two components, along with a nutritional snack, to engage students in multiple ways. Lauer and others (2004) found that strategies that were both academic and social had a slightly higher mean effect size than those that were mainly academic for mathematics outcomes. Referencing her study of a 60-program initiative, Grossman (2002) described the best programs as "offering a range of interesting, engaging activities—not just homework help and tutoring—and were based on the children's current interests, such as sports or cooking" (Grossman 2002). Granger and Kane also stated that "within the after-school field, there is reasonable agreement on the key ingredients required for success: interesting activities, supportive relationships, and the capacity to deliver such things" (Granger and Kane 2004).

WestEd asked grantees to list and describe each of their program activities, choosing from 22 categories. The categories related to several broad areas: academics, social services and community development, vocational development, and student health and safety. Understanding that an activity may serve many purposes, grantees could use several categories to characterize a single activity. Grantees could also suggest additional categories and did so, adding the categories Cultural Enrichment, Community Service, Parent Programs, and SAT preparation. Grantees classified single activities as belonging to as many as six activity categories. WestEd evaluators critically examined grantee responses to determine the primary and secondary function of each activity, allowing activities to be associated to no more than two activity types.

Table 9 presents the number of activities that grantees indicated fell into specific categories as well as the number of grantees offering each activity type. A more complete table that displays the number of activities projects offered in each category is available in Appendix B. Each project offered activities related to academics. This finding is consistent with the ASSETs Program and California *Education Code* Section 8423(b)(1) requirements of offering an academic assistance component that is aligned "with state academic standards, preparation for the high school exit examination, and other academic interventions."

Grantees identified a total of 60¹² activities with an academic component, the most common of which was homework assistance. Seven of the eight grantees offered a total of 22 activities related to homework assistance. Activities categorized as “homework assistance” could be as simple as having physical spaces available for students to complete their work, such as computer labs, libraries, and designated homework centers, or as structured tutoring programs for individual subjects such as English, science, and foreign language. Academic tutoring was not strictly for low-performing students, but for students needing assistance in their academic content at many levels. During one of the WestEd site visits, we met a student who received tutoring in Calculus through the project at his school. Other grantees reported similar high-level course offerings.

Most grantees also offered activities specifically designed to assist students in passing or performing well on standardized tests. Six grantees provided CAHSEE preparation activities. One project arranged a course dedicated to preparing students for the SAT. However, there was variability in the intensity of some of these activities. For instance, one grantee offered CAHSEE preparation for three weeks, four hours a week. A grantee site offered a similar activity over 20 weeks for about ten hours a week. These data suggest that while activities might be similarly categorized, there may be differences in the services students receive or what the activity may accomplish.

Grantees offered more visual and performing arts activities than any other type of activity. All but one grantee offered visual and/or performing arts activities. These activities ranged from general visual and performing arts to activities that involved making murals, video production, and dance traditions associated with specific cultures. Arts activities attracted students to projects, expanded their breadth of experience, and instilled them with a sense of accomplishment and pride. Many grantees also identified these activities as community development. For example, dance programs put on performances for the host school or other schools in the area, or participants in a mural making activity worked with students at an elementary school. As mentioned earlier, many activities could be identified in several categories. The multiple benefits of such activities are undeniable.

¹² Though the sum of total activities serving specific academic functions in Table 6 is 76, these functions were provided by 60 individual activities, 16 activities serving dual academic functions.

Table 9
Number of activities by category, 2003-04

General Activity		Total	Grantees
Category	Specific Activity Category	Activities	Offering Activity
Academic	Homework assistance for coursework	22	7
	Mathematics	10	6
	Tutoring for individual skill development	17	5
	CAHSEE preparation	7	6
	College preparation, research, application	6	4
	Science	5	5
	English language development and support for English learners	4	4
	Reading/Literacy	4	3
	SAT preparation	1	1
Social Services and Community Development	Visual and performing arts	28	7
	Receive mentoring	13	7
	Recreation activities	15	5
	Provide mentoring/tutoring to younger students	7	5
	Cultural enrichment	8	3
	Community service	1	1
Vocational Development	Parent programs	1	1
	Computer and technology access and skill development	11	7
	Career and technical education	12	5
	Job skill development and job readiness	8	5
Health and Safety	Physical fitness	15	6
	Counseling	1	1
	Nutrition education	1	1
	School health services	1	1

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

All grantees provided activities that encouraged positive social behaviors, personal growth, or community development. Each grantee had at least one activity that focused on creating mentoring opportunities such as internships, formal mentorship programs with college students, and discussion groups focused on politics or opportunities after high school. All grantees also offered activities focused on job readiness or vocational training. Seven of the eight grantees had programming that emphasized computer and technology access and skill development. A common offering in this category was computer labs, which were open for students to work on homework, class projects, or

pursue areas of personal interest. Some activities, such as media arts and Web page design, blended computer skills with career and technical education. Other career and technical education activities included an automotive class and a class that introduced students to the health care industry.

Most grantees had a physical fitness component that generally consisted of sports or dance activities. Sports activities ranged from the more traditional high school sports, such as football and track, to less mainstream sports, such as fencing and handball. Sports activities also provided incentives for students to perform well in school. In student focus groups, a number of students referenced eligibility for sports programs as an incentive to attend the after school project and keep up their grades. One grantee offered programming focused on nutrition education.

The provided activities did not always match grantees' identified goals. Most grantees offered a variety of activities unrelated to their stated objectives. For example, sites that did not identify improving performance on the CAHSEE provided academic preparatory activities for the exam. Some potential reasons for the mismatch may be that grantees' goals changed from the inception of their grants to the first year of implementation. Another reason may be that grantees' initial goals were not realistic and needed reworking to better reflect implemented activities and a more meaningful focus. Yet another potential reason for the mismatch may be that students suggested the activities and the project took on a wider scope than originally intended.

E. Staffing

Key Findings:

- All grantees employed both paid and volunteer staff members. Most used a majority of paid staff.
- Grantees used teachers more than any other staff type.
- Summer staffing reflected school year staffing trends in the program.

This section provides a summary of staffing trends among grantees. First, we explore regular school year paid and volunteer staffing including a discussion of staff background, followed by a brief description of summer staffing.

Appropriate program staffing is continually referenced as a key ingredient to high quality after school programs (Afterschool Alliance 2005; National Governors

Association Center for Best Practices 2005). Effective staff members connect with students and are knowledgeable in the subject they teach, helping to maximize program enrollment and gains for participants. Students have many options available to them after school and recognize that a staff with limited knowledge has little to offer them. Additionally, staff members need to relate well with youth. Adults who make connections with youth attract students to the program and are more approachable when students have problems, questions, or suggestions. Grantees employed a variety of volunteer and paid staff members in developing a knowledgeable staff to whom students could relate.

Paid and Volunteer Staff Members

Table 10 provides data on the staffing of grantees during the 2003-04 school year. The average number of volunteer and paid staff members was 45. The number of staff members at an individual grantee ranged from as few as 16 to as many as 63 people, with a combination of both paid and volunteer staff. Grantees employed mostly paid staff members with paid positions accounting for as much as 94 percent of staff. San Francisco Unified School District was the only grantee that used more volunteer than paid staff members. In general, grantees reported having difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers, which may help account for the higher use of paid staffing.

Table 10
Paid and volunteer staff, regular school year, 2003-04

Staff Member Background	Paid	Volunteer	Total ¹³
School-day teachers (include former and substitute teachers)	111	2	138
Other non-teaching school staff (library staff, guidance counselors, aides, etc.)	29	1	35
College students	19	12	35
High school students	35	23	62
Parents	2	8	10
Youth development workers	6	0	10
Other community members (business mentors, senior citizens, clergy)	5	9	14
Other	8	1	21
Total	215	56	425

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

Staff Member Backgrounds

Grantees used staff from a variety of backgrounds and most frequently drew staff from the host high schools. Approximately 111 regular school teachers had paid positions with grantees, more than half the 215 total paid staff members. Teachers accounted for as many as 70 percent of paid staff (62 percent of all staff) and as few as 20 percent (10 percent of all staff). An additional 29 non-teaching school staff worked as paid employees. Both project staff and student participants from many of the schools agreed that the involvement of school-day teachers in the after school project demonstrated that teachers cared about students and allowed students to develop healthy relationships with these teachers.

Two grantees hired “other community members” as paid staff, and three used them as volunteers. Three grantees used high school students as staff members: one used them on a volunteer basis, and the second paid them. The third used students in both capacities. Grantees that paid their students used a greater percentage of them in their staffing than any other staff type.

¹³ One grantee with a staff of 43 did not distinguish between paid and volunteer staff in their report. Details regarding their staff are not included in the “Paid” and “Volunteer” columns of this table, but they are included in the “Total” column.

Six of the eight grantees that submitted data on staffing indicated they employed college students on a volunteer or paid basis. Grantees used as few as two and as many as 13 college students. College students worked as tutors, site coordinators, or as mentors. Some of the volunteer college students earned credit at their university or were satisfying requirements associated with scholarships. By hiring college students or recent high school graduates, grantees hoped to facilitate mentoring opportunities by providing positive role models that were close in age to student participants.

Summer Staffing

One grantee with a large job readiness component that included a well-developed internship program used 100 volunteers from 12 different organizations (city and state agencies, schools, hospitals, private businesses and non-profits). Volunteers provided internships for and supervised ASSETs Program participants. Other projects used this model of paying students to participate in otherwise unpaid internships, but did not identify staff at participating organizations as volunteers in their project.

Four grantees reported staffing summer programs. Projects used much fewer staff in the summer because summer projects were smaller than those operating during the school year. Staff sizes ranged from as few as two paid employees to as many as 23 paid staff members (Table 11). Total staff sizes ranged from two to 28. As with the regular school year, grantees relied heavily on regular school-day teachers for summer programming. A total of 23 school-day teachers worked as paid employees during the summer—63 percent of all paid summer positions.

Most summer programs also had a greater number of paid than volunteer staff members. Two grantees used volunteer staffing. San Diego Unified School District offered only a summer program at the end of the 2003-04 year. Their program sought to boost the literacy skills of students who had not yet passed the English portion of the CAHSEE. After two weeks of classroom instruction, students worked in local businesses as interns and received on-site instructional support from the grantee. Internships sought to show students that literacy skills had practical use in the workplace. Their 13 volunteer staff members were mentors who supervised students in the workplace.

Table 11*Paid and volunteer staff, summer 2004*

Staff Member Type	Paid	Volunteer	Total
School-day teachers (include former and substitute teachers)	23	5	28
Other, non-teaching, school staff (library staff, guidance counselors, aides, etc.)	7	0	7
College students	2	0	2
High school students	0	0	0
Parents	0	0	0
Youth development workers	4	0	4
Other community members (business mentors, senior citizens, clergy)	1	13	14
Other	1	2	3
Total	38	20	58

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

F. Links to the School Day

Key Findings:

- Grantees used four strategies to link after school projects to the regular school day: principal engagement and communication; teacher involvement; formal academic links; and strategies involving the site coordinator.
- School teachers and site coordinators were instrumental in connecting the after school projects with the school day by attending all staff meetings and having regular contact with site administration.
- Some sites provided credit for after school academic activities.

Improving academic performance is the major focus of the federal 21st CCLC Program. This emphasis extends through the ASSETs Program. Literature on after school programs suggests that linkages between after school programs and students' regular school programs foster quality educational experiences for youth. This section explores the different strategies ASSETs Program after school grantees employed to establish connections to host schools.

Strong connections allow the regular school program and its after school component to better coordinate the use of available resources including the school building itself (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices 2005). Coordinating after school learning with students' regular school program offers opportunities to reinforce skills those students are developing during school hours. Additionally, after school programs have greater flexibility, allowing students to study topics of personal interest that are aligned with classroom learning. This is particularly important with high school students because after school is a time when school activities may be blended with community-based learning such as internships and community service projects (Pittman 2003).

Grantees linked after school activities to the regular school day in multiple ways. Reviewing data gathered from responses to the guidebook and during evaluation site visits, we identified four ways that projects made these linkages:

- Through principal engagement and communication with the project;

- Through the site coordinator and his/her activities;
- By involving teachers as leaders of after school activities; and
- By using a single plan to guide a student's learning both during and after the regular school day.

Each of these approaches represents significant ways that facilitate coordination between in-school and after school learning activities. The following discussion addresses these links in detail.

Principal Involvement and Communication

Principals serve as both the instructional and administrative leader of their schools. The principal's support of an after school project indicates the project is important to the school, shaping how both its instructional and non-instructional staff relate to the after school project. From WestEd's previous work with many after school programs, we have seen that when a principal supports a project, teachers are more likely to let their classrooms be used for after school activities. In schools where principals were more hostile, the after school project found classrooms were unavailable and activities were confined to a large multi-purpose room or cafeteria.

Principals at most ASSETs Program high schools generally supported after school projects at their schools. However, there were differences in how actively principals were involved in projects. Some principals played very active roles with the after school project. At three schools, for example, principals were deeply involved in the planning and operation of their projects. These principals engaged in such activities as participating on project advisory groups, recruiting teachers as after school activity leaders, observing activities after school, and serving as chaperons on field trips.

Principals at other schools were less engaged with their projects. Their limited engagement, however, did not mean they did not support the project. Rather than take an active role in the project, these principals assigned responsibilities for supervising the project to another administrator such as the assistant principal. At some sites, principals had sufficient confidence in the project's site coordinator that the coordinator could work with a great deal of independence.

We found there were varying levels of communication between principals and after school coordinators at their sites. At some schools, principals and site coordinators held regularly scheduled meetings as frequently as once a week. It was more common, though, for principals and coordinators to have more informal meeting arrangements.

Quite often, their meetings would be when they saw each other in the school hallway or main office. Principals reported that these arrangements left them feeling very informed about the after school project.

We only found one project where principal involvement and communication with the after school project appeared to be low. During the 2004-05 school year, the two schools participating in this project were divided into ten smaller learning communities, each with its own principal, making communication between the site coordinator and all of the principals difficult. One of the after school coordinators indicated that the lack of principal engagement benefited the project by limiting the number of “administrative hoops” one might have to navigate in order to move forward. However, the lack of principal involvement also made it difficult to recruit students for the project.

Site Coordinator as a Link

Site coordinators, by definition, play a major role in an after school project. Choice of site coordinator as well as strategies enacted by site coordinators were important in linking after school projects with regular school programs.

Some projects successfully increased links to the school day by hiring a teacher as the ASSETs Program site coordinator. One school employed this strategy, using a second-year mathematics teacher at the school as the after school project leader. Her dual role brought familiarity with the school’s math curriculum to the after school project, which clearly benefited the academic component of the project. This site coordinator was also known and respected by the school’s faculty members when she began her position.

Other project coordinators boosted ties with the regular school program by engaging key staff members in after school planning. One site coordinator worked with an academic department chair to plan portions of the after school curriculum. This strategy helped ensure the after school curriculum reflected the academic content standards of the regular school program.

After school coordinators at several ASSETs Program high schools participated in faculty meetings or on the school’s site council. Including the after school coordinator in such meetings can be helpful in several ways. First, the after school project gains visibility. This can be important when a new project begins at a school, particularly at a large school where a nascent project may be overlooked because so much else is occurring. Project coordinators also gain visibility and perhaps legitimacy among staff members and administrators by being a part of regular school meetings.

A second benefit of including a site coordinator at regular school meetings is that the meetings provide opportunities for the coordinator to learn about issues affecting the school. Such information may help the after school project adjust its activities to meet what could be emerging needs. Additionally, a site coordinator's involvement in regular school meetings allows the coordinator to keep teachers and other key school stakeholders informed about the after school project. Such information may help teachers understand how they can refer students to the after school project, how the after school project can supplement classroom learning, and how they can become involved in the after school project.

Teacher Involvement

Hiring school-day teachers as staff members in an after school project is a logical way to form a bridge between the regular school and after school portions of a youth's day. As described in the previous section, the ASSETs Program successfully connected the after school program to the day school by staffing their activities with more school-day teachers than any other group. School teachers bring knowledge of the curriculum covered during students' school day and the skills it promotes. If teachers work with the students they instruct during the school day, they also understand where a student's skills need to be strengthened or expanded. Working with students outside the school day also allows teachers and students to learn things about each other they might not have otherwise learned from their regular school contacts. Reisner and others (2004) found teachers who worked with students in after school projects, a more relaxed setting than their regular classrooms, developed insights into those students. The continuity of contact also helped develop a "web of support for children" (Reisner, and others 2004 p.14), relationships that contributed to project quality.

In some projects, teachers worked after school with students who were in their regular school classes. In such instances, teachers came to the after school project already familiar with students' academic skills. After school time became a time to strengthen abilities or challenge students in ways that could not occur in the classroom. After school time allowed teachers to work in smaller groups, with different kinds of projects, or with flexibility not possible during the regular school day.

At one project, a school hired school-day teachers from the English and mathematics departments to serve as lead teachers in the after school project. The lead teacher helped align the academic content of after school classes with students' needs and the CAHSEE to better prepare students for the exam.

Working after school also allowed teachers to work with students in areas of interest that might not be a part of the regular school program. For instance, an English teacher with a keen interest in journalism might start a school newspaper as part of the after school project. When students and teachers work together in this area, the teacher might use the activities as opportunities to build student skills in academic content areas as students tackle a real world project.

There was wide variability in how many teachers were involved in a project. Determining factors among grantees included the structure of the after school project and its relationship to the regular school program, as well as the demands that the regular school program places on teachers. At one school, more than one third of the school's 108 teachers were also after school project staff members. At a different project, almost none of the school-day teachers staffed the after school project. The site coordinator at this latter school explained that few teachers at this small high school had time to be a part of the after school project. Teachers' time was already focused on the school site council, other school committees, and preparing for an accreditation site visit that occurred in spring 2005. These teachers did not have time to play a role in the project.

While very desirable, involving regular school teachers in after school activities carries the risk of teacher burnout given the demands of classroom teaching. One project addressed this issue by scheduling activities that only required a four-week time commitment from teachers. This practice allowed teachers to lead activities and work with students after school without being involved for eight to sixteen weeks at one time. This project's director felt that limiting the time requirement asked of teachers decreased burnout. Additionally, she believed students benefited because they were exposed to multiple teaching styles.

Formal Academic Links

Some ASSETs Program grantees fostered links between their projects and the regular school by working jointly to establish formalized connections between the two. Three examples that we observed deserve mention. First, one site used a common individual student plan that served as the guiding document that helps coordinate each student's educational experience in both the regular school and after school programs. After school coordinators meet with teachers each quarter or more frequently if needed to review each student's progress. Second, at another project, students could participate in after school "credit recovery" activities. Another project required students

to make up all absences from school, regardless of their circumstances. If a student attended the after school project or participated in Saturday school activities, the student could make up time previously lost from school. Lastly, an ASSETs Program grantee allowed students to earn school credit when they attended some after school activities. This practice, like having a credit recovery process, provided students with academic incentives to be involved with the after school project. Once students were involved in academically oriented activities, they had the opportunity to participate in other enrichment activities.

G. Collaborating Organizations

Key Findings:

- Grantees most commonly developed collaborative relationships with CBOs and national non-profits.
- Most collaborative partners contributed to grantees by delivering services to students.

The ASSETs Program is built on the recognition that providing services for youth is a community responsibility. CDE encouraged schools and community groups to work together in planning and implementing after school projects. This section provides a brief summary of collaborative relationships developed by grantees, highlighting their respective roles in programming.

Researchers and policymakers who work extensively with after school programs agree that forming partnerships among agencies to deliver services is an important practice (Vandell and others 2004; Geiger and Britsch 2004; C.S. Mott Committee on After School Research and Practice 2005). Agencies that collaborate with schools contribute multiple resources, including supplies, personnel, space, structured activities, and a variety of services. Students benefit when agencies collaborate because a broader expertise is available to help structure and provide activities.

The guidebook asked ASSETs Program grantees to list partnering agencies involved with the grantee, identifying the types of agencies, the role they played in the collaborative, and the number of hours the agency contributed. Table 12 summarizes their responses. The seven ASSETs Program grantees who provided information identified a total of 60 collaborative partners and estimated that these partners contributed over 11,920 hours to after school projects. Grantees partnered with as few

as five and up to as many as 15 outside agencies. The most commonly reported partnering agency was a CBO, with 14 agencies being described as CBOs. Agencies in this group included art centers, museums, community centers, and youth development organizations. Grantees described ten agencies as national non-profit organizations, which included YMCAs, Campfire USA, and Boys and Girls Clubs of America. School districts, county offices of education, and colleges and universities also played important roles in projects.

Table 12
Type of collaborating agency, 2003-04

Agency Type	Number of Agencies
Community-based organization	14
National non-profit organization	10
School district	8
County office of education	8
Institution of higher education	7
Private for-profit agency	6
City agency	4
County agency	2
State agency	1
Total	60

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

Table 13 shows that collaborating organizations assumed many roles. Their most significant contribution was assisting in the delivery of services, a role played by 75 percent of partnering agencies (44 agencies). A large number of partners (43 percent) also shared resources with grantees. The service delivery and sharing/contributing resources roles were often connected. Of the 26 partner agencies that shared or contributed resources, 21 also assisted in the delivery of services. Many of these agencies contributed by assisting with program planning, design, and oversight. Their involvement in these activities drew additional knowledge and insight to these functions and increased community support for a project. Such support helped build project sustainability, an area where ten collaborating organizations assisted grantees.

Table 13
Role of collaborating agency, 2003-04

Actual Role in Collaborative	Number of Agencies
Delivery of services	44
Sharing/contributing resources	26
Program planning and design	18
Sustainability	10
Management oversight	4
Other	9
Total	111

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

H. Youth Involvement

Key Findings:

- ASSETs Program youth provided feedback, were formal advisers, influenced project policy and design, held leadership positions, and recruited other students.
- Students were involved in projects by providing feedback about programming, by serving in leadership roles, and in helping to recruit students.
- Youth ran two projects and made decisions about activity offerings, policy, staffing, and snacks.

High school youth are dynamic individuals with interests and abilities that can extend their participation in after school programs beyond simply showing up for provided activities. Youth can substantially contribute to an after school program by taking leadership roles in planning, managing, and evaluating after school activities. Research has shown (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2002; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002) that both young people and communities benefit when youth are active partners in projects that aim to build stronger, healthier communities.

In many programs across the nation, youth are taking active roles as board members, peer mentors, and program planners. Youth bring a perspective that particularly benefits programs that serve young people because youth tend to think “outside the box.” Also, actively involved youth learn and practice skills that will

positively shape their futures. For example, involvement on a board or in a leadership role stands out on college and job applications and builds the capacity to lead other efforts. The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (2004) identified aspects of quality programs that included having young people help plan and lead activities, design the environment, and determine rules they will abide by while in the program.

When youth take on leadership roles in their after school projects, they develop deeper connections with that project and with their school. Youth also promote equality by facilitating other students' connections to school and helping them improve their academic achievement. This resonates with the research by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and the National 4H Council (2004) that shows adolescents are driven to explore issues of social justice and bring their concerns to the forefront. Youth remind programs that all young people want to belong and assist in creating a space for that to happen.

The California *Education Code* supports student involvement and feedback in after school programs by encouraging and requiring student involvement. Section 8422(b) stipulates that a program be planned through a collaborative process that includes students. Further, Section 8423(b)(5) identifies one of the criteria to be considered in awarding the grant as completion of an assessment where youth express activities or programs they most desire.

Some grantees are still reworking their needs, goals, and activities and, as a result, are asking youth which activities they most like and would like to have as part of the project. Youth participants in projects were involved in a variety of ways, including:

- Giving input;
- Leading projects;
- Advising;
- Participating in leadership trainings; and
- Recruiting youth into a project.

This section describes the different ways youth involvement contributed to projects. First, the section covers youths' feedback process through surveys and informal focus groups. After this section, we will explore other ways grantees involved students more deeply through leadership roles, advisory groups, leadership institutes, and as recruiters of other students.

Giving Input

The most common way that grantees involved youth was to gather student feedback about programming through surveys and focus groups. Six grantees sought such feedback through surveys designed to gauge student interests and their satisfaction with project activities. Students led some of these survey efforts. During student focus groups with WestEd, youth recalled their input on the surveys, usually administered at the beginning of the year. One student described how he and other members of the school's youth leadership team gathered feedback from other students about the after school project:

We walked around campus and asked... the kids if they thought- 'hey, do you think this would be cool?' Or we sent around little slips and we put our ideas on there and then... if they marked something... we have lists of different things [activities]. It's cool.

Students in the focus group said they liked giving feedback, but they wanted surveys to be regularly administered and to play a larger role in administering the surveys to fellow students.

Another method of obtaining student feedback involved informal focus groups. One grantee's dissatisfaction with low student attendance in the after school project led staff members to regroup and rethink their programming. The site gathered students together to informally discuss how an ideal after school program would look. Extensive student feedback prompted staff members to give students a major role in shaping the project. Students took ownership of the project, renaming it, reconfiguring it, and becoming the primary decision makers. Like youth across the nation, students participating in projects reinvigorated programming to the extent that their involvement was the backbone of the project. As Heath and Smyth (1999) suggested, the adults provided the space, the funding, the training, and the tools, but young people made decisions regarding activities, scheduling, providers, and recruitment of participants.

Leading Projects

Students became young leaders of projects by participating in leadership roles. Students ran the after school projects at two sites, only consulting adults for feedback and approval on ideas. These students made decisions about which activities to offer

and program policies, mapped implementation, and even chose which snacks would be available after school. At one site, students used a democratic process to elect the leadership team, holding a school-wide election to vote for candidates. At another school, teachers nominated students to participate on the leadership team, and youth held an internal election to vote in the officers. At both schools, the youth leadership teams expressed satisfaction with the electoral process and were especially proud of their autonomy in decision-making.

At one of these schools, students decided which field trips after school participants would take during the year. These youth felt their decisions were important since field trips were the biggest draw for participation because many students had no other means to visit such places like Disneyland and universities. One student explained the process entailed in planning the field trip:

If we do any fund-raising activity [for the field trips], we just have an adult supervisor. We organize all the activities, plan the field trip. We make permission slips and pass them out. We also do presentations in the classrooms.

Youth leadership was also evident at one high school where a team of about 20 students organized the school's Career Day held in May 2005. Students began planning the previous October. They surveyed their peers to identify occupations of interest, invited two dozen outside speakers who talked about their jobs, scheduled each of the school's 480 students to attend four different presentations, hosted presentations, and evaluated students' impressions of the day.

Advising

Youth served on advisory committees that were sounding boards to after school programs. At two sites, student representatives participated in the advisory group that guided the overall direction of after school programming. These projects empowered students by allowing them to guide programming; however, little is known of the extent that student input was expressed, validated, or acted upon. This aspect of involvement will be important to explore in the future reports of the ASSETs Program.

Leadership Training

Adult staff members at a few sites provided youth with leadership training to encourage and increase youth involvement in after school projects and school in general. Staff members organized youth training around leadership skills and team-building activities. For example, two sites contracted with the highly commended Youth in Government program to provide leadership training. The participating students defended a cause they believed in, enhanced their writing skills by drafting legislation, practiced their expository skills by presenting their case through a mock trial, and networked with youth from other parts of the state. Other leadership activities at sites included YMCA leadership camp, Ghost Camp, Scout Island, and site-specific leadership workshops. These activities provided students an avenue to showcase their school projects and communicate with and learn from students like themselves from other schools. Furthermore, adults at their schools suggested these leadership development efforts tapped into student voice and trained youth to be leaders at their own schools.

Recruiting Youth

Students at some sites were involved in recruiting student participants and teachers to lead after school activities. The Youth Service America Toolbox (2005) posits that youth focused organizations need to involve youth because youth can spread the word and motivate other youth. Students at some projects were key in informing other students about the after school activities and motivating participation. Teachers and administrators supported youths' efforts to increase student connections to school by allowing youth to present in classrooms. At one site, students in charge of recruitment described "hyping up" the project by visiting homerooms and giving presentations about after school activities. At some sites, youth involvement extended to helping identify and recruit teachers to supervise after school activities. These youth reasoned that involving popular teachers would draw their classmates to after school activities, thereby boosting student participation. To this end, students contacted teachers whom they liked and asked them to lead activities after school.

I. Youth Development

Key Findings:

- Grantees found multiple ways to support positive youth development in eight areas: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community efforts.
- All grantees provided physical safety for youth in structured and supervised environments.
- Adults and youth in the program believed that the after school projects provided students with supportive relationships where adult staff members cared about student success.

This section of the report assesses the extent to which Cohort 1 grantees employed practices identified in the literature as supporting positive youth development. We begin by presenting a synopsis of youth development literature and CDE's promotion of youth development strategies among ASSETs Program grantees. We then discuss the specific approaches grantees used to promote positive youth development.

Youth who attended projects came from diverse backgrounds and brought with them multifaceted ways of functioning. Their variety of needs and interests placed high demands on after school projects to appeal to youth and provide them with supports that aid in their development. Youth have powerful influences in their lives, many of which compete with after school programming, including jobs, family responsibilities, socializing with friends, and, as one principal of an ASSETs Program high school recognized, "the street." A student at one school described how sometimes she needed to be at home to help with chores. She said she needed:

to get my little brother ready [for his baseball games] so my mom would be like 'oh, no you can't go [to the after school project] this Monday' or 'you can't go this Wednesday' so I would miss a lot.

After school projects face the challenge of attracting students' interest and keeping them engaged once they begin participating in after school activities.

Youth advocates understand that human growth is an important process and place great emphasis on positive youth development. Since the early 1990s, researchers have conceived of this process in terms of the kinds of environmental supports that youth need to successfully transition into young adulthood. Observers, using terms like resiliency and developmental assets, posit that youth need certain resources from their environment as they mature. The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, (2002), in a comprehensive review of this area, identified eight areas that promote positive youth development. Youth achieve better developmental outcomes when their lives include these supports. While these supports may not be in place in all areas of a youth's environment, having such supports in at least some parts of their lives is an important ingredient for healthy social, psychological, and emotional growth. The areas identified by the National Research Council are as follows:

- Physical and psychological safety;
- Appropriate structure;
- Supportive relationships;
- Opportunities to belong;
- Positive social norms;
- Support for efficacy and mattering;
- Opportunities for skill building; and,
- Integration of family, school, and community efforts.

Youth spend their time in school, at home, working jobs, and with friends, to name just some of the possibilities. After school programs may be an important part of this mix. The after school program environment may be explicitly structured to support youth development in ways that are not possible during a school's regular day program. Yet, even with the school day, we see attempts to promote positive development through school reform initiatives such as the move toward smaller, more personalized and supportive learning communities.

The ASSETs Program strongly encourages local grantees to consider how after school time may promote youth development. The strength of a grantee's proposed youth development focus was one criterion used to judge the quality of proposals submitted for Cohort 2 and 3 ASSETs Program grants. Additionally, CDE encouraged

Cohort 1 grantees to incorporate youth development principles into their programs. Lastly, youth development has been a focus of discussions and presentations at meetings of the ASSETs Program Learning Community.

The National Research Council framework is consistent with the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices' (2000) discussion of "best practices" related to after school programs. Their assessment of the literature indicated that the most successful program models are those that employ approaches to promote youth development. Such approaches involve a focus on strategies that help youth become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, cognitively competent, healthy and productive adults. Youth development programs strive to influence an adolescent's developmental path toward positive outcomes. They see youth as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed (Roth and Brooks-Gunn 2000). Approaches tend to be holistic rather than piecemeal and go beyond addressing, for example, academic tutoring to teaching youth to complete a task, revel in their achievements, and learn to be role models for others.

The guidebook asked grantees to comment on how their activities related to components in the National Research Council framework, a framework familiar to Cohort 1 grantees through the ASSETs Program Learning Community. Additionally, we gathered relevant interview data from ASSETs Program stakeholders when we visited Cohort 1 grantees.

Overall, grantees found multiple ways to incorporate supports for positive youth development into their operations and activities. We will discuss their approaches in relationship to each of the areas in the National Research Council framework. When discussing how these practices are reflected in the ASSETs Program grantees, it is important to recognize that a single practice may actually relate to more than one area of the framework. For instance, having a separate room for the after school project may contribute to physical and psychological safety, opportunities to belong, and/or supportive relationships with adults, depending on the specific project. For the sake of brevity, we limit repetition but want to acknowledge that a single approach may be classified in multiple ways.

Physical and Psychological Safety

A sense of physical and psychological safety is an important aspect of positive youth development. Grantees found multiple ways to create a secure environment for their participants. Projects supported physical safety in several ways. First, most

grantees served students who came from neighborhoods where they could more readily become crime victims. Each project contributed to students' physical safety by providing a location in a school building or youth center where students were physically safe after school hours. Staff members were on premises when the projects operated, in some cases with security guards as well. Some projects created a hub of activities in a centralized area, most often near the after school office. However, we spoke with one site coordinator who said that during after school hours, the only people remaining at the school were project participants and project staff. This remark suggested that security could be bolstered at this site, particularly since anyone could walk into the teen center, which had a door opening directly to outside the building.

Adults who worked with students observed how drug use and gang activities occurred near the schools. Students felt safe at their high schools during ASSETs Program activities. At some sites, they downplayed the dangers in areas surrounding the school. For instance, participants at one school located between the territories of two urban gangs indicated that they avoided threats from gangs by wearing neutral colors. At a southern California school, students felt safe at school, but not necessarily on their trips to and from school or in their neighborhoods.

Grantees reinforced psychological safety foremost by opening communication lines with students, enabling youth to talk with adults in the project about their concerns, be they academic, social, or personal. Several projects had specific rooms at a school that were used by the projects. We found during our site visits that these rooms had sofas, tables and chairs, magazine racks, and other furniture arranged to create a relaxed, welcoming environment for students. This practice sets a space that students find physically and psychologically welcoming. By establishing a comfortable environment, learning in a relaxed setting could take place.

At two sites, a staff member for the after school project was in the project room during the school day and students could come to the room and speak with the staff member. Some students found this arrangement very positive. An adult was always available to counsel and support students, a factor that students told us created a safer psychological space for them at school. Such an arrangement also provides supportive relationships for youth that extend from the after school project into the regular school day.

Appropriate Structures

In their first year, ASSETs Program grantees created drop-in programs, allowing high school youth to attend when they needed additional assistance with school work, engaging enrichment activities, or a safe place to be after school. Grantees did not enforce strict attendance. However, if students set academic goals, such as passing a class or recovering credit to qualify for graduation, frequent attendance in academic tutoring was necessary to achieve their goals. High quality programs include flexible programs where participants are involved in identifying how they can achieve their goals.

One project established structure for its participants by posting guidelines for behavior in its after school center, a space that once was the school's auto shop. We noticed guidelines were posted during our visit to the project. The guidelines were not complex or extensive and called for treating others with respect. While posting such rules of the room might be a simple task, they are important because they set an expectation for students to follow and remind them that participation in after school activities also has responsibilities.

Projects, at times, established clear boundaries between adults and students. This step was particularly important when project staff members were college students or recent high school or college graduates who looked much like the high school students with whom they were working. One site had plans to develop a logo that will be displayed on staff members' shirts and badges to differentiate staff from students and participating students from non-participating students.

Supportive Relationships

Caring or supportive relationships are characterized by a sense of compassion and acceptance that looks beneath negative behaviors in search of their causes. Adults who provide youth with caring and compassion actively listen to and are interested in what young people have to say.

Staff members who worked with projects were successful at establishing positive relationships with participants. When we spoke with students during our site visits, they told us they felt adults in the project cared for them and about their success. Students expressed that adults conveyed that care by doing small things that adults might not have even realized they were doing. For instance, students told us that they inferred a sense of caring when a staff person looked them in the eyes or asked their opinion.

Students said they could tell one teacher leading an after school activity cared because the teacher bought dinner for everyone one evening that students were working late on a project. According to students, adults also gave students the message that “they were there to help” by staying beyond the school day to tutor or to teach students a skill they were passionate about, such as jogging or ballet *folklorico*.

Staff members who stayed after school had regular communication with students who attended. During student focus groups, youth identified adults in the project they could go to if they had a problem or needed someone to lend an ear. One grantee trained all adults in creating caring relationships with students. Another site held informal support groups for students to allow them to speak freely about any issue.

Opportunities to Belong

Opportunities for youth to participate in group activities can help fulfill a strong psychological need for belonging. Youth develop positive attitudes for successful learning and development by being heard, voicing an opinion, making choices, having responsibilities, and problem solving (Benard 2004). Grantees fostered communication between adults and youth by including students in decision-making, as noted earlier. Students contributed to the project by participating in youth advisory and leadership groups. Youth made their voices heard to project staff by weighing in on the day-to-day work assignments. For example, at one site students negotiated deadlines for projects. At another site, students voiced their opinions in an anonymous suggestion box. This technique was particularly helpful for shy students. Most grantees also solicited student feedback about project activities through surveys.

Sites where students had access to the after school room throughout the day particularly fostered a sense of belonging. At one site, students decorated the room to their liking. Parents donated used furniture such as couches, chairs, and coffee tables. Youth created a space that appealed to peers. When a new participant walked into the room, youth appeal of the room highly increased their comfort level and influenced their decision to be a part of the after school project. Most students at this site came to the after school room while on breaks during the school day. Youth and adults reported that youth influence on the project undoubtedly had a positive impact on students’ sense of belonging to the project.

Grantees found other ways to make students feel included in the group. At two sites, different aspects of the project received specific names. One site called its academic component Cougar University. This name immediately gave students

something of which they could feel a part. The name also helped remove whatever stigma was associated with staying after school for academic assistance, raised perceptions of the associated level of academic activities, and suggested to students they were capable of attaining post-secondary education in their lives.

A different project developed a student leadership group named the "Career Catz." Career Catz played a crucial role in deciding what classes would be offered after school. They reviewed proposed classes to be sure they would be of interest to their classmates. The Career Catz fostered a sense of belonging among students in the group. This sense was particularly important because Career Catz were mostly newcomers, a group that often feels disengaged from school.

Positive Social Norms

Most grantee activities occur at high schools, which makes it easy to mirror behavior rules from the school day in the after school project. At sites where programming took place on school grounds and school-day staff members were also project staff, the behavior rules were rather seamless. Projects communicated their desired expectations of students such as having proper attire for recreational activities or for work sites as well as arriving to the project or work site on time. Further, project staff members were particularly critical in espousing the norms and expectations of student behavior. Staff modeled ways of doing things.

An easy-going climate was the norm for several grantees. After school time at several sites looked and felt different for students because of the physical space of the after school room and after school staff members created a warm and welcoming climate that gave students more freedom and flexibility to have voice and perform their activities at their own pace. For example, at one site, students said they felt more relaxed after school because teachers who stayed were nice to them and let them listen to music and talk freely among their friends while they did their work. They felt they were treated like adults and reported finishing their work. At other sites, students were involved in establishing norms for operating the project, such as the types of activities and behaviors that were welcome, both for students and teachers. If a teacher's activity or attitude was not well-liked by students, the organizing group of students ended the activity because it was not aligned to their project or climate goals.

Support for Efficacy and Matting

Youth involvement in decision-making contributes to their competency. Projects that challenge youth to stretch themselves in demanding and creative activities that are meaningful to them are instrumental in shaping their positive development. In order for young people to feel like they matter and can make a difference in their communities and lives of others, they need to be agents of change (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2000). The ASSETs Program grantees are supporting youth in shaping their worlds by providing them opportunities to be leaders, mentors, and contributors to their communities. Students were part of leadership groups that met consistently to discuss programmatic issues and some even took their concerns to the program and school administration. At one site, the student leadership group wanted to help the victims of the 2004 tsunami in Asia. Students organized a car wash to raise funds for the tsunami relief efforts. In talking with these students during a focus group, they relayed such passion and pride in contributing to recovery efforts of a natural disaster of such magnitude. The activity was meaningful to them.

Projects also encouraged students to be mentors to younger students and to develop their civic leadership responsibilities. At several sites, students mentored elementary school youth after school. Some of these students identified this as an area of interest while others received credit for service learning that they could include in their college applications. By linking students' participation in a meaningful activity with a potential future benefit like college preparedness, youth felt their contributions mattered. Additionally, projects inspired students to develop their own clubs to pursue their own hobbies and goals.

Opportunities for Skill Building

Equipping youth with good habits and a range of competencies and skills is a key ingredient of the projects. Specifically, grantees focused on strengthening students' academic skills to help them complete their classes, pass achievement tests, and prepare them for life beyond high school. Studies have shown that having an intentional learning environment is one of the critical characteristics of successful programs (McLaughlin 2000). Projects dedicated time and resources to assist students in academics.

Grantees also structured enrichment activities that encouraged students to build a repertory of skills in areas of interest. Students gained team building skills through

leadership or sports activities; technology skills through computer and media classes; and job training through work placement activities. Of the cited benefits of participation in an after school program, ASSETs Program students overwhelmingly pointed to academic support and life skills. One group of students told us how participating in a personal growth class held at a community college caused them to think more seriously about going to college.

Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts

Young people have a clear vision of adult and community expectations of them when their many worlds are in sync with one another. As such, youth behavior and life goals tend to be supported by their multifaceted environments. Youth environments tend to consist of the family, school, and community. Research shows that when family values are at odds with school values, youth experience lower school achievement (Comer 1998; Peshkin 1997; Romo and Falbo 1996). When family values are at odds with community values, youth experience more problem behaviors (Schwartz 1987; Romo and Falbo 1996).

For many grantees, the school and community agencies are already collaborating to provide programming for high school youth. In an effort to connect with parents of their students, projects hold parent nights that involve families such as PIQE (Parent Institute for a Quality Education) workshops, ESL classes, and parent orientations. However, many grantees experienced difficulty in making lasting connections with parents and found this component particularly challenging. Often, the same handful of parents was the only group who attended the school-sponsored events.

Grantees also reached out to community agencies such as chambers of commerce, city councils, Elks Clubs, and private companies to partner in providing services to students and their families. Unfortunately, many of these efforts have not been successful. For example, businesses may participate in an enrichment activity for a few months, but are quick to lose momentum in working with youth. Grantees are committed to finding ways to improve youth lives and many plan to improve their engagement of family and community representation in programming to align youth environments.

J. Student Benefits

Key Findings:

- Students primarily cited academic support as a benefit of participating in an after school project. In receiving support, youth had access to school resources, such as computers, and exposure to career choices beyond high school.
- Projects strengthened youths' sense of belonging to the school community, with like peers in the project, and with adult staff members who gained their trust in providing academic and enrichment activities.
- Youth and adults believed their increased life skills such as critical thinking, learning to ask questions, and managing multiple tasks would facilitate a healthy adulthood.

This section addresses student benefits expressed by both students and adults to evaluators during interviews and focus groups. Participation in projects included the following seven benefits:

- Getting help with schoolwork;
- Using/doing things I can't use/do at home;
- Learning about options after high school;
- Feeling like I belong;
- Getting to know other people;
- Making friends with teachers; and
- Learning life skills.

There is abundant research suggesting that students are better off having participated in structured activities beyond the school day. Students who participated in after school programs often are more positive about school and their schoolwork, and are more ambitious to graduate from high school and attend college (U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice 2000). Further, after school programs that provide extracurricular activities may help dissuade students from becoming involved

with delinquency (Cassel and others 2000). It is affirming to see that there is congruency between what the literature in the field posits and what students say about their experiences through the ASSETs Program.

Getting Help With Schoolwork

Participants benefited from the activities both academically and developmentally. Students in participant and non-participant focus groups cited a number of benefits of participating in the after school project, most often mentioning receiving academic support such as homework assistance or tutorials that helped in understanding what was taught in class. According to the project director at one site, students came up with the idea of having a CAHSEE prep class to help students pass the exam. “[The student leadership team] is the one who said, ‘lots of kids didn’t pass the high school exam. We’ve ‘gotta’ have a whole bunch of courses to teach them how to pass.’”

Students particularly said they learned while having fun in a more relaxed place. One student said, “After school, some teachers make it fun and you learn more.” Student focus group participants at one site agreed that after school programming had a more casual feel. They liked teachers who were more at ease after school and had recommendations for teachers who treated after school as rigorous as the regular academic day. “Most staff are real cool. After school is not like you’re having a class. They’re just helping us a little bit... Be like you’re a friend to us. You’re just helping us out.”

Using/Doing Things I Can’t Use/Do At Home

Students were excited about the access to resources and opportunities that would otherwise not be available without such programming. Many students liked having computers accessible because they did not have a computer at home. For example, one student described the services at the computer lab as “really beneficial.” She said, “Especially being a senior, it helped me out a lot during my senior exhibition... I didn’t have a computer at home.” Another student said he used the computer lab “to finish up a paper because my computer at home is broke[n].” Access to computers on site after school allowed students to complete their homework assignments by typing reports and researching topics on the Internet. This finding is consistent with California *Education Code* Section 8423(b)(10) that asks grantees to provide “access to and availability of computers and technology.”

Moreover, students had access to enriching academic, recreational, and cultural activities that many otherwise could not afford. A project director observed the following:

I think there are some cool and different things that students at Hoover would not get to do because of their family situation. I mean, a parent cannot afford to take them rock-wall climbing or take them swimming. So, part of that [reason they continue attending the project] is the cool stuff that we offer that they can't do.

Learning About Options After High School

Youth participation in the activities has led students to consider and act on options for post-secondary education they had not previously considered. For example, several students said they really enjoyed their health and nutrition class (also referred to as cosmetology). Their exposure to the field prompted their decision to attend cosmetology school. At the time of the focus groups, a few students had already pre-enrolled in cosmetology school and would begin in the summer. One project coordinator said that through the after school project's exposure to careers, students begin to envision life beyond high school. She said, "Students get a lot of exposure to a world outside [city]. It makes them think outside the box about their future." Students agreed and some even thought that those youth who did not attend the after school project needed more exposure to options beyond high school.

Many of our students aren't really exposed to the outside world. They're just exposed to [city]. So they need to be exposed. They need to know the importance of education, the importance of having a good job, the importance of making good grades.

The project at one school employed many recent high school graduates to lead activities and mentor students at school. One of these staff members told us of how she benefited from the after school project. When attending high school, she became involved in the project's mural club that painted a large wall in the after school center. Through her involvement in the club, she discovered her love of being a creative artist. Although she had not taken art classes at the high school, she decided that she wanted to study art after graduation. The site coordinator helped her develop an art portfolio

and apply to post-secondary arts programs. Today, in addition to being a project staff member, she is studying art at a local college.

Feeling Like I Belong

After school projects rekindled many students' sense of belonging to the school. Students could not participate in after school programming without coming to the regular school day. At some schools, all extra curricular activities, including sports, were funneled through the after school project thereby encouraging school attendance. One coordinator said that students get up in the morning, come to school, and stay after school. The fact that they were getting up in the morning was a big step for many students. At one site, a student who was on the verge of suspension from school approached the after school coordinator to ask if he could still come to the after school project should he be suspended. The coordinator spoke with the administration about the students' attachment to the after school project to discourage the youth's suspension and take advantage of an opportunity to work with the student to further foster his sense of belonging to the school.

Getting To Know Other People

The convergence of youth from different backgrounds, social circles, and academic levels provided a rare opportunity for students to connect because of the sense of safety fostered by the after school environment. A student said she got to meet a lot of people through the project. She said,

As I got into the program, I met a lot of people. Not that I didn't know anybody but I did. Yeah, I already knew a lot of people but I met more people... It was fun.

Students interacted with other students who were different from themselves and with whom they would normally not interact, and found they had similar interests. For example, one site coordinator recounted how newcomer and low performing students became friends with popular students who were from financially comfortable homes as a result of their interactions in the after school project. Field trips sponsored by the project helped facilitate a bond among students because away from school, all students

were the same. Essentially, youth had similar interests in music, food, and having a sense of belonging.

Making Friends With Teachers

Not only did students interact with their peers, but the after school environment also provided them an opportunity to interact with adults. Students connected with adult staff members at a level unique from the regular school day. Since the after school project was less formal, student interactions with adults also were also less formal. During student focus groups, youth talked about how they got to know teachers as people, more like their friends. As one student told us during a focus group, through the after school project you learn the teacher is “not some boring teacher walking across the hall.” Youth felt teachers cared about them and showed it by staying after school to work with them. Students thought that teachers who were asked to stay after school but did not stay, did not care much about them.

By having a good relationship with students, teachers’ messages are well taken. One project director noted that adult messages to students made a difference in a student’s life. “When a teacher says ‘You’ve got to go to this,’ I think that matters.” Students further said that if they needed to talk with an adult to get advice about a personal problem, they could go to after school project staff. At one site, students commented on knowing project staff beyond the project. “They [staff] don’t only ask us about our school. They know our parents. They invite us to their houses.” According to staff at the site, staff members reached out to students and their parents to establish good relationships that will foster school and project attendance.

Learning Life Skills

After school grantees reinforced important life skills that students could take with them beyond the school campus. Through participation in project leadership, internships, service learning, and activities of interest, students were forced to interact with other students, adults, and the world outside school. Youth learned to ask questions, manage projects, and take on responsibility. Adult staff members in the after school projects who participated in the interviews commended students on their ability to juggle multiple tasks and, at the same time, provide the diligence necessary to complete their assignments. One site had a job fair organized by an after school teacher

and a partnering agency. The job fair helped students fill out job applications. One student described the event.

[We learned] how to like sit through an interview to get the job and, you know, what type of clothes we should wear to an interview, little things that helped.

According to staff members, students became more confident and had a better self-understanding, skills that show individual growth and maturity.

K. Professional Development

Key Findings:

- Most grantees trained staff members in after school programming and academic content areas, and some trained staff members in youth development. Since the majority of staff members were school teachers, many grantees relied on district and school-provided professional development focused on academic content.
- The majority of professional development service providers were school districts, county offices of education, and CBOs.

This section provides a brief summary of the professional development activities provided to after school staff. This section includes trends in professional development content, service providers, and frequencies of workshops provided to staff, as well as the number of staff trained.

Content of Professional Development

Research suggests that after school programs with positive student outcomes tend to have positive, well-trained staff members. Often, programs that provide staff with professional development training focused on working with students in after school programs benefit by increasing student and staff retention rates in the program (McComb and Scott-Little 2003). If staff members feel they are provided opportunities for learning and students feel staff members are receptive to their needs, both are more likely to continue attending. Knowledgeable and qualified staff members are more likely

to provide quality programming to students than staff with little training and understanding of the issues students face.

Grantees trained staff in multiple areas, including: the logistics of operating successful after school programs, areas related to the academic component of the program such as curriculum and classroom management, youth development, and peer mediation. However, academic-related workshops, such as engaging students in writing, quality instructional strategies, and computer tutorial software training, were the most common area of professional development. Many grantees, whose staff members predominantly consisted of regular day teachers, leveraged their professional development opportunities with the school and district provided workshops. Consistent with California *Education Code* Section 8423(b)(3), staff training was well-integrated with training of regular school day staff.

Grantees' heavy reliance on school and district provided professional development to train after school staff members often meant that other areas of students' lives were left out of trainings. For example, just a few grantees provided staff training in youth development skills for working with students beyond the school day. As such, grantees' focus on curricular strategies often bypassed child/youth development and affective techniques that engage student voice. While some grantees attempted to mesh the two techniques, the marriage of the two approaches was not highly common for schools.

Service Providers

Among the nine grantees, the district, county offices of education, and CBOs provided much of the staff training. As previously mentioned, the majority of grantees used the school and district to provide professional development activities to staff. Six grantees connected with LEA resources including the districts' school health programs and after school grants departments and the host school itself whether through principals or department chairs.

Some grantees out-sourced their professional development trainings to local agencies in the community. For example, one site relied on the collaborative that worked closely with them to provide programming to increase staff skills in school safety and classroom management. Still a couple of grantees looked to the ASSETs Program Learning Community meetings, held a twice a year, for professional development.

Frequency of Offerings

While a few of the grantees provided training to all staff members (those whose school-day teachers worked in the program), the trend for most ASSETs Program grantees was to target one to four staff members. The training of such few staff members follows a trainer-of-trainers model, where trained staff return to their sites and then train their colleagues in the strategies learned. However, this strategy is often not practiced for a number of reasons. Staff providing services to youth often work part time. Finding a time when all staff members are available to discuss the training is a challenge. Further, with staff turnover, trained staff members may leave the grantee and not funnel the information learned to remaining staff. For these reasons, expanding training to include more after school staff members is critical in truly establishing a successful, sustainable project that will improve student outcomes.

L. Family Literacy Component

Key Findings:

- Six grantees provided a family literacy component that included training on how to be partners in education and age and grade-appropriate strategies to use with youth.
- Family literacy activities were courses for adults or extended library hours open for adults.

CDE encouraged ASSETs Program grantees to include a family literacy component. It is one of three mandatory criteria for after school programming. Grantees in Cohorts 2 and 3 are required to assess the need for family literacy services among the adult family members of students served by their projects and refer adults in need to existing literacy and educational development services, or coordinate with agencies in providing these services.

Seven ASSETs Program grantees provided information about how they incorporated family literacy into their projects. One grantee did not have a family literacy component during the 2003-04 school year. Grantees that had a family literacy component offered courses for adults or extended library hours. The majority of grantees offered either single or multiple session courses. These courses focused on topics such as literacy, adolescent development, nutrition, parenting, legal issues, financial literacy, and computer literacy. Grantees believed that offering courses in

multiple areas allowed them to attract parents to literacy programs. Staffing was often coordinated with other programs at a school. For instance, one grantee used an existing II/USP family literacy coordinator to organize family literacy activities, while another grantee hired the parent liaison from the regular school day to work with its after school project.

One grantee addressed family literacy by extending library hours at one school to 5:30 p.m. During the extended time period, the library was open to the community. Project administrators worked with the librarian at a second school to see how hours could be extended in a similar type of arrangement.

The grantee that did not have a family literacy component was researching and planning such services. The grantee coordinated with the local literacy council to develop an instrument for assessing the need for family literacy services. The council hoped to use the results to refer adults in need to appropriate literacy service providers including local community colleges and adult education centers.

M. Advisory Group

Key Findings:

- ASSETs Program grantees are beginning to leverage their resources to continue after school programming beyond the funding period.
- LEAs are tapping into district-funded programs while non-LEAs are regrouping to expand their options for funding.
- All grantees have plans to develop sustainability plans in the upcoming academic year.

A strong advisory group or steering committee guides an after school program, assisting with program development, providing feedback about the progress of activities, and directing staff towards community resources. An after school project may have a single advisory group whose members represent many fields of expertise, ranges of experience, and points of view. Other projects may choose to have two or more advisory groups representing separate purposes. Advisory groups that meet regularly to evaluate program rules, discuss current issues in the program, and give guidance to activities positively impacting program functioning and sustainability. Involving youth in an advisory group is a positive step for high school after school

programs. It gives students a voice and increases their sense of program ownership. In such situations, youth understand that the program is not only for them but also values their input.

Seven ASSETs Program grantees reported having some form of formal or informal advisory group. The structure of these advisory groups was rooted in one of two models—intra-project advisory groups or inter-project advisory groups. Beyond using these common models, the groups were as varied as the projects themselves.

Intra-agency Groups

Intra-project advisory groups, meaning advisory groups with members drawn from the stakeholders of one project, were by far the most common among ASSETs Program grantees. Six grantees described such arrangements. Five grantees had a formal advisory group structure. With up to 11 members, these groups met on a regular basis. Group members included regular school-day administrators, staff and teachers, after school administrators, owners of community businesses, parents, and students. While members of most projects' advisory groups came equally from these different sources, one grantee who focused on job readiness had an advisory group almost exclusively composed of employers who worked as worksite hosts and mentors.

Advisory groups met as frequently as twice a month and as infrequently as twice a year. One site reported meeting twice a year as a large group. However, different sub-teams of this advisory group, such as the administrative team and the leadership team, met to discuss the progress of the after-school project as frequently as once a day. Another grantee with an intra-project advisory group had an informal arrangement without established meeting times for their advisory group. Instead, project staff members reported, "groups of stakeholders (youth, teachers, administrators) came together periodically to provide vision and critical feedback."

Inter-agency Groups

In spring 2005, one school district that received several ASSETs Program grants implemented an inter-project advisory group consisting of site coordinators from each of the six projects in their district.¹⁴ The committee focused on the goals and challenges of the district, capitalizing on the varied experience of committee members and using each

¹⁴ Other grantees in this advisory group were from the second and third cohorts of projects and did not submit data for this report.

other as resources for program development and improvement. Their regular meetings also served as an opportunity for all members to participate in staff training. To supplement this committee and ensure the grantee was meeting the needs of students, administrators also created “a student committee that provides oversight and input for the program.” Members of this latter group were elected by the student body and met monthly. In their guidebook, this grantee described how the committee “sets the program calendar, reviews individual course proposals, and suggests new strategies for engaging and retaining students.”

Another grantee with an intra-project advisory group used the school’s student government as a student advisory group. The project director described how elected students were liked and respected by the other students in the school and were in touch with their classmates’ needs and interests. Involving students with the after school project helped with activity development and participant recruitment.

Although the majority of grantees had an advisory group in place, some were still in the process of creating one, and others were working to improve their established advisory groups. Improvements for advisory groups that grantees were considering for the future included establishing regular meeting times and including student representatives where they are not already involved. In future years it might be worth examining how different models of advisory groups influence project effectiveness.

N. Sustainability

Key Findings:

- Grantees are working with a variety of agencies, including their districts, to solicit monetary and in-kind contributions that will support sustainability.

This section discusses the ways in which ASSETs Program grantees are addressing sustaining the after school activities beyond the funding period. First, we present a brief presentation of related research. Then, we discuss the different approaches between grantees that are LEAs and those that are not.

Sustaining a program beyond the funding period requires innovative techniques that will ensure the services benefiting youth, schools, and the community remain available year after year. According to Policy Studies Associates, the key to sustaining a program is drawing from a variety of funding sources. If one source diminishes, the program can continue with other financial support (Vandell and others 2004). As such,

ASSETs Program grantees are finding ways to leverage their existing resources for after school programming. Some grantees are tapping into other district-funded programs and resources, while other grantees are regrouping to expand their options for future funding.

LEAs

Many ASSETs Program grantees are LEAs and, by their nature, have access to multiple funding streams. These LEAs also have extensive experience soliciting funding and have the institutional capacity to carry out large-scale initiatives that will help sustain a variety of programming. Peterson and Spitz (2003) show that 21st CCLC Program grantees rated soliciting “in kind” resources from a school or district (e.g., space, supplies) as the most important sustainable strategy. As such, LEAs potentially have school and district in-kind resources to leverage future funding. Several grantees noted efforts to look within their district funds to help sustain their projects. However, we spoke with some principals who felt it was unlikely their districts would provide future funding for high school after school activities since district finances were very limited.

Non-LEAs

For grantees who are not LEAs, the concept of sustainability is one that requires extensive conversations with partners about the options for additional funding streams. Corporate Voices for Working Families (2004) supports the notion that an infrastructure of support meet to identify, manage, and coordinate funding streams as well as harness resources to sustain on-going programming. One grantee has an ongoing collaborative that meets monthly to sustain all after school programs with which they work. Their attention focused on soliciting future funding.

Most grantees had thought about sustaining programming. Plans for upcoming years included more attention to developing a sustainability plan once programming was further under way. Some grantees suggested wanting to increase community awareness by connecting with private sector employees and parents, and increasing community ties.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Earlier sections of this Interim Evaluation Report identified areas where project components need further development if grantees are to achieve the goals of increasing student academic achievement and promoting youth development. Several suggestions for cultivating resources are embedded in the text of the report. Some areas target local project stakeholders while others highlight systemic issues needing clarification or re-examination. This section revisits these areas and examines how they may be developed. Grantees made important strides in developing and implementing programming to serve students in need of academic assistance and enrichment opportunities. However, focusing on a few key areas including the following could strengthen projects:

- Support for grantees and projects in areas such as:
 - Aligning needs and goals;
 - Using data to inform programming;
 - Expanding professional development for staff; and
 - Recruiting and retaining students;
- Better integrating academics into grantee activities; and
- Linking after school programming to high school reform efforts.

Our discussion of next steps concludes by considering the Final Evaluation Report due in 2007 and how it will continue to address the evaluation questions identified by CDE.

A. Support for Grantees and Projects

Grantees are at a ripe stage where additional supports and opportunities provided through technical assistance and professional development would strengthen projects in a way that provides staff with increased skills. The supports discussed include:

- Aligning needs to goals;

- Using data to inform programming;
- Expanding professional development opportunities; and
- Recruiting and retaining students.

Alignment of Grantee Needs and Goals

At times, we found there was a loose connection between the identified needs and goals that grantees were addressing. Grantees reported identified needs in their community for an after school program; however, in many instances, their goals were unaligned to their stated needs. This inconsistency explained why goal statements were unclear. Sometimes, goals were not linked to a specific need and had little focus. Additionally, several grantees identified more than one goal in a single goal statement.

It is evident that revisiting their needs and goals would benefit grantees and help clarify the connections between identified needs and goals. Then grantees could look at their project activities and their intended outcomes to determine whether there is alignment between their needs, goals, activities, and intended outcomes. A technical assistance workshop where grantees could have hands-on, small group training in revising their own needs and goal statements would be very helpful and allow grantees to be more intentional in their approaches to programming. Included in this workshop should be information about the chain of connections that extends from needs through activities to help ensure that grantees operate with a coherent vision and plan.

In an effort to clarify the thinking behind purposeful, sequential programming, WestEd made changes to the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2004-05* that may help evaluators better understand the links between grantee needs and goals. The modified report template reflects one effort to help grantees think about how needs and goals are linked to all aspects of programming.

Equally important, grantees would benefit from training related to program evaluation and continuous improvement management (CIM). ED and the C.S. Mott Foundation made a substantial investment in CIM during the late 1990s (Pane and others 1999). CIM is an iterative, ongoing process that reinforces the importance of linking needs assessment, goal definition, grantee activities, and gathering outcome data. These data allow a grantee to determine, based on measured outcomes, whether those outcomes are consistent with the design of the after school program. Such information helps identify where changes are needed to increase impacts. For new and developing grantees, this process is especially useful. New grantees are likely to begin

programming with a definitive plan and, upon delivering their plan, realize that they need to modify activities or even their focus. Reworking their focus requires revisiting their goals. Understanding that this is part of the process to develop a program that makes a difference in the lives of students and the larger community is a step toward establishing a successful program.

Data Use

As the preceding paragraph demonstrates, the use of data to inform programming is an integral part of CIM. When grantees realize they need to modify activities, their decision is usually informed by data. The data may come in the form of observations. For example, staff may find that students only attend activities that include an arts component. The data may also come from informal conversations with students about the after school project. Regardless, staff members are using data to help make decisions to modify the project.

During our site visits, we found that sites regularly used informal data to change programming components, but rarely relied on data from their local evaluation to inform their practice. A handful of grantees hired local evaluators to collect data, but none used the data to revisit goals that would better reflect the populations they ultimately served or to review staffing or professional development offerings. A few evaluators mentioned that they collected an abundance of data on multiple levels for grantees to use, but there were no avenues for them to discuss the data with grantees.

Grantees and projects are fortunate to have so much data collected about their after school projects for many reasons, but our discussion will focus on three. First, data are needed to document the impact of high school after school programs, the challenges these programs face, and how grantees have successfully tackled these challenges. Second, the data can be used for planning and further developing the grantees to be successful. Grantees have the opportunity to learn from their ups and downs and correct their practices to ensure students are receiving the supports they need to make them healthy, contributing adults. Third, the data provide a context for having conversations about what is and is not working and what other resources grantees may tap to increase their impacts.

Technical assistance workshops on how to use ASSETs Program data to inform and improve programming will undoubtedly impact the way grantee staff view their role, data, and their role in using data. A workshop might include gathering several staff members from a grantee—an evaluator, a project director, and staff member that

collects data—who have a conversation about the data and consider its implications for the design and structure of activities.

Expansion of Professional Development Opportunities

Grantees provided professional development opportunities to their staff members. Yet, the level of their offerings was slim and few staff members participated. Sites that had regular school-day teachers participating in the after school project took advantage of the district and school-sponsored professional development offerings and counted these trainings as professional development for after school. However, the trend for most sites was to target a few after school staff members for professional development training rather than their entire after school staff.

The research and evaluation literature on after school programs indicates that knowledgeable and trained staff members are more likely to provide consistent, quality programming to students than staff with limited or inconsistent training. Staff members who receive the same training are more likely to espouse the same values and move the project along according to their shared vision. Training all staff members in a given area also ensures continuity of programming when faced with staff turnover. When most staff members are knowledgeable in a variety of areas interruptions in programming are reduced or eliminated when grantees need to search for qualified staff to lead specific activities. Expanding training to include more project staff may establish a successful, sustainable project that will improve student outcomes.

Recruiting and Retaining Students

Student recruitment and retention is an area of concern for after school programs that serve high school students. As we have discussed earlier, there are many interests competing for the out-of-school time of these students including jobs, family responsibilities, and opportunities just to be kids that spend time with friends. Overall, project attendance increased from 2003-04 to 2004-05, as did the percent of students who attended for 30 days or more. Yet even in 2004-05, while there were variations from school to school, overall, 32 percent of students enrolled at the high schools in 2004-05 were participating in projects. Furthermore, only 32 percent of those participants attended for 30 days or more. Some schools that had large numbers of participants had small percentages that attended the project over 30 days.

We believe it would be useful for grantees to share information about their programs including the strategies they use to draw students to their after school activities and keep them returning. We recognize that unique circumstances affect each project, which means that not every strategy is applicable in all situations. However, being aware of more options for recruiting and retaining students expands the avenues available to grantee staff. The Final Evaluation Report that WestEd submits to CDE in 2007 will examine project attendance and associated issues in more detail.

B. Better Integration of Academics

Based on our review the activities of Cohort 1, we feel that grantees could do a better job integrating opportunities to boost students' academic skills into their programming. There are clearly projects where linking the academic day to the after school program is done well. We saw this in multiple ways:

- Credit recovery efforts;
- Coordinating after school curriculum by working with department heads;
- Using teachers as after school coordinators;
- Conferences between regular school and after school staff about student needs; and,
- Using a single student plan to coordinate instruction during the regular school day and after school support for students.

At the same time, however, we visited sites where efforts to provide academic assistance during after school hours were much weaker and it was possible that activities did little to help boost students' academic skills.

We feel it is important for grantees to better integrate academic supports into their programs. Grounded in the federal NCLB legislation, the ASSETs Program clearly anticipates that participating students will benefit academically by participating in the program-supported components. The initial Request for Applications issued prior to funding Cohort 1 spelled out CDE's expectations:

The overarching goal of the 21st CCLC Program is to establish or expand community learning centers that provide students, particularly students

who attend schools in need of improvement, with academic enrichment opportunities and supportive additional services necessary to help the students meet State and local standards in the core content areas (California Department of Education, 2002, p. 2).

Grantees need to keep this goal in mind when offering academic and educational enrichment activities for students.

There is tension in the after school field because its supporters view out-of-school time programs from many perspectives (Bowman 2001; Dynarski and others 2001). Some advocates view after school as a time to help students grow academically, while others place much greater emphasis on the developmental tasks that students face as they move through childhood and adolescence into adulthood. We do not see these as mutually exclusive possibilities for after school programs. In fact, the ASSETs Program encourages academic enrichment within a framework that supports youth development. Furthermore, cognitive growth is an important part of this developmental process:

The most important cognitive changes during [adolescence] relate to the increasing ability of youth to think abstractly, consider the hypothetical as well as the real, process information in a more sophisticated and elaborate way, consider multiple dimensions of a problem at once, and reflect on oneself and on complicated problems (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2002, p. 56).

Grantees are doing some excellent work in the areas of youth development, as presented earlier in this report; and, grantees will learn much from each other as they share practices. However, we believe students would gain more benefits from grantee activities if more activities were structured with greater consideration of how they would support cognitive and academic growth. We do not mean to imply that grantees should restrict their focus on remediation of academic deficiencies or offering what some might consider as an extension of the school day. If the curriculum does not engage students, added doses of that curriculum will not draw youth to after school activities.

Grantees offer tutoring, homework assistance, and preparation for the CAHSEE as part of their academic assistance strategies. Their approaches also need to include other enrichment activities that build academic skills through approaches such as project-based learning, service learning, tutoring other students, and internships that build academic and problem-solving skills by addressing problems and issues that

students find engaging. Activities may be designed or selected keeping in mind the defined needs and goals of a grantee and their relationship to the state's academic standards.

We observed instances among projects where educational enrichment activities that enhance learning opportunities are already available to students. Venues are needed that would allow projects to learn from each other about these activities and others that could be used effectively in high school after school programs.

C. Linking After School to High School Reform

High schools have drawn a great deal of attention in the past few years, both nationally and in California (Harvey and Houseman 2004; Education Trust-West 2004; Horowitz 2005; Legislative Analyst's Office 2005). There are multiple issues underlying this focus including the following:

- The high numbers of students who are failing to complete high school;
- The lack of sufficient opportunities for students to take the A-G curriculum needed to attend a four-year college or university;
- The need for improved vocational choices for students; and
- The requirement for students to pass the CAHSEE to receive a high school diploma.

The persistence of these issues has led to multiple calls to rethink and reform high schools by turning them into smaller learning communities, increasing training focused on equipping students with workplace and career skills, expanding access to the A-G curriculum, and holding higher expectations for students' academic success, to name a few.

Given the ASSETs Program's focus on schools with lower API scores, it is not surprising that helping to prepare students to pass the CAHSEE is a priority for many grantees. However, despite the immediate concern that the CAHSEE poses for schools, grantees need to be part of a broader vision at their schools that holds high expectations for students and the belief that students should graduate prepared to move into post-secondary education. To this end, grantees, teachers, and school administrators would do well to work collaboratively to determine how academic enrichment opportunities made available through the after school grant fit with reform

efforts to improve the readiness of all students to succeed with entry into college and careers “after school.” Following are some of the examples of high school reform strategies that are based on research, standards-aligned instruction and assessment in support of academic achievement by all students:

- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID);
- California Partnership Academy Program;
- Smaller Learning Communities;
- Educational Technology Plan (school and LEA) and the services of the California Learning Resource Network (CLRN) and the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP);
- Integration of academics and career-technical education (CTE) standards, pathways; services of the California Career Resource Network (CCRN);
- High School Puente Project;
- California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP);
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)
- California State University Early Assessment Programs (EAP)

Each of these programs, and similar reform efforts, contributes to raising the sights of students and providing the academic and personal supports that students need if they are to graduate high school and pursue further study. After school projects are in an excellent position to contribute to this goal.

The impact of grantees will be maximized as the regular school and after school programs work together in planning programs and allocating resources to support students. The goals of the school day and after school program should be consonant with both understanding how their day-to-day efforts contribute to achieving those goals. Working together necessitates close communication between the regular school and after school staff. One project has an individual student plan that focuses on activities that occur for a student during and after school. This is an example of one level of coordination that may occur. Ideally, as they work together, the regular and after school programs will understand the strengths that each contribute to student development. We saw earlier in the report how students viewed after school as providing flexibility and

connections with staff that were not possible during the regular school day. Furthermore, after school provides flexibility that allows students to pursue projects in ways that are not possible during the school day given how time is cut into class periods.

D. Looking to the Final Evaluation Report of the High School ASSETS Program

This Interim Evaluation Report on the High School ASSETS Program has provided important information about the progress Cohort 1 grantees have made since they began programming in 2003-04. It is equally important to note that this report is a first step in developing an understanding of the ASSETS Program. In 2007, WestEd will complete the Final Evaluation Report about the High School ASSETS Program. That report will allow us to provide further data related to the key questions underlying this evaluation. In addition to addressing key areas discussed in this Interim Evaluation Report, we plan to incorporate data into the Final Evaluation Report about the following areas:

- The impact of the ASSETS Program on participating schools;
- The impact the ASSETS Program has on students in the following areas:
 - Academic performance such as scores on the California Standards Tests, CAHSEE, and course completion;
 - Student behaviors including school attendance, bullying, and the use of alcohol and drugs; and
 - Youth development outcomes such as feeling safe, connections to adults, and opportunities for skill building.
- How outcomes compare for ASSETS Program participants and “similarly situated” students.

When we consider how the ASSETS Program impacts schools, WestEd evaluators will consider multiple areas including academic performance and school operations because after school programs operate within a broader school community, as our comments about connecting after school projects with high school reform efforts demonstrate. Perhaps projects impact schools by affecting areas such as the services schools make available to all students, how resources are allocated to programs, or

ways schools use data when developing program plans. There are multiple areas where impacts may be evident since quality after school programs are linked to the regular school program and both seek to have positive impacts on the same group of students.

We will examine the possibility of using data about changes in API scores or about annual yearly progress when assessing how the ASSETs Program benefits schools. Including such data would be consistent with the goals of the ASSETs Program and both the needs and goals that grantees have established for their projects. A possible approach would be to compare school level outcomes at participating high schools to other high schools in the group of similar schools developed to rank schools on the API. As we explore this issue, we will consider whether it will be possible to use appropriate and valid statistical approaches and analyses.

Our analyses will be informed by data about the level of student participation in projects. It will be important to ask whether participation at the school, grantee, or ASSETs Program levels is sufficient to impact such school level outcome measures. If not enough students are participating or are not participating with the frequency to impact the outcomes that grantees established, grantees may need to rethink some or all of these areas: their goals, their approaches to delivering services, and the ways they demonstrate project impacts. The technical assistance we discussed above will be useful in this regard.

Grantees will begin administering the after school module of the CHKS to students participating in project activities. We anticipate that grantees will administer the CHKS after school module in early 2006 and again in the spring. Students' responses will provide valuable feedback related to their experiences with their schools, the after school projects, and areas where projects foster positive learning and youth development outcomes.

The Final Evaluation Report will encompass all three cohorts of ASSETs Program grantees. We anticipate that we will have received information from these grantees about their 2004-05 and 2005-06 program years. This information will come from the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2004-05*, the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2005-06*, and the federal data reporting system covering these two years.

The field test of the guidebook with Cohort 1 was very useful and provided important information that CDE and WestEd used to refine the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2004-05* by asking grantees:

- To clarify the criteria they use to determine whether a student had participated in a project for one day. It was unclear from the field test data whether each grantee used the same criteria.
- How they planned to increase attendance in 2005-06 over the 2004-05 levels.
- To describe both their Academic Assistance and Educational Enrichment components.
- How they used data to target activities and make shifts in programming.

Information related to these issues will help us better understand grantees' activities and the outcomes and benefits associated with high school after school programs. Additionally, some modifications are being made to the federal reporting system for the 21st CCLC Program. CDE and WestEd will be coordinating their data collection with the federal reporting system, drawing data from the system where possible so ASSETs Program grantees do not have to provide the same information to both the federal reporting system and CDE.

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VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A
Site Visit Instruments

ASSETs Program
Principal Interview Protocol

Goals

1. What are the primary goals of your after school project?
2. How safe is your school? How safe is your community?
3. How is your project connected to the schools' academic programs (probe: communication about student needs, curriculum, practice)?
4. In what ways does the project promote student well-being and healthy development (probe: caring relationships, opportunities to belong)?
5. In what ways does the project help students academically?
6. What do students gain from their experience in this after school project?

Link to School Day Program

7. What resources does the school provide (probe: space, facilities, staffing)?
8. How often do you meet with the director of the after school project?
9. What opportunities are there for after school staff to participate with teachers in professional development?
10. What are the benefits of having the after school project at your school?

Sustainability

11. What have been the major challenges to implementing and operating the project (probe: what successful, unsuccessful)?
12. What changes would you like to see to the project content and delivery (probe: organizational structure, resources, collaboration)?
13. (If applicable) Describe your long-term plan for sustaining the after school project.

ASSETs Program
Project Director Interview Protocol

Goals

1. What are the primary goals of your after school project?

Enrollment

2. Who do you serve (probe: target group)?
3. What is the main obstacle to expanding the project to serve all students?

Activities

4. How were your project activities selected?
5. In what ways does the project promote student well-being and healthy development (probe: caring relationships, opportunities to belong)?
6. What keeps students coming to the project?
7. What keeps students from coming to the project?
8. What do students gain from their experience in this after school project?

Staffing

9. How is this project staffed and what are the roles and responsibilities of the various staff and partners (probe: FT, PT, volunteers)?
10. What opportunities are there for project staff to participate in professional development? (probe: alignment of activities with student needs?)

Link to School Day Program

11. How is your project connected to the schools' academic programs (probe: communication about student needs, curriculum, practice)?
12. What resources does the school provide (probe: space, facilities, staffing)?

13. How often do you meet with the principal of the school?
14. How useful are your conversations with the principal regarding student needs and programming? (probe: What would make them more useful?)

Sustainability

15. What have been the major challenges to implementing and operating the project (probe: what successful, unsuccessful)?
16. What changes would you like to see to the project content and delivery (probe: organizational structure, resources, collaboration)?
17. (If applicable) Describe your long-term plan for sustaining the after school project.

ASSETs Program
Project Coordinator Interview Protocol

Programming

1. What are the primary goals of your after school project?
2. Where do project activities take place?
3. What criteria does the project use to determine who can participate?
- 3a. Why do students choose to join your project? What is the most common profile of your average participant?
4. What are the greatest inhibitors to student participation in your project (probe: apathy, safety, family obligations)?

Academic Programming

5. In what ways does the project help students academically?
- 5a. How does the project address students' needs for lifelong learning? What activities are specifically linked to increased college attendance or high school to work (CAHSEE or SAT prep., job corps)?

Link to School Day Program

6. How is your project connected to the schools' academic programs (probe: communication about students, curriculum, practices)?
7. How often do you speak with teachers or the principal about student needs (probe: usefulness of conversations)?

Activities/Enrichment

8. In what ways does the project promote student well-being and healthy development (probe: caring relationships, opportunities to belong)?
9. How much input do students have into the activities that are offered?

10. What do students gain from their experience in this after school project?

Staffing

11. What opportunities are there for you to participate in professional development? (probe: Who else participates?) How have these helped you align project activities with student needs?

12. What additional training topics would be useful to project staff?

Sustainability

13. What have been the major challenges to implementing and operating the project (probe: working with students, what successful, unsuccessful)?

ASSETs Program
Project Staff Interview Protocol

1. What is your role in this after school project?

Programming

2. How does your after school project support students' schoolwork or future goals (probe: college or job readiness)?

Activities

3. How are rules of behavior and expectations communicated to / agreed upon with project participants?
4. How much input do students have into the activities that are offered?
5. How does the project support youth development?
6. What opportunities do youth have to help the community through the after school project (probe: peers, families, other schools, environment)?
7. What opportunities do students have to lead activities?
8. What do students gain from their experience in this after school project?

Link to School Day Program

9. How often do you speak with teachers or the principal about student needs (probe: useful of conversations)?

Staffing

10. What opportunities are there for you to participate in professional development? (probe: Who else participates?) How have these helped you align project activities with student needs?
11. What additional training topics would be useful to project staff?

Sustainability

12. What have been the major challenges to implementing and operating the project (probe: working with students, what successful, unsuccessful)?
13. What changes would you like to see to the project content and delivery (probe: organizational structure, resources, collaboration)?

ASSETs Program
Evaluator or Evaluation Coordinator Interview Protocol

1. Describe the extent of interaction and communication with the project director.
2. How did you decide which activities to evaluate? What do you hope to document?
3. What data system, if any, are you using?
4. How are you involving students in your data collection and analysis efforts?
5. (If applicable) How are your clients using the results of the evaluation?
6. What has been your biggest challenge in evaluating the project?
7. What has surprised you most in evaluating the project?

ASSETs Program
Student Participant Focus Group Protocol

1. What do you usually do after school in a typical week?
2. Before the after school project, what did you usually do after school?
3. How did you learn about the after school project?
4. Why did you decide to attend the project (probe: how often attend)?
5. How safe do you feel at school? How safe do you feel in your community?
6. What do you do in the project?
7. How much input do you have into the activities that are offered?
8. What opportunities do you have to lead activities?
9. What opportunities do you have to help your community through the after school project (probe: peers, families, other schools, environment)?
10. In what ways does the project help you academically (probe: academic activities)?
11. How else does your after school project support your schoolwork or future goals (probe: college or job readiness)?
12. Do you feel project staff care about you and the other students here? How so?
13. What keeps you coming to the after school project?
14. What could the project provide to help you be more successful (probe: at school or in life)?
15. Do you plan to attend the after school project again in the fall?

ASSETs Program
Student Non-Participant Focus Group Protocol

1. Do you know about the after school project at your school? Could you tell me something you know about it?
2. Do you go to the after school project or have you thought about going? Could you tell me more about it (probe: reasons for not attending)?
3. What do people say about the after school project?
4. What do you usually do after school in a typical week?
5. How safe do you feel at school? How safe do you feel in your community?
6. How often do you feel you get a say in what goes on at school (probe: class activities or rules)?
7. What could school provide to help you be more successful?
8. Do you feel someone at school cares about you and the other students here? How so?
9. What would an after school project you'd like to attend look like to you?

Appendix B
Project Activities by Grantee

Activities by grantee

General Activity Category	Specific Activity Category	Grantee*											Total Activities	Total Grantee	
		COR	FCOE	LBUSD	PVUSD	SBCUSD	SDSUF	SDUSD	SFUSD						
Academic	Homework assistance for coursework	4	3	1	2	4	7				1			22	7
	Tutoring for individual skill development	10	3	1			2				1			17	5
	Mathematics	3	2	1	1	1	2							10	6
	CAHSEE preparation	1	2	1		1	1	1		1				7	6
	College preparation, research, application	1				1	2			2				6	4
	Science	1	1	1	1		1							5	5
	English language development and support for English learners	1			1	1	1							4	4
	Reading/Literacy	2	1	1										4	3
	SAT preparation						1							1	1
	Social Services and Community Development	Visual and performing arts	7	3	1	4	2	1			10			28	7
	Recreation activities	8	3	1			2			1			15	5	
	Receive mentoring	4	1	1		1	2		1	3			13	7	
	Cultural enrichment	5					1			2			8	3	
	Provide mentoring/tutoring to younger students	1	2	1	1	2							7	5	
	Community service					1							1	1	
	Parent programs					1							1	1	
Vocational Development	Career and technical education	4	1	1			2			4			12	5	
	Computer and technology access and skill development	2	1	1	1	1	2			3			11	7	
	Job skill development and job readiness	3		1			1		1	2			8	5	
Health and Safety	Physical fitness	2	3		1	3	4			2			15	6	
	Counseling												1	1	
	Nutrition education		1										1	1	
	School health services	1											1	1	

Note: Some individual activities were cross-listed under more than one activity category. Because of this, the number of activities listed in different activity categories will not add up to the total number of activities for each school presented in Table 8.

Source: Data provided by ASSETs Program grantees in the *ASSETs Program Evaluation Guidebook, 2003-04*

* Information was not available for Sweetwater Union High School District.

Appendix C
Guidebook for Evaluation, 2003-04

21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program

Cohort 1

Guidebook for Evaluation, 2003-04

Draft 3.05 pending CDE review, approval, and field test

Prepared by WestEd under State Contract No. 3353:

California Department of Education

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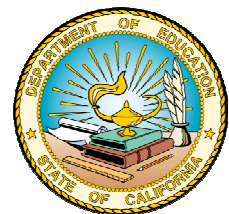
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INTRODUCTION

The California Legislature established the 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program (*California Education Code* sections 8420-8428, Statutes of 2002). The ASSETs Program seeks to “create incentives for establishing locally driven after school enrichment programs that partner schools and communities to provide academic support and safe, constructive alternatives for high school pupils in the hours after the regular school day” (*California Education Code*, section 8421). The California Department of Education (CDE) awarded grants to its first cohort of high school after school projects during the fiscal year 2002-03.

Projects funded by the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program are required to submit annual evaluations to CDE. This document identifies the information that CDE requests Cohort 1 projects to submit as their evaluation for the 2003-04 project year. The time period for this report is all of the 2003-04 school year as well as the summer months of 2004. Projects are asked to provide information about ASSETs program implementation, participants, partners, and the level to which the project is working toward the goals set forth in its original application for ASSETs funding. We anticipate that preparing the evaluation will help evaluators and project staff reflect on their past year’s experience and aid in planning for the future.

The evaluation of the first cohort of ASSETs grantees is intended to accomplish a number of things including the following:

- Gather baseline data from Cohort 1;
- Gather data indicating a project’s status at the end of the 2003-04 school year;
- Stimulate thinking that supports the operation of strong programs;
- Gather information about areas that are related to promising practices for high school after school programs;

- Learn about data capacity of the involved schools and districts and how they use data to support after school programs;
- Lay groundwork for answering the following key questions about the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program:
 1. What is the impact of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program on participating schools, and what benefits do participating students receive?
 2. To what extent do ASSETs projects address and integrate a youth development approach within the program design and implementation?
 3. What factors contribute the effectiveness of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program as measured in relation to Questions 1 and 2?
 4. What unintended consequences have resulted from the implementation of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program?

In order to reduce the burden of data collection, grantees are asked to provide data that projects and schools already collect or have collected for state and federal accountability reports.

Outline of Report Requested From Cohort 1 Grantees

This evaluation of the first full year of implementation for Cohort 1 of the ASSETs Program seeks comprehensive information about each grantee. The requested data includes the following:

- Information on participants including demographic data, attendance information, academic achievement data, and data on student behavior;
- Project data including assessed needs, project goals, activities;
- How the ASSETs project is linked to the regular school programs of students;

- Program staffing and administration;
- Professional development;
- The project's family literacy component;
- Impacts on institutional capacity;
- Youth involvement;
- The project's advisory group;
- Project sustainability after ASSETs funding; and
- Collaboration among schools and community organizations.

A. STUDENT DATA

Please provide demographic, student achievement, and participation data about the students who participated in time beyond the regular school day that was funded by the ASSETS Program. Data about individual students should be submitted electronically to CDE in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. These data include demographic information, the number of days the student attended ASSETs project activities, achievement data, and behavioral information. Include all of the participants. Figure 1 is an example of the spreadsheet. Please refer to Appendix A for further information on the structure of the Excel file and how to submit it to CDE.

Other information about your project may be submitted using table formats included in this document and narratives where you are able to provide more complete information about your ASSETs project. The research and student assessment office of your school district will be able to assist you.

Student Demographic Data

We are requesting the following demographic data be provided for each student who participated in your ASSETs-funded project during the 2003-04 school year.

Figure 1
Layout of Spreadsheet for Student Data

		DEMOGRAPHICS				PARTICIPATION		ACHIEVEMENT						BEHAVIOR			
Student ID	School	Gender	Ethnicity	Grade	ELL	SPED	Days Attending Program	Summer, Holidays, School Breaks, or Inter-sessions	CST LA Spr 2003	CST LA Spr 2004	CST MA Spr 2003	CST MA Spr 2004	CAHSEE LA 2004	CAHSEE MA 2004	Absences from School Day	Times Suspended 2002-03	Times Suspended 2003-04
12345678	Adams	M	B	10	N	N	23	Y	FBB	B	BB	B	NP	P	10	0	1
90123456	Adams	F	B	9	N	N	42	N	B	B	P	P	P	P	5	0	0

- Student ID number;
- Gender;
- Ethnicity;
- Students' grade level (grade 9, 10, 11, 12);
- Participation in special education; and
- English language proficiency.

Data on Level of Participation

Please report the number of days each student participated in the ASSETs-funded project during the 2003-04 school year, including all summer activities of 2004, if applicable. If the student participated in summer activities that were a part of the local ASSETs project or project activities that occurred during school breaks, holidays, or inter-sessions, please indicate this by placing a 'Y' in the appropriate field of the Excel spreadsheet.

Achievement-related Data

Please provide the following achievement data for each 2003-04 participant:

- Performance level scores from the California Standards Tests (CSTs) identified as Advanced (A), Proficient (P), Basic (B), Below Basic (BB), and Far Below Basic (FBB).
 - English Language Arts proficiency level in Spring 2003
 - English Language Arts proficiency level in Spring 2004
 - Mathematics test in Spring 2003
 - Mathematics proficiency level in Spring 2003
 - Mathematics test in Spring 2004
 - Mathematics proficiency level in Spring 2004
- Performance on CAHSEE in 2004 (when applicable), identifying scores as Pass (P) or No Pass (NP).

Data on Student Behavior

Please provide the following data about participation in the regular school day for each student who participated in the ASSETs project during the 2003-04 school year:

- Number of days absent from school;
- Number of times suspended, 2002-03 school year; and
- Number of times suspended, 2003-04 school year.

B. PROGRAM DATA

Program planning and development requires knowledge of a project's current capacity. By identifying areas of strengths and challenges, projects can address future planning stages. As a result, projects are to report on their key objectives, providing information about the following:

- Assessed needs as described in the original proposal submitted to CDE in response to the Request for Applications to CDE;
- Original project goals as stated in the original proposal submitted to CDE;
- Goals of project as of the beginning of the 2003-04 school year;
- An indication of why project goals have changed from the original grant proposal;
- Activities being implemented to achieve current ASSETs project goals;
- How current activities are aligned with each of the following:
 - Single Plan for Student Achievement from each of the high schools involved with your ASSETs project;
 - California's academic content standards; and

- Positive youth development settings (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002).
- Documented progress in 2003-04 toward achieving stated goals. Where possible, please refer to measurable outcomes.

As appropriate, alignment to content standards and California's curriculum frameworks may include the use of specific instructional materials approved for use by the California State Board of Education textbook adoption process, the SBE review process for supplemental electronic learning resources (California Learning Resources Network), or standards-aligned instructional materials reviewed and approved by the school district for use for specific grades and curricular areas.

Suggested Reporting Format

We are providing three different tables that you may use to report about your project.

→ Use Table 1 to identify your project's initial assessed needs, the project's goals at the time its grant proposal was submitted to CDE (fall 2002), and the adjusted project goals as of the beginning of the 2003-04 school year. We are making this distinction because Cohort 1 grants were awarded before the California Legislature formalized the ASSETs Program. Since then, grantees have been incorporating aspects of the 21st Century High School ASSETs Program spelled out in California *Education Code* (sections 84820-8428) into their ASSETs projects, including linking activities to program components described in the Education Code and the features of positive development settings for youth summarized by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002).

Table 1
Needs and Goals

Assessed Needs	Goal as identified in Proposal to CDE	How goal changed for the 2003-04 school year
<i>Example Low student performance on state math assessment</i>	<i>To increase student math performance</i>	<i>At least 40% of students participating in Math Masters will perform at standard on standards-aligned classroom tests.</i>
Goal 1.		
Goal 2.		
Goal 3.		

Add additional lines as needed

→ Table 2 shows the format to follow for providing information about the general activities for each goal the project is implementing. Please provide relevant information about how an activity is linked to the school’s Single Plan for Student Achievement, academic content standards, and youth development principles.

Note: Please provide the information requested in Table 2 for each of the goals you have listed in Table 1, providing a table for each goal. Table 2a will provide information about what you have listed as Goal 1 in Table 1; Table 2b will provide information about what you have listed as Goal 2 in Table 1, and so forth.

Table 2
Goals and Activities in 2003-04

<i>Goal 1: (from column 3 of Table 1) At least 40% of students participating in Math Masters will perform at standard on standards-aligned classroom tests.</i>
Activities to achieve goal:
Link to Single Plan for Student Achievement
Link to academic content standards:
Link to positive youth development settings:

→ Use Table 3 to indicate the progress that the project made during the 2003-04 school year on the project's key goals. Where possible, indicate how you have measured your progress, using data from standards-aligned assessments where appropriate.

Table 3

Progress in 2003-04 toward key goals

Goal	Progress during 2003-04 school year
<i>Example</i> To increase student math performance	The project made strides towards this goal. Regular student attendees, who participated in programs such as Math Masters, indicated they performed better on classroom tests and district assessments. 70% of participants performed at standard on standards-aligned classroom tests.
1.	
2.	

Add additional lines as needed

C. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Table 2 asked for general information about your project activities. At this point, we would like you to provide more specific information about these activities. Furthermore, we would like you to distinguish between ongoing activities that occur once or several times a week for a period of weeks (*Regular Activities*) and activities that do not occur so regularly, perhaps just once or twice during a semester.

Please use Table 4 to provide the following information about your regular, ongoing activities for the 2003-04 project year:

- The name of the activity;
- The category of activity (categories are listed in Appendix B on page 22);
- The number of hours the activity was offered in a typical week;
- The total number of weeks that the activity was offered;

- Whether the activity was offered before school, after school, or on the weekend;
- Whether the activity occurred during the summer 2003 or earlier; the fall semester 2003, the winter/spring semester 2004, summer 2004, during a holiday or an intersession, or a combination of these;
- The typical ratio of staff to students at the activity;
- Who participated in the activity—students, parents, and/or families; and
- The approximate average daily attendance at the activity.

If you cannot find an appropriate category for an activity in Appendix B, please suggest a category for the activity and provide enough information about it so someone can understand which activities would be included in the category. Add rows to the table as you need to do so.

Definitions

Activity: This is the name of your activity.

Activity Code: Using the table in Appendix B (page 22), please enter the activity code or codes that best describe the activity. Since there will be activities that fit in several categories, you may need to provide more than one activity code for an activity. Please use all of the categories needed to for the activity. If you cannot find an appropriate code for an activity, please suggest a category for the activity and provide enough information about it so someone can understand which activities would be included in the category.

Number of Hours Offered During a Typical Week: Please report the total number of hours this activity operated in a typical week.

Total Number of Weeks Offered: Write the number of weeks your program operated this activity.

Time Activity Offered: Please indicate whether the activity took place before school, after school, on the weekend, during an intersession, during a holiday, or during the summer. An activity may occur multiple times (see example in Table 5).

When Activity Offered: Please indicate whether the activity took place in the summer 2003 or before (categorize these as summer 2003), the fall 2003

semester, the winter/spring 2004 semester, and/or summer 2004. An activity may have been offered multiple times during the year (see example in Table 5).

Staffing Ratio: Please describe the adult to student staffing ratio for the activity.

Who Attended: While most of your activities are targeted to students, your project may offer activities that involve students, their parents, and their families. Please indicate who participated the activity.

Average Daily Attendance: Each regular activity occurs many times. What is the approximate average daily attendance for the activity?

Table 4
Regular activities for 2003-04 school year and Summer 2004

Activity	Description of Activity							Participation in Activity	
	Activity Code(s)	Number of Hours Offered in a Typical Week?	Total Number of Weeks Offered	Time Activity Offered	When Activity Offered	Staffing Level	Who Attended	Average Daily Attendance	
KEY	(See Appendix B)			After = A Before = B Weekend = W	Summer 2003=S03 Fall = F Spring = S Summer 2004 = S04 Intercession = I Holiday=H	One-on-one or 1:1 = 1 Small group of 1:2-7 = S Medium group of 1:8-20 = M Large Group of over 1:20 = L	Students=S Parents=P Families=F	1-10 = A 11-20 = B 21-30 = C Over 30 = D	
<u>Example</u> Tutoring for individual skill development	T, J, N, R	5	11	A, W	F, S	M	S	C	
<u>Example</u> Homework assistance for coursework	H, J, N, R	5	30	A	F, S	S	S	B	

Add additional lines as needed

Please use Table 5 to provide information about your project activities that occur infrequently or just once or twice.

Table 5
Infrequent Programs or Activities for 2003-04 school year and Summer 2004

Activity	Description of Activity				Participation in Activity	
	Activity Code(s)	Number of Times Offered	When Offered	Sponsoring Organization	Who Attended	Approximate Number Attending
			Before = A During = B After = C Weekend = W		Students = S Parents = P Families = F	
<i>Example</i> <i>College Counseling Day</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>California State University</i>	<i>S, P</i>	<i>85</i>

Add additional lines as needed

D. LINKS TO REGULAR SCHOOL PROGRAM

One of the primary objectives of the ASSETs program is to foster improved academic achievement. Research has indicated that linking the academic assistance that students receive after school to their regular school program is an important ingredient of program success. There are a number of ways to create such linkages including planning interventions with input from students' school day teachers, written communications with school staffs, holding staff meetings that include both regular school day and after school teachers, and having regular school teachers offer activities that are a part of the after school program, to name a few.

Please provide information about how your ASSETs project is linked to the regular school program, typing the information into Table 6. Areas you might consider addressing include the following:

Table 6

Discussion of links between ASSETs project and regular school program

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Add additional lines as needed

- How information about a student's academic needs is communicated between the regular school and after school programs;
- The ways that principals, school day teachers, and other school staff are involved with the project and contribute to strengthening services for students;
- The number of regular school teachers involved in the project and strategies the project is using to build their support and participation;
- Ways that project staff communicate with school day teachers; and
- The challenges, if any, your project has faced creating linkages between your ASSETs-funded project and the regular school program. How have you addressed these challenges? How have your strategies changed over time? How successful have these efforts been?

E. PROGRAM STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

This section gathers information about the people providing services as part of your ASSETs project. Table 7 asks projects to list the number of involved staff members, whether paid by the project or a partner agency, or volunteer. Please list the number of people in the category and line most appropriate to their role and function in your project.

Table 7
Characteristics of ASSETs project staff

Type of Staff Member	School Year		Summer	
	Paid	Volunteer	Paid	Volunteer
<i>Example</i> School-day teachers (include former and substitute teachers)	4	2	2	0
School-day teachers (include former and substitute teachers)				
Other non-teaching school staff (library staff, guidance counselors, aides, etc.)				
College students				
High school students				
Parents				
Youth development workers				
Other community members (business mentors, senior citizens, clergy)				
Other (please specify)				
TOTAL				

F. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing, high quality professional development is a key component to developing a strong and sustained project. Staff development may include an assessment of the strengths and needs of all service providers and the delivery of aligned training.

Using Table 8, please list the professional development/orientation activities your project provided to staff or volunteers during the 2003-04 project year. These activities could be provided by: (a) your lead educational agency, (b) a school, (c) a partner agency, (d) a regional or state agency, (e) the ASSETs Learning Community or (f) other agencies recommended by CDE.

Table 8
Professional Development

Activity	Sponsoring Agency (see above)	Objective of Activity and Target Group	Number of Hours the Average Participant Was Involved and Total Number of Participants
<i>Example</i> <i>Engaging Students in Learning</i>	<i>Central School District Office</i>	<i>To help tutors develop ways to keep students engaged in learning</i>	<i>3 hours; 7 participants</i>
1.			
2.			

Add additional lines as needed

G. FAMILY LITERACY COMPONENT

Please describe your project's family literacy component. Include information about the activities included in the component during the 2003-04 project year, the approximate number of participants, and how regularly activities occurred. What have you learned as a result of your experiences during the year? What changes have you made based on your experiences? Please enter your discussion in Table 9.

Table 9
Discussion of the ASSETs project's family literacy component

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H. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

The 21st Century Community Learning Center program offers an opportunity to provide services that support high school students in a number of

ways. These programs also enable grant recipients to develop new approaches to working with these students.

Please discuss how your ASSETs grant is helping to develop the ability of collaborating schools and community organizations to implement approaches and systems that help youth grow academically, developmentally, and in other areas such as the arts, recreation, leadership, and careers. Also, consider how your grant helps the participating organizations and work with parents and provide services that meet family literacy needs. Please enter your discussion in Table 10.

Table 10

Discussion of the ASSETs project and its impact on institutional capacity

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Add additional lines as needed

I. YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Developmentally, high school students are different from students who attend elementary and middle schools. Youth who are enrolled in grades 9 to 12 have interests, responsibilities, and needs that are often dissimilar to those of younger students. The ASSETs program recognizes that high school youth are able to be involved with projects in multiple ways. While these students benefit from participating in academic and cultural enrichment activities, they may also contribute substantially to a project and derive additional benefits by taking leadership roles in planning, managing, and evaluating their after school projects.

Table 11

Discussion of youth involvement in the ASSETs project

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Please describe in Table 11 how youth are involved in leadership roles within your ASSETs project. How did their involvement proceed during the past year? Questions you may wish to consider include the following:

- Are they a part of an advisory group?

- How does your project incorporate youth voices into its operations?

J. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The National Research Council has recommended that community programs for youth be based on a developmental framework that supports the acquisition of personal and social assets (physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social development) in an environment and through activities that promote both current adolescent well being and future successful transitions to adulthood. Please use Table 12 to document the ways in which your program is promoting positive youth development.

Table 12
Features of Youth Development

Setting Features	Please describe relevant examples of how your ASSETs project has embedded these features to foster positive youth development.
Physical and Psychological Safety	
Appropriate Structure	
Supportive Relationships	
Opportunities to Belong	
Positive Social Norms	
Support for Efficacy and Mattering	
Opportunities for Skill Building	
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	

K. ADVISORY GROUP

Does your ASSETs project have an advisory group that provides input into your project? How large is this group? Who are members of the group, for instance, project staff, school principals, representatives from collaborating agencies, students, parents, and teachers? How regularly does the advisory group meet? What were the advisory group's major accomplishments during the 2003-04 school year? How have the advisory

Table 13

Discussion of the ASSETs project's advisory group

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Add additional lines as needed

group and its role with your ASSETs project changed during the past year? Please enter your discussion in Table 13.

L. SUSTAINABILITY

The 21st Century High School ASSETs Program may provide up to five, one-year grants for those projects that demonstrate they are progressing well. Projects are to identify ways to sustain their programs after this funding period. We recognize that launching your project was probably your primary focus during the 2003-04 school year. If relevant, please discuss how, during the 2003-04 project year, you addressed sustaining your activities after the five-year grant period. If you did not address this issue, how will you be approaching it during the 2004-05? Please enter your discussion in Table 14.

Table 14

Discussion of sustainability issues

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M. COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

In the section below, please list each agency that your program listed as a partner in the original proposal and their current role in your collaborative. Their roles may include the following: planning/designing the program; delivery of services; sharing and contributing resources; involvement in program management or oversight; and working on sustainability beyond the grant period.

Please use Table 15 to provide information about the collaborating groups involved with your ASSETs project during the 2003-04 project year. Provide information about each agency including its name, its anticipated role in your project, its actual role, the agency type, including a community-based organization, corporate agency, regional agency, state agency, national agency, or other and an estimate of the number of hours the agency was involved with the ASSETs project during 2003-04.

Table 15
Collaborating Partners

Partner Agency	Agency Type	Proposed Role in Collaborative	Actual Role in Collaborative	Total Number of Hours Contributed
		KEY Program planning and design = A Delivery of services=B Sharing/contributing resources=C Management/oversight=D Sustainability=E Other=F		
<i>Example</i> California City College	<i>State agency</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Example</i> Women's Crisis Center	<i>Non-profit</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>55</i>
1.				
2.				

N. EVALUATION NARRATIVE

Please provide additional information you feel is important about your ASSETS project for 2003-04 that was not covered in the previous sections of this report. Areas that projects may wish to consider include the following:

- Information about the launch of the project and any challenges encountered;
- Data about student academic achievement and behaviors, how your project used that data to target activities, and any shifts you made in your programming as a result of this data; and
- Results from surveys and focus groups conducted with project staff, students, parents, collaborating agencies, and other involved stakeholders.

One approach to this section could be to discuss your findings in terms of lessons learned about your program in the last year. Please enter your discussion in Table 16.

Table 16
Evaluation Narrative

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Add additional lines as needed

APPENDIX A

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING
STUDENT DATA**

Instructions for completing the spreadsheet on student data – SECTION A

You are being asked to provide demographic, achievement, participation, and behavior data about the students who have been a part of your ASSETs project. Please submit your individual participant data using the record layout specified on the following page.

Student ID

Use a unique student identifier. The identifier should stay with a student during the entire time in the ASSETs project and not be duplicated for another student. **Do not use the student's name!**

School

Please enter the name of the school the student attends.

Legend for entering demographic data

Only enter one response per category.

Gender - Please use the following codes:

- **M** for Male or
- **F** for Female.

Ethnicity - Please use the following codes:

- AA = African-American (Not of Hispanic Origin),
- AI = American Indian/Alaska Native,
- AS = Asian,
- HS = Hispanic,
- PI = Pacific Islander,
- WH = White, or
- OT = Other

Grade in School - Please use the following codes:

- **9, 10, 11, or 12** for each student's grade level.

English Language Learner - Please use the following codes:

- Enter **Y** for Yes or
- Enter **N** or leave blank for No

Special Education (SPED) – Please use the following codes:

- Enter **Y** for Yes if student participates in special education or
- Enter **N** or leave blank for No

Free or Reduced price lunch or other information source suggesting student is from a low-income family - Please use the following codes:

- Enter **Y** for Yes or
- Enter **N** or leave blank for No

Data on Level of Participation

Enter the number of days each student attended the program.

Summer Participant

- **Y** = Yes if student was involved in ASSETs during the summer.
- **N** or leave blank = No

CST Mathematics Tests

Please use the following codes to indicate which of CST in Mathematics the student took in Spring 2003 and in Spring 2004. A student may not have taken the same test each year. Report the test that the student did take.

- **A1** = Algebra 1
- **A2** = Algebra 2
- **G** = Geometry
- **GM** = General Mathematics
- **IM1** = Integrated Math 1
- **IM2** = Integrated Math 2
- **SM** = Summative High School Mathematics

Participant Achievement-related data

Using the California Standards Test (CST) results for Language Arts and Mathematics, enter each student's proficiency level for Spring 2003 and Spring 2004. Responses may include:

- **A** = Advanced:
- **P** = Proficient,
- **B** = Basic,
- **BB** = Below Basic, or
- **FBB** = Far Below Basic.

Using the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) results for Language Arts and Mathematics, enter each student's performance (if applicable). Responses may include:

- **P** = Pass or
- **N** = No Pass.

Data on Participant Behavior

Absences from School Day: Enter the number of days student was absent from school.

Times Suspended: Enter the both of the following:

- The number of times the student was suspended for 2002-2003. If the student was not suspended any time, you may leave this column blank.
- The number of times the student was suspended for 2003-2004. If the student was not suspended any time, you may leave this column blank.

DEMOGRAPHICS		PARTICIPATION		ACHIEVEMENT						BEHAVIOR							
Student ID	School	Gender	Ethnicity	Grade	ELL	SPED	Days Attending Program	Summer, Holidays, School Breaks, or Inter-sessions	CST LA Spr 2003	CST L/A Spr 2004	CST MA Spr 2003	CST MA Spr 2004	CAHSEE L/A 2004	CAHSEE MA 2004	Absences from School Day	Times Suspended 2002-03	Time Suspended 2003-04
12345678	Adams	M	B	10	N	N	23	Y	FBB	B	BB	B	NP	P	10	0	1
90123456	Adams	F	B	9	N	N	42	N	B	B	P	P	P	P	5	0	0

APPENDIX B

**CODES FOR ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES
OF ASSETS GRANTEES**

Codes for Activities and Services of ASSETs Grantees

CAHSEE Preparation	A
Career and technical education	B
College Preparation, research, application	C
Computer and technology access and skill development	D
Counseling	E
Drug/violence prevention	F
English language development and support for English Language Learners	G
Homework assistance for coursework	H
Job skill development and job readiness	I
Mathematics	J
Mentoring opportunities	K
Nutrition education	L
Physical fitness	M
Reading/Literacy	N
Recreation activities	O
School health services	P
School safety	Q
Science	R
Snack (nutritional)	S
Tutoring for individual skill development	T
Tutoring younger students	U
Visual and performing arts	V
Other activity (add activities as needed) and <u>describe</u>	OTHER