



Statement of Jodi Grant,
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February 23, 2006

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New LA's BEST Evaluation Underscores That Kids, Communities Gain with Afterschool Programs

“It is a great pleasure to be in Los Angeles with so many champions of afterschool, and to be here when you release powerful new data that provides even more evidence that afterschool programs help children and communities in so many ways. LA's BEST is an extraordinary program – a model for the nation. One of the many reasons is its long-term commitment to evaluation.

The study being released today shows many gains for the children served by LA's BEST. Teachers note that students achieve positive changes in terms of social skills, classroom behavior and discipline as a result of the LA's BEST program. Over 16 years, children participating in LA's BEST programs either improved or maintained their CST scores on English language arts and math. And, perhaps most importantly, LA's BEST students are 20 percent less likely to drop out of school than students who do not attend an LA's BEST program.

California is leading the way for the nation in getting to afterschool for all. It is no wonder. With quality programs like LA's BEST, you see every day that afterschool is a wise investment that pays off for children, families, businesses and communities.

The Afterschool Alliance will take these evaluation results to other states as we urge lawmakers to make afterschool available to all. We will take these results to Congress as we urge Members to fulfill the promise of the *No Child Left Behind Act* by increasing funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool initiative. And we will take these results to voters to help them press for greater public and private investment in afterschool programs.

According to an Afterschool Alliance study released last year, 14 million kindergarten through 12th-graders in this country take care of themselves after the school day ends, including 22 percent of California students. We need to change that. All our kids deserve quality afterschool programs like those offered by LA's BEST.”

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by the year 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org. For more information on the LA's evaluation, visit www.lasbest.org.