

# Willows Unified School District

## SPARK / ELOP Sustainable Investment Plan

### 2026-2027 School Year

#### Total Annual ELOP Allocation

\$1,400,000

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## Executive Summary

The Willows Unified School District Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (SPARK/ELOP) provides academic support, enrichment, leadership development, recreation, physical activity, and safe supervised opportunities for students in Transitional Kindergarten through Eighth Grade.

This proposal outlines a sustainable investment strategy designed to maximize student participation, expand enrichment opportunities, improve physical wellness, strengthen staffing structures, and develop facilities that support expanded learning opportunities for years to come.

The plan aligns with California Education Code, Expanded Learning Opportunities Program requirements, and the district's commitment to providing engaging, meaningful experiences that support the whole child.

The district's vision is to create a comprehensive system of expanded learning opportunities that allows every student to find an area of interest, develop new skills, build positive relationships, and become more connected to school and their community.

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## Student Impact

### Projected Annual Participation

Program Area	Estimated Students Served
After School SPARK Program	150+
Summer Camp Programs	150+
Athletics & Recreation Programs	150+
Enrichment Clubs	150+

Program Area	Estimated Students Served
Field Trips & Special Events	300+

Many students participate in multiple programs throughout the year, creating opportunities for sustained engagement and connection to school.

## Expanding Opportunities for Student Success

Willows Unified School District recognizes that students have diverse interests, talents, and needs. By expanding the variety of after-school, summer, enrichment, and recreation opportunities available through SPARK/ELOP, the district can engage students who may not traditionally participate in school activities.

Providing students with multiple options—including athletics, leadership programs, STEM activities, culinary experiences, arts programs, agriculture, outdoor learning, recreation, and career exploration—creates pathways for every student to find an activity that excites and motivates them.

As participation increases, students benefit from:

- Increased school connectedness
- Improved attendance and engagement
- Positive relationships with peers and staff
- Enhanced physical fitness and wellness
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Development of leadership and teamwork skills
- Improved social-emotional well-being
- Reduced behavioral concerns
- Greater interest in lifelong healthy activities

The district's goal is not simply to increase participation numbers, but to create meaningful opportunities that help students develop a positive mindset regarding school, their future, and their overall well-being.

By investing in a broad range of expanded learning opportunities, Willows Unified can ensure that more students are engaged, supported, physically active, and connected to their school community.

This approach aligns directly with the purpose of ELOP by providing safe, supervised, and enriching opportunities that support the whole child while preparing students for success in school and in life.

## Budget Overview

Category	Investment
Staffing & Program Leadership	\$700,000
Summer SPARK Camp	\$175,000

Category	Investment
Academic & Enrichment Clubs	\$100,000
Athletics & Recreation Programs	\$100,000
Multi-Use Recreation Facility	\$125,000
Athletic Fields Development	\$100,000
Transportation & Access	\$50,000
Facilities, Equipment & Infrastructure	\$50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,400,000</b>

# Priority 1

## Staffing & Program Leadership

**Investment: \$700,000**

The greatest predictor of program quality is qualified and dedicated staff.

Funding supports:

- Director of Community Schools/ELOP oversight
- ELOP Academic & Enrichment Coordinator (TOSA)
- Site Coordinators
- Activity Assistants
- Summer Camp Staff
- Substitute staffing
- Professional development
- CPR/First Aid certification
- Youth development training
- Curriculum planning and collaboration

### Expected Outcomes

- Increased program quality
- Consistent districtwide implementation
- Improved student supervision
- Better academic support
- Increased staff retention

# Priority 2

## Summer SPARK Camp Expansion

**Investment: \$175,000**

The Summer SPARK Camp has become one of the district's most successful expanded learning initiatives.

Programs may include:

- STEM Camps
- Cooking Camps
- Agriculture Camps
- Arts Camps
- Sports Camps
- Career Exploration Camps
- Leadership Camps

The Summer Camp model provides:

- Academic enrichment
- Physical activity
- Social-emotional development
- Nutrition support
- Safe summer supervision

### Expected Outcomes

- Reduced summer learning loss
  - Increased student engagement
  - Greater family participation
  - Expanded enrichment opportunities
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# Priority 3

## Academic Enrichment & Club Expansion

**Investment: \$100,000**

Expansion of opportunities including:

- Robotics
- Coding
- Art

- Music
- Culinary
- Gardening
- Agriculture
- Leadership
- STEM
- Outdoor Education

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased student participation
  - Exposure to future careers
  - Improved school connectedness
  - Development of leadership skills
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## **Priority 4**

### **Athletics & Recreation Initiative**

#### **Investment: \$100,000**

Willows Unified currently operates a highly successful wrestling program serving approximately 100 students in grades 1–8.

Additional recreation opportunities include:

- Wrestling
- Soccer
- Softball
- Track & Field
- Fitness and Conditioning

These programs directly support ELOP goals through:

- Physical activity
- Leadership development
- Teamwork
- Student engagement
- School connectedness

#### **Statement of Need**

Willows Intermediate School currently operates a successful after-school wrestling club serving approximately 100 students in grades 1–8 through Expanded Learning programming. Participation levels demonstrate a strong student and community need for structured after-school recreation and athletic opportunities.

## **Anticipated Outcomes**

- Increased student engagement
  - Improved attendance
  - Increased physical wellness
  - Development of leadership and teamwork skills
  - Stronger elementary-to-middle school connections
  - Increased family engagement
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# **Priority 5**

## **Multi-Use Expanded Learning Recreation Facility**

**Investment: \$125,000**

This project is not simply a wrestling room.

It is a Multi-Use Expanded Learning Recreation Facility designed to support a wide variety of expanded learning opportunities.

### **Facility Uses**

- Wrestling practice space
- Indoor recreation
- Fitness and conditioning
- ELOP club meeting space
- Leadership development activities
- Summer Camp programming
- Student wellness activities
- Youth development programming

### **Student Impact**

The facility will support:

- 100+ wrestling participants
- Recreation programs
- Summer Camp activities
- SPARK clubs and enrichment programs
- Year-round student engagement opportunities

### **Long-Term Benefit**

The facility creates a permanent student-centered space that promotes physical activity, leadership development, recreation, and expanded learning opportunities for years to come.

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## Priority 6

### Athletic Fields Development

**Investment: \$100,000**

Development and enhancement of outdoor recreation and athletic spaces.

Potential projects include:

#### Regulation Softball Field

- Improved playing surface
- Irrigation improvements
- Dugouts
- Safety fencing
- Spectator accommodations

#### Multi-Use Recreation Areas

- Soccer practice space
- Track and field training area
- Conditioning stations
- Open recreation areas

#### Justification

These improvements expand opportunities for students to participate in safe, supervised physical activities while supporting ELOP goals related to wellness, enrichment, and engagement.

Particular emphasis will be placed on expanding opportunities for female student participation through softball programming and creating additional recreation opportunities for all students.

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## Priority 7

### Transportation & Access

**Investment: \$50,000**

Transportation remains one of the largest barriers to participation for rural students.

Funding supports:

- Late buses
- Summer transportation
- Field trip transportation
- Community partnerships

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased participation
  - Improved equity
  - Expanded access
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## **Priority 8**

### **Facilities, Equipment & Program Infrastructure**

**Investment: \$50,000**

Allowable ELOP expenditures may include:

- Classroom use
- Gym use
- Pool use
- Utilities
- Custodial services
- Storage solutions
- Furniture
- Technology
- Shade structures
- Garden spaces
- Outdoor learning environments

These expenditures directly support program delivery and long-term sustainability.

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## **Sustainability Strategy**

This proposal intentionally balances staffing, programming, recreation, enrichment, transportation, and infrastructure.

Approximately:

- 62% invested in people

- 20% invested in direct student programming
- 18% invested in sustainable facilities and infrastructure

This balance ensures that students receive immediate benefits through high-quality programs while the district develops facilities and resources that will support future generations of students.

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## **Board Message**

This proposal is not an athletics project.

It is a comprehensive Expanded Learning investment strategy designed to provide safe, supervised, engaging opportunities for students before school, after school, during intersessions, and throughout the summer.

The proposed recreation facility and athletic field improvements are extensions of an existing high-participation expanded learning system that already serves approximately 100 wrestling participants and hundreds of additional students through SPARK programming.

By investing in staffing, enrichment, recreation, transportation, summer programming, and sustainable facilities, Willows Unified School District can maximize the impact of ELOP funding while creating lasting opportunities that help students become more engaged, more active, more connected, and more successful in school and in life.