ATTACHMENT B

CALIFORNIA

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Supporting Continuous Program Improvement
for Quality After-School Programs

Developed August 2007–September 2009

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CALIFORNIA

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Where the QSA Tool Comes From

The California Afterschool Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool (QSA Tool) is a collaborative project of the California Afterschool Network and the California Department of Education (CDE). Network Staff engaged the CDE, Regional Leads, The California After School Demonstration Program (CASDP), California Tomorrow, The Alliance for a Better Community, The Center for Afterschool Education, The Network Quality Committee, The Network Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee, ASAP Connect, after school providers, QSA Tool Implementation Pilot Sites, and national experts in the revision of the Tool.

What the QSA Tool is for

- Engaging key stakeholders in meaningful conversations about program quality and continuous program improvement.
- Generating an Action Plan that identifies the immediate, mid-range, and long-term professional development and technical support needed to enhance program quality.
- This tool is not intended for use as an external evaluation tool. It is appropriate for self-assessment purposes only.

Programs must decide how best to use the QSA Tool

The Tool is a comprehensive look at many areas of program quality. Programs will utilize the tool in different ways depending on time available and the developmental stage of the program. **There is no one right way to use the QSA Tool!**

The QSA Tool can be used in many ways, such as:

- Reviewing single sections of the QSA Tool during staff meetings to inform program planning and professional development.
- Using the several sections of the QSA Tool as a staff survey to assess multiple dimensions of program quality.
- **State-funded after school programs cannot overlook grant compliance requirements.** For more information, visit the *California Department of Education After School Programs Office* web site at www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ba
- The *User's Guide* includes extensive guidance about implementing the QSA Tool. Please review it prior to distributing the QSA Tool to program staff and stakeholders.

What's inside the QSA Tool: Eleven Program Quality Elements

The QSA Tool is organized into eleven program quality elements.

Quality Element
Section 1: Program Design & Assessment
Section 2: Program Administration & Finance
Section 3: Community Partnerships & Collaboration
Section 4: Alignment & Linkages with the School Day
Section 5: Program Environment & Safety
Section 6: Youth Development
Section 7: Staff Recruitment & Professional Development
Section 8: Family Involvement
Section 9: Nutrition & Physical Activity
Section 10: Promoting Diversity, Access, Equity, & Inclusion
Section 11: Effectively Supporting English Learners

Scoring the QSA Tool

The QSA Tool uses the following rating system to assess the degree to which each quality indicator is evident in the program.

Level 1: Our program is just beginning to work in this area and has an urgent need to address this practice. Our program can be much better at this than we are currently.

Level 2: Our program has done some work in this area but will need targeted support to move to the next level. Our program is making progress, but can improve further.

Level 3: Our program has achieved a high level of proficiency in this area and needs only a little additional work to be exceptionally proficient. Our program is very good at this practice.

Level 4: Our program is exceptionally proficient in this practice and can demonstrate this in observable ways. This is an area of quality practice where our program can serve as an example for others.

Don't Know: I am not familiar enough with this aspect of the program to rate performance on this indicator or am just not sure how to rate it at this time.

After school programs should strive to meet Level 3 or 4 for each indicator to demonstrate overall program quality. Assistance and support should be sought for areas scoring as Level 1 or Level 2.

Using the QSA Tool for Program Planning & Professional Development

When developing an action plan based on the QSA Tool ratings, after school programs should consider the following:

What is the current Performance Level in our program?
Practices that receive a 1 or 2 rating will likely need to be addressed in the short-term. Practices that receive a 3 rating will likely need additional attention within the current school/fiscal year and practices that are rated as a 4 should be sustained.

How urgent is the need to address the practice?
Practices that have a direct impact on participants' health and safety or that are closely linked to program goals should take priority in the action plan.

Each program quality element includes a section at the end to record thoughts about planned next steps and technical assistance needs. The *User's Guide* includes suggestions for programs to develop an action plan based on results of the self-assessment.

For more detailed information on how to use the QSA Tool, please see the *California After School Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool User's Guide*.

SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESIGN & ASSESSMENT

Quality after school programs are intentionally designed to achieve clearly defined and measurable goals. Quality after school programs conduct continuous improvement and outcome evaluations, using strong research-based designs, to determine the level of achievement of program goals and objectives and to determine overall program effectiveness.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
Vision and Planning			
1	There is a clearly defined, well understood vision and mission in operation that has been agreed upon by our staff and stakeholders.		
2	Program activities support the vision and mission.		
3	Activities are well defined, hands-on, and student-centered and incorporate and combine academics, youth development, and recreation.		
Attendance			
4	Activities are attended at capacity.		
Evaluation and Assessment			
5	Evaluation and assessment activities are guided by clearly defined, measurable, goals that are linked to participant and community needs.		
6	A qualified staff person or consultant conducts regular self-assessments and outcome evaluations using strong research design.		
7	Staff who are responsible for collecting data are trained to ensure effective collection of quality data.		
8	Program leadership uses assessment and evaluation data to continuously review and refine program activities, policies, staffing, and professional development.		
9	Key stakeholders receive accessible assessment and evaluation results in a timely manner (i.e., shortly after the information is available to the program).		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

Level 1: Just beginning; **Level 2:** Done some work; **Level 3:** High level of proficiency; **Level 4:** Exceptionally proficient; **DK:** Don't Know

SECTION 2: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

A quality program has an effective management and fiscal structure that develops and implements policies, procedures, and practices to ensure the successful operation of the after school program based on the program goals, vision, and design. Programs that receive state or federal funds should take care that they do not supplant any other sources of support.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
Administration			
1	Staff recruitment, hiring, and retention policies and practices are well defined and support our program goals.		
2	Leaders at the district or organization level have a working knowledge of the program's funding sources and associated reporting requirements.		
3	Activities meet funder-mandated content standards and hours of operation.		
4	All required attendance, evaluation and expenditure reports are accurate and submitted on time.		
5	There is clear evidence that the program adheres to local, state, and federal fiscal, accounting, recordkeeping and audit requirements, including keeping records for five years (ASES & 21st CCLC).		
Finance			
6	Annual site and organizational budgets assure that resources are allocated to meet organizational goals and objectives.		
7	A sufficient proportion of funds are allocated for direct services (85% for ASES and 21st CCLC).		
8	Site coordinators have timely access to resources and are able to allocate resources to meet site-specific needs.		
9	Expenditures and cash flow are monitored continually and immediate action is taken to address potential problems.		
10	Leaders at the district or organization level actively pursue new sources of funding and in-kind resources.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

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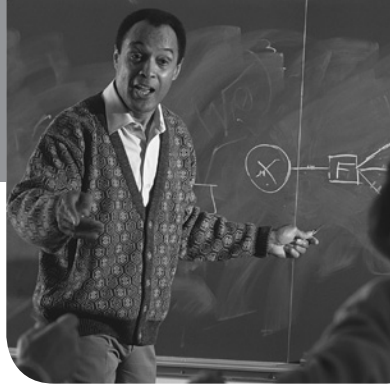
SECTION 3: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

A quality program develops, maintains, and strengthens school-community collaborations that engage diverse community members, school staff (where applicable), business leaders, and community-based organizations in the development, implementation, and support of after school programs. Strong collaborative groups are characterized by open, respectful relationships among partners who share a common vision for their shared work.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	Program staff and leadership collaborate with partners to meet the diverse goals of our program, such as fundraising, administrative support, inclusion of children with special needs or disabilities, and expanding activity options for youth and families.		
2	Collaborative partners' roles and expectations are clearly defined through Memoranda of Understanding or other documents.		
3	Collaborative partners have regular opportunity to provide feedback about the program.		
4	Leadership and collaborative partners establish policies and procedures that provide clear governance and regular meetings to ensure effective engagement of partners.		
5	Staff provide partners and stakeholders with regular updates about program events, activities, and achievements in a variety of formats and in multiple languages, as needed, such as through a program website, newsletters, flyers, and emails.		
6	The collaborative supports long-term sustainability through joint fundraising and in-kind contributions of services and materials.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

Level 1: Just beginning; **Level 2:** Done some work; **Level 3:** High level of proficiency; **Level 4:** Exceptionally proficient; **DK:** Don't Know



SECTION 4: ALIGNMENT & LINKAGES WITH THE SCHOOL DAY

A quality program supports, complements, and expands the school day through intentionally designed enrichment activities and student-centered academic assistance. School-based after school programs and programs with a purposeful focus on youth's academic development are especially likely to benefit from communication with the host school. Note: After school programs that receive CDE funding are required to collaborate and coordinate with the regular school day program.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	Staff are aware of the ways in which academically-oriented activities in after school support participants' school success and help to address the achievement gap.		
2	Staff communicate frequently with administrators and faculty to ensure alignment of program activities to the host school's learning goals and curricula.		
3	Staff seek input from school day teachers and from administrators on the impact of after school programming for participants.		
4	Staff participate in school committees (e.g., School Site Council, School Wellness Committee, meetings to develop Individualized Education Plans) and the program is included in the Single School Plan for Student Achievement and School Wellness Policy.		
5	Staff and participants have access to sufficient indoor and outdoor space, including classrooms, library, computer labs, gym, fields, kitchen, and storage that can be locked when needed.		
6	Staff use information about participants' academic and behavioral progress in school to tailor activities (e.g. assessment results, attendance, language fluency, needed accommodations, grades, and homework completion rates).		
7	Youth who need intensive academic support work with trained staff members individually or in small groups.		
8	Academic activities build on or complement school day curricula and are clearly linked to state content standards.		
9	Academic activities are engaging and build on youths' interests and individual learning styles.		
10	Academic activities incorporate a variety of age-appropriate instructional strategies to help youth build and master key academic skills and content.		
11	Participants have enough time to make substantial progress on their homework (where applicable).		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

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SECTION 5: PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT & SAFETY

A quality program provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment for all youth. It ensures that young people are physically and emotionally secure, respected and accepted for who they are.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
Physical Environment			
1	Youth use equipment and space that is clean, well maintained and safe.		
2	Youth receive a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks that meet California Education Code (where required) and participants' dietary needs.		
3	There is access to enough equipment, supplies, and space to carry out a variety of academic, social, nutritional, and physical activities to meet the needs of all youth.		
4	There are effective health and safety procedures in place, and these are known to staff, youth, and families.		
5	We have a comprehensive safety plan in place; school-based programs' plans are aligned with their host schools' safety plans.		
6	Staff are aware of participants' health and medical needs as appropriate, and adjust activities as needed.		
Social Environment			
7	Staff members address youth by name.		
8	Youth-to-staff ratios do not exceed 20:1 to encourage youth engagement and motivation.		
9	The emotional climate of the program is positive, characterized by mutually respectful, supportive, and relaxed interactions among staff and youth.		
10	Staff consistently intervene when youth or adults make hurtful or negative comments.		
11	There are clearly defined expectations for youth and staff conduct that are well known to staff, participants, and parents.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

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SECTION 6: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A quality program employs research-based youth development strategies that reflect a complementary, holistic approach that is built on youths' assets and promise rather than risk prevention and repairing deficits. Rather than a separate activity or strand of programming, youth development philosophy describes the manner in which programs do what they do – providing a set of guiding principles that can be incorporated into any kind of after school program or activity.

THIS ELEMENT IS DIVIDED INTO THREE SUB-SECTIONS:

Supportive Environment: A quality program develops, nurtures and maintains positive relationships and interactions and supports young people as they try new things.

Interaction: A quality program is structured to encourage participation and ownership by youth.

Engagement: A quality program provides participants with an opportunity to play a meaningful, active role in their program, so that youth can have input into decision-making, opportunities to take responsibility and demonstrate leadership.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
Supportive Environment			
1	Staff consistently strive to understand youths' interests, talents, life experiences, and developmental needs.		
2	Youth have the opportunity to try new skills with support from staff.		
3	Staff provide specific feedback to youth about positive behavior and accomplishments.		
4	Staff approach conflicts and negative behavior in a non-threatening way, approaching youth calmly and acknowledging youths' feelings while stopping hurtful or dangerous behavior.		
Interaction			
5	Youth and staff demonstrate a strong sense of ownership and belonging, such as by holding one another accountable to behavioral expectations and sharing program traditions.		
6	Activities are carried out in different groups, each one with a clear purpose.		

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7	Staff have high expectations for youth and support youth as they strive for excellence.		
8	Youth and staff share leadership of most activities: adults provide guidance and facilitation while youth have the opportunity to lead activities and to work independently or as part of a small group.		
Engagement			
9	Youth have age-appropriate opportunities to make choices, such as picking books to read, joining clubs or teams, or deciding on a project topic.		
10	Young people have structured opportunities to reflect on their goals and accomplishments.		
11	Youth have multiple opportunities to provide input into the structure and content of the program, such as through youth councils, informal conversations or surveys.		
12	Youth have the opportunity to participate in community service projects, such as neighborhood clean-ups, peer-to-peer tutoring, or community needs assessments.		

Action Plan	**Technical Assistance/Training Needed**

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SECTION 7: STAFF RECRUITMENT & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The quality of after school programs is directly related to training, and ongoing professional development for staff and volunteers that enhances their qualifications and motivation. High quality after school programs thoroughly orient new staff members, and provide ongoing career development opportunities for veteran staff. Note: In programs that receive CDE funds, all staff members who directly supervise pupils meet the minimum qualifications for an instructional aide, pursuant to the policies of the school district.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	Staff are recruited and hired based on their experience and interest in working with youth and their knowledge and skill in the program's content areas.		
2	We strive to recruit a diverse group of staff who reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, family, and community characteristics of participants.		
3	New staff are thoroughly oriented to the after school program, including policies and procedures that affect youth safety or are required by funders.		
4	Professional development opportunities are available in multiple formats, including workshops, observation, coaching, and peer-to-peer learning.		
5	Staff participate in ongoing professional development to address the unique characteristics of youth and families. Examples include working with English Learners, supporting students' academic success, discussing sensitive issues with parents, working with youth with special needs or disabilities, and culturally sensitive practice.		
6	Veteran staff have the opportunity for professional growth and development, such as by coaching other staff members, attending trainings and conferences, or representing the program in the community.		
7	Staff members participate in regular, performance-based, assessments of their work and have opportunities to build needed skills.		
Program Leadership			
8	Supervisors from the district or agency are available to meet with site level staff on a regular basis.		
9	Senior staff use shared leadership strategies to encourage ownership, accountability, collaboration, and learning among all staff.		
10	Staff are fairly compensated and publicly recognized for their achievements in order to support staff retention.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

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SECTION 8: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Quality after school programs regularly provide families with opportunities to get involved with the program, link parents and caregivers with resources in the community, and communicate with families in a variety of formats and in multiple languages, if necessary. School-based after school programs share information about events in the host school, capitalizing on their in-person contact with parents and caregivers.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	We host regular orientations so that parents and caregivers can learn about the program, meet the staff, and learn how after school programs can support their children's social and academic growth.		
2	Parents and caregivers are encouraged to visit the program to observe and participate in activities or to interact with youth and staff.		
3	Staff make an effort to learn the names of all parents and caregivers and to greet them personally.		
4	Staff make a regular effort to share positive information with parents and caregivers about their child through both written updates and conversations.		
5	Staff communicate constructive feedback about children with parents and caregivers in a respectful way and in a confidential setting.		
6	Parents and caregivers are encouraged to share their thoughts about the after school program, such as through informal conversations, focus groups, or surveys appropriate to the culture, language, and literacy level of parents and caregivers.		
7	We offer a variety of family events at different times of day and year, ranging from potlucks and celebrations to field trips.		
8	Parents and caregivers are supported and empowered to play an active role in supporting their children's education.		
9	Parents and caregivers have the opportunity to play leadership roles in the after school program, such as by serving on the collaborative committee, organizing special events, or volunteering at the program.		
10	Staff refer families to community resources such as summer camps, food pantries, adult education classes, counseling, local parks and family-friendly events.		

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SECTION 9: NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Quality after school programs create and sustain environments that promote healthy choices among youth and staff. They may do this by providing a variety of developmentally appropriate, research-based nutrition and physical activity education experiences that engage students in active and meaningful learning to master new and life-long behaviors.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
Food and Nutrition			
1	Healthy food is available for youth (including snacks, cooking classes, events).		
2	Safe drinking water is available to youth and staff at all times and youth are encouraged to drink water.		
3	Program staff model healthy eating habits for youth by consuming healthy food and drinks during program hours and encouraging youth to do the same.		
4	Youth have the opportunity to learn about healthy eating and positive food choices through activities such as cooking clubs, gardening, or visits to local grocery stores.		
Physical Activity			
5	Youth have the opportunity to engage in daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.		
6	Staff emphasize character-building components of physical activities (e.g., playing by the rules, treating opponents with respect, learning from mistakes).		
7	Physical activities are physically safe (e.g. activity rules and equipment help to assure that youth are at limited risk for injury, activities are adjusted for inclement weather).		
8	Physical activities are emotionally safe (e.g. teams are picked at random, youth are encouraged to do their best, varied activities appeal to youths' interests and skill levels).		
9	All staff members participate in physical activities to model an active lifestyle for youth participants.		

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SECTION 10: PROMOTING DIVERSITY, ACCESS, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Quality after school programs embrace and value diversity, and have a conscious commitment to helping all youth thrive by providing inclusive, accessible, responsive, and engaging services. Quality programs understand, value, and respect the myriad backgrounds and experiences of youth and their families. This commitment is reflected in program vision and leadership, and is woven throughout the program.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	The mission statement, outreach materials, and policies emphasize our commitment to serving all youth and families in the community.		
2	No one is turned away from the program because they cannot pay enrollment fees (where applicable).		
3	Information is available in parents' and caregivers' home languages (e.g. in the home languages of 15% or more parents and caregivers).		
4	When possible, participating youth represent the full diversity of the host school or neighborhood in terms of language fluency, gender, special needs or disability, family income, and race/ethnicity.		
5	Staff and leadership make reasonable accommodations to serve youth with learning differences, such as breaking activities into smaller parts, working in smaller groups, and providing extra time to complete tasks.		
6	Staff adapt activities to be accessible to English learners and encourage their active participation in the program.		
7	Youth have opportunities to explore, share, and celebrate their heritage and culture with others.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

Level 1: Just beginning; **Level 2:** Done some work; **Level 3:** High level of proficiency; **Level 4:** Exceptionally proficient; **DK:** Don't Know

SECTION 11: EFFECTIVELY SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

Quality after school programs embrace the significant and growing English Learner (EL) population in California and the nation. Quality programs understand the complexity and diversity of EL youth and work to be culturally responsive to them, while maintaining high expectations for all EL participants. They utilize current research-based effective strategies to both teach EL youth English and keep a connection with their home languages and cultures.

In our program:		Level 1-4, DK	Examples of this indicator in our program
1	Staff provide an environment and activities that encourage English Learners to practice oral English skills without fear of judgment or ridicule.		
2	Staff adapt activities to engage participants with different levels of English fluency. For example, through visual cues for very limited English speakers or opportunities for discussion for students who have a greater degree of English fluency.		
3	Staff use academic support strategies for English Learners, such as explaining common academic terms and providing content-based materials and instruction in participants' home languages.		
4	Staff and program leadership encourage participants to develop and sustain their home languages and cultures. For example, the program can encourage the use of home languages in the program and provide materials that represent participants' home cultures and languages.		
5	All adults in the program are committed to meeting the socio-emotional needs of English Learners, who come from varied backgrounds and familiarity with American norms and customs.		
6	English Learners and English-fluent students interact regularly, both in structured program activities and during free time, which promotes inclusion and strengthens participants' English development.		
7	Staff and leadership empower and encourage English Learners socially and academically. For example, programs may provide leadership opportunities for English Learners and acknowledge their academic and linguistic progress.		
8	Staff communicate with EL participants' teachers to learn about participants' language fluency, home language, and academic program in order to tailor after school activities.		
9	Staff communicate frequently with families about English Learners' needs and accomplishments.		

Action Plan	Technical Assistance/Training Needed

Level 1: Just beginning; **Level 2:** Done some work; **Level 3:** High level of proficiency; **Level 4:** Exceptionally proficient; **DK:** Don't Know