Case Study Report
In-Depth Evaluations of Beyond the Bell After-School Programs

A compendium of evaluations conducted by Research Support Services of elementary and middle school after-school programs managed by the Beyond the Bell Branch of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The evaluations include school profiles and activity observations, as well as interviews with site coordinators and principals.

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Research Support Services (Marina del Rey, CA)

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<td>PLN</td>
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<td>Sepulveda MS</td>
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Introduction

“If you’ve seen one after-school program, you’ve seen one after-school program.” This bit of wisdom from the after-school field applies to the programs supervised and supported by the Beyond the Bell Branch (BTB) of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Each after-school program (ASP) is the work of a particular agency and staff working to meet the needs of a specific group of students and parents. Program activities occur within the context of resources and constraints provided by the school, the agency, and community.

Responding to the uniqueness of individual ASPs, Research Support Services (RSS) applied the case study method to examine daily operations at 43 ASPs within LAUSD. Using multiple means of data collection, the RSS team captured characteristics, strengths, and limitations of each site, while also providing descriptions of program activities, staffing, and the school-program relationship.

Each case study report consists of three sections. The first is a site profile providing demographic data, after-school information, and California Department of Education (CDE) API scores which can be used to rank all the public schools in the State in terms of academic performance. The second is a brief summary of the interview with the school principal. The third section is the descriptive report. Ranging from five to eight pages, this section describes significant ASP features, strategies, achievements, and problems; and includes information gathered during an interview with the ASP site coordinator.

Data Collection

The case study sample consisted of 43 ASPs: 25 serving elementary students, 17 serving middle school students, and one serving grades K-8.1 Twenty-nine partner agencies managed the programs, and if an agency had both elementary and middle school programs, more than one site represented it. The sites were randomly selected by agency, with the stipulation that sites chosen for the previous (Fall 2007) case studies would not be selected again.

During May and June 2008, eight observers conducted on-site observations. Each site received at least four visits from individual observers. Typically, they spent two to three hours at the site, moving from activity to activity, conducting observations of about 15 minutes each. Overall, the team completed 1,040 activity observations, for an average of more than 24 per site. The observation form elicited both ratings and descriptive data on three elements: setting, students, and staff. Usually within 48 hours of the visit, observers transferred their notes to a central database by means of an interactive web interface. The descriptive data from the observations became the raw material for the case study reports.

Observers also conducted interviews with site coordinators. Senior observers and some recently retired LAUSD principals conducted the interviews with principals. The interview questions were largely open-ended and aimed to elicit opinions on various aspects of program operations. Additional information on the interview format is in Table 1. Observers took detailed notes

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1 The sample comprised 42 schools. Students at Virgil Middle School had access to two programs, one on-campus and one off-campus, resulting in 43 programs.
during each interview and typed their notes shortly thereafter. Site coordinators’ responses supplement the observations in the case study reports. The results of each principal interview are reported in a one- to two-page summary.

Table 1: Site Coordinator and Principal Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>When Conducted</th>
<th>Typical Length</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
<th>Major Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Coordinator</td>
<td>June 2008</td>
<td>45-60 minutes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Attendance, program components, stakeholder relations, staffing, material resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Program components, program-school relationship, perspectives of parents and teachers, support from agency and BTB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observers also gathered some program documents. Although no two sites provided the same documents, some of the common documents were daily program schedules, monthly calendars, flyers, and newsletters. Although not a major source of case study data, these documents facilitated data collection and provided important details about site operations.

Case Study Reports

Each case study report is both a stand-alone document and part of a descriptive tapestry. On its own, each case study provides insight into the daily operations of a specific ASP site. Along with the results of the value-added analyses and the site interviews, the report indicates what succeeds and what fails at the site. Taken together, the 43 case study reports contribute to a broad representation of the status of ASPs across LAUSD, capturing characteristics, successes, and limitations of the programs.

Although each case study report includes highlights and conclusions, the reports are largely descriptive in nature. To gain the best insights regarding a particular site, the reader should actively engage the report content. He or she might ask the following questions:

- What are the primary strengths and limitations of this program?
- In what ways does the program respond to the unique needs of the school’s students and community?
- Where are the missed opportunities?
- Are there promising practices that might apply to other ASPs?
- In what ways could the school/ASP relationship improve the program?
- What support does the site need from its parent agency?

Some readers may examine multiple case study reports, perhaps choosing them by agency, school level, LAUSD region, or demographic group. That person might consider the following questions:

- What characteristics, strengths, and limitations surface across an agency’s sites?
- How well do ASPs meet the needs of particular groups of students?
- How can agencies and BTB build on the strengths that recur across sites and agencies?
• What systemic factors might explain limitations that recur across sites and agencies?
• In what ways can the agencies strengthen services at the sites?
• In what ways can BTB strengthen services at the sites?

Rather than extending this already lengthy document with cross-case analyses, RSS will provide a series of Accountability Briefs during the winter and spring of 2009. Drawing from multiple data sources (qualitative and quantitative observational data; principal and site coordinator interviews; student, parent, and staff surveys; and value-added analysis), these 8-16 page reports will address topics important to making decisions regarding after-school services in LAUSD. They include homework assistance, arts enrichment, and physical activity; training and support for site staff; and the respective roles of partner agencies and BTB.

Conclusion
The case study reports provide important insights into program operations at 43 sites, as well as the overall status of after-school enrichment in LAUSD. They complement results of large-scale quantitative analysis presented as part of this evaluation project. But the case study reports move beyond the numbers to give the reader knowledge and the vicarious experience of diverse after-school programs throughout LAUSD.
# Site Profile
## A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK)
## Del Olmo Elementary School

### School Site Profile
<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Del Olmo Elementary School</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100 N. New Hampshire Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90004</td>
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</tbody>
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### Principal
- Eugene Hernandez

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>985</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td>85.9% Hispanic, 7.2% Asian, 3.9% Filipino, 1.9% Black, 0.8% White, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan, 0.1% Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
<td>Total: 646, 591 Spanish, 29 Other, 18 Pilipino, 7 Korean, 1 Cantonese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>A World Fit For Kids</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normandie Nigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lafit@aol.com">lafit@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-387-7712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># ASP Students</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Days of Attendance</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%72-107 Days</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>149%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 744 |
| API – 2007 | 704 |

*Source: LAUSD School Profile
Mr. Hernandez’ comments regarding A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK) are only somewhat positive. He believes this ASP has potential, but it needs several improvements. Inadequate training and funding keep it from providing students with more meaningful experiences.

Mr. Hernandez wants more academic enrichment, including individual tutoring, expansive musical instruction, and community service opportunities. Clearly, he believes his pupils do not get these benefits now.

He has an excellent relationship with the agency but believes communication needs to improve between all partners, including students, parents, teachers, ASP staff, the agency, and Beyond the Bell. Program leaders are doing the best they can with inadequate preparation, in a format that stresses physical education and fitness. Mr. Hernandez appreciates the efforts, but wants far more enrichment and variety.

Components
Homework assistance suffers from the young staff’s lack of training. Program leaders “are just kids,” he says. Mr. Hernandez believes individual tutoring would help. He wants ASP leaders trained in district instructional policies and expectations, including, for example, the number of homework minutes deemed appropriate for each grade level in math and language arts. They should also learn about district initiatives like Open Court, a scripted reading program, efforts to improve fluency and Second Step, which focuses on school-wide discipline.

AWFFK does not appear to provide Academic enrichment. Given a choice, Hernandez would like science clubs, conservation instruction, community service connections, games tied to promoting concepts and skills, and problem-solving activities such as chess. He wants leaders to “forget the videos” and bring back old games like checkers and jacks.

Though sports and athletic activities are the focus of AWFFK, the program still needs better-trained leaders who can develop skills through made-up games like “basketball without the court.” He believes skills in organized sports should be expanded and that the agency should create leagues so students can compete in intramurals. He wants to see volleyball and kickball. Mr. Hernandez appreciates the work of an ASP consultant who worked with Del Olmo teachers prior to school physical fitness testing. Youth Services helps absorb the overflow of pupils unable to join AWFFK, but neither entity works with the other. Better communication here, too, would improve programs.

Fine and Performing Arts are also missing. Were Mr. Hernandez to design his own ASP, he would have a band and/or orchestra, musical instrument instruction, a drum line, ballroom dance and an association with LACMA, Inner City Art or another professional art entity. He would also offer ceramics, drawing and painting classes.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Mr. Hernandez does not elaborate on teacher views of AWFFK, saying the only element he believes they like is seeing assigned homework completed. He adds that ASP socialization is a positive contribution to pupils’ emotional growth: “The school’s neighborhood is all apartments, so the kids would just go home and sit. Now, school is open until 6p.m. The kids can run, play, socialize, problem-solve, and get in
disagreements—all the things that happen when they go out and play.” He stresses that both ASP staff and teachers would benefit from two or three meetings each year, to improve understanding and cooperation. Such meetings would set the stage for both groups to learn to work together.

Parents like knowing where their children are and trust the program to keep them safe. Mr. Hernandez does not recall parent opinions on what the program is missing, but said better feedback might arise if the Agency took a leadership role and scheduled informational meetings just for them.

Agency and District Support
AWFFK maintains an on-going dialogue with Mr. Hernandez and takes an active role with their program. He finds them receptive to his ideas and quick to resolve problems. The program has a long waiting list, which reflects its popularity. Beyond the Bell has not been needed for interventions. Mr. Hernandez believes Beyond The Bell should do a better public relations job, letting communities know about its quality after-school programs and about model programs at other campuses. BTB should seek ideas from their wide variety of ASPs and, they should provide more funding and resources.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
ASP staff needs training in behavior management and, at the minimum, and acquaintance with learning theory and District programs. The program should be more than “just PE.” They also need to keep their rooms cleaner—a significant problem at Del Olmo for teachers and administrators. Mr. Hernandez calls AWFFK “a great ASP” that needs more money, training, and room for more participants.
Case Study Observations
A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK)
Del Olmo Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Del Olmo Elementary School (a 1-6 school) in Los Angeles. A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK) is the sponsor. Mr. Ramiro Aispuro is the site coordinator.

Homework
Students work on homework outside. While some focus on completing their work, others’ attention wanders because of classmates playing or socializing nearby. Several observers commented on a noise level so high that students sometimes could not hear the instructor’s words. Observers wrote:

Second-graders work on their homework. The staff helps with questions. The students are outside, where students in other ASPs play and do other activities. This makes the area very loud and very distracting for many.

Only about half the kids actually work. The rest are either done or distracted.

Some students do math worksheets. Others play games on the computers, and the rest talk. When I walk into the room, the instructor is on the phone with the AWFFK office. About half the students run around. Six students start work on math worksheets when I walk in. The instructor tells them to be good because I will be watching them and writing down the names of those students who do not behave. Four girls eat Cheetos and make hats out of construction paper. As students complete the math worksheets, they start playing board games.

Four first-graders sit outside working on a variety of tasks. One reads, one finishes her homework, and the other two color. As they finish, the staff member lets them go play hula hooping and softball.

The group of students is comprised of second- through fifth-graders. Students work on math or ELA worksheets. A few students read a comic book together. Mr. Aispuro said they have no homework because of CSTs.

Academics
Two observers visited academic enrichment activities during the field study period. They wrote:

The fourth-graders are working on a group project, a poster board presentation of birds, flowers, and weather. The groups decorate their boards with glitter, glue, crayons, markers, and construction paper. The instructor answers their questions.

Students are playing board games and reading. The staff member earlier brought books for them to read. She told them to read for 15 minutes. Then they could play. Some have finished their assignment and now play Chinese checkers. The students sit outside, surrounded by students playing sports and doing other activities. This makes it a bit difficult for the readers to concentrate.
Arts
Though Mr. Aispuro said arts and crafts are among the students’ favorite activities, observers saw only a few drawing and painting sessions.

An observer watched students reading and painting pictures from the book “The Giving Tree,” by Shel Silverstein:

While the instructor reads, all six kids are leaning toward her, actively listening. Afterward, the instructor gives the children finger paints and paper to draw their own giving tree. She shows them how to use the side of the hand to make the trunk, and explains how its thickness at the base and narrowness farther up resembles a real tree trunk. “Why are trees fat at the bottom and then they get skinny?” one student asks. The instructor says that it is because trees have roots and they are all at the bottom of the tree. “That’s where the tree eats,” she says.

The instructor tells the students to write, ‘My Giving Tree’ at the top of their paper and says the tree should represent them. One of the students asks, “What do we use the green paint for?” “What part of the tree is green?” the instructor responds. “The leaves, silly!” The group laughs. One of the other students asks why they only have green and brown paint and indicates that he wants his giving tree to be many different colors.

During another observation, a local artist gave a class to kindergarteners and first-graders. They looked at a still life, and then he taught them to draw a fruit bowl: first, each individual fruit, then the bowl, then the tablecloth. They talked about what colors the students should use and he moved around the room answering individual questions.

Sports and Games
Observers watched basketball, soccer, Tae Bo, dance, drill team, handball, and general exercise. Students also played chess and bingo. Mr. Aispuro said Dance Dance Revolution is among the students’ favorite activities. One day, the hot weather interfered with outside activities. Mr. Aispuro said he wanted to keep the students in the shade as much as possible.

Observers of several sessions wrote:

Students watch a Tae Bo video and follow the televised instructions. All are engaged. They enjoy themselves. The instructor also participates. The instructor uses humor to keep the students’ attention.

Students work on a drill team routine. The staff member seems annoyed. She tells the students that if they cannot get the easy steps down they will not be able to do this at all. The students move through the routine, but not all are enthusiastic. Some students barely go through the motions.

Students play Dance, Dance Revolution. Three staff members are present and about 27 students wait to play. Some of the students practice the steps alongside the others. During the game, students step on a pad to the beat of a song, following instructions from a video screen. Those who make no mistakes in the steps win. While they wait, students read a comic book, color, or watch the players. The students watching and playing are very engaged and having fun.
Mr. Aispuro plays softball with 12 students. They are all engaged. He encourages the student and gives them technical pointers.

First-graders do exercises and play handball. First, they stretch, then they run four laps around a small track, then they do jumping jacks. Afterward, they start the game.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Observers wrote that students seemed relatively uninterested and off-task during homework and academic achievement activities. They showed more interest in arts and sports activities. The staff of this ASP did not generally put much effort into managing classrooms. Some staff members clearly needed more guidance in how to work with difficult children. One observer saw the following interaction between a staffer and a student:

The instructor is having a difficult time controlling one student who is very defiant and throws chess pieces. The staff member says she is going to call Mr. Aispuro, but never does. The student eventually calms down but remains verbally defiant. The commotion distracts students doing worksheets and reading.

Staff
Mr. Aispuro earns $16 per hour, the parent coordinator earns $14 per hour, and the coaches earn $12 per hour. This ASP began here a few years ago. Mr. Aispuro is happy with all staffers. The ASP also has volunteers. They are mostly parents and high school students working as aides.

The ASP has no access to substitutes. Present staff members cover for absent ones and combine student groups. The ASP occasionally brings in an artist, and specialists in tennis, volleyball, and football. Mr. Aispuro wants them to participate more consistently.

New staff members get one week of training and shadowing. They learn to manage homework, handle emergencies, and conduct arts & crafts activities. They also learn first aid. All staff members receive monthly training on topics like nutrition and safety.

Mr. Aispuro wants staffers to get more training on planning. “At our monthly meetings we only get about 15 minutes to plan,” he said.

Material Resources
The school does not allow students in this ASP to use classrooms to do homework. Instead, they work outside. Mr. Aispuro said there is not enough classroom space and the ASP does not get access to the library or the computer lab.

Mr. Aispuro has asked the vice principal and the principal to let him use classrooms. “The teachers don’t want us to go in their class and mess things up,” he said. “They think that the kids will go in there and use their stuff.”

The ASP has enough materials and equipment to support activities. Mr. Aispuro is happy with the cleanliness of the parts of the school the ASP uses.

He wants more variety in the snacks. Students usually get milk and cookies. He wants them to have juice and fruit.
Relationship with the School
Mr. Aispuro’s primary contacts are the principal and the vice principal. He said he has strong relationships with both and talks daily with them about attendance and planned activities. He said the administrators give the ASP supplies and other things.

Mr. Aispuro said staffers talk regularly with teachers, often about homework and special projects. Staffers arrive a few minutes before school lets out and visit teachers in their classrooms. They learn about homework from packets and schedules the students carry. They also sign off on completed work.

There is no joint planning with teachers to coordinate the ASP’s activities. The school does not share students’ CST or assessment scores with the ASP.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
The ASP sends parents a monthly newsletter. Mr. Aispuro said he often talks with parents. The parent coordinator conducts meetings and workshops for the parents. They talk about homework and student behavior. “The parents are good but hey usually just come and go,” he said. “They are not as involved as I would like them to be. Some of them are, and we have a really good, strong relationship with them, but that’s not the majority.”

Mr. Aispuro said he is new to the community, but most staffers live in the neighborhood. Some even went to school here. “I make myself available and I try to be in the community as much as possible,” Mr. Aispuro said. He gave no further detail.

Support from local businesses and community groups is limited. Mr. Aispuro said children went on a field trip to tour a Raphs store and talk about nutrition “That’s about it,” he said. “We don’t have much of a relationship with the community organizations or local businesses.”

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
Mr. Aispuro said the relationship between the ASP and the agency is very good. He said if he or his staff need anything, agency officials provide it or visit to see how they can help. He said he does not really know the staff at Beyond the Bell.

Attendance
The agency provides a sign-in/sign-out form to take attendance, which staffers use each day. Mr. Aispuro then sends the information to the agency via computer.

The ASP holds a parent orientation to minimize absences and encourage students to attend more days each week. At this year’s meeting, Mr. Aispuro explained that if students have three or more unexcused absences, they are expelled. “The parents are really good about getting their kids here,” he said. “If there is an issue with attendance, I talk to the kids first and then to the parents.” Administrators promote the ASP to students and parents.

There is a wait list with 40-50 students. When openings occur, the ASP takes the next on the list. He did not say whether the program strives for balance by grade level, even though the wait list includes that information.

Mr. Aispuro said holidays and long weekends interfere with attendance. He said there is no competition from other programs, but sometimes, older kids want to vary activities and join them.
Safety and Security
Mr. Aispuro said he, his staff, and the agency are satisfied with the security of both the school and the ASP’s property.

Conclusions and Comments
This year may have been one of changes for this program. Mr. Aispuro mentioned a coach he had to replace. He said the new hire is good at working with kids. He said the ASP had a drop in attendance at the beginning of the year, but the staff change fixed that.

Staffers might benefit from behavior and classroom management training. Some children responded with respect to staff members, but others behaved rudely, talked back to instructors, and caused distractions. It was not clear how or if these students were held accountable for their behaviors and actions.

Space for the ASP is a major problem. “I wish we had our own space to run the ASP,” he said. “We can’t really do much because we are on the site. They have to let us do things.” Though Mr. Aispuro and his staff have strong relationships with school administrators and teachers, they do not have much access to indoor space, including classrooms, the library, and the computer lab. Mr. Aispuro wants to add computer classes because many students do not have computers at home. He said the challenge is acquiring the money for the equipment. It is not clear why he has not negotiated further for access to the school’s computer lab.
# School Site Profile

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<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>150 S. Burlington Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90057</td>
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| Principal             | Giuseppe Nardulli        |

## School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.7% White</td>
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<tr>
<td>.3% Asian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 64.2% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 733 |
| 723 Spanish | 6 Pilipino | 3 Other | 1 Vietnamese |

## After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>A World Fit For Kids</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Normandie Nigh</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lafit@aol.com">lafit@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 718 |
| API – 2007 | 718 |
Mr. Nardulli gives a mixed review of AWFFK, voicing concerns over major problems that detract from
the ASP’s effectiveness with students. He reports critical issues with staff, including: (1) their inability to
assert authority or control children’s disruptive behavior; (2) program leaders’ immature conduct; (3)
constant turnover that complicates training; and (4) staff inattention to housekeeping that causes Mr.
Nardulli to resist letting them use teachers’ rooms.

Program offerings show strength in sports and fitness but weakness in art, music, drama, dance, and
academic enrichment.

AWFFK shows a need to improve communication, to extend the length of the daily schedule, to
understand the breadth of responsibilities ASPs should exercise, and to connect with Union
Elementary’s needs and ideas. “AWFFK does their own thing and are not responsive to school
suggestions,” Mr. Nardulli said.

Components

Mr. Nardulli says homework assistance lacks consistency. The staff would benefit from “grade level tool
kits” which would assist leaders in understanding instructional priorities and expectations. The Union
Avenue Literacy coach made a notable effort to help homework leaders upgrade their efforts: she
modeled strategies and tried to improve the homework “atmosphere” which the principal feels is not
conducive to successful academic help. She also taught how to conduct reading circles and response
journals. Any system of communication between homework leaders and teachers would improve the time
students spend in this activity where, according to the principal, many students do not admit to even
having homework.

There is no academic enrichment. Mr. Nardulli suggests hands-on science projects or lessons around
geography or culture. He thinks AWFFK staffers need to concentrate on the skill development of
homework leaders through the activities provided by the Literacy coach.

Sports and athletics is the program’s strongest suit, with team sports competitions and activities on
nutrition and health. Mr. Nardulli believes coaches do a good job with skill development, but he would
like to see more intramural contests. He wants both Youth Services and AWFFK coaches to be a stronger
presence after school, taking responsibility for all children and checking on their reasons for being on
campus. He says there are many “floater” children that do not seem to be connected to any program.
These children need guidance from YS and AWFFK staffers, who are the adults in charge.

AWFFK evidently does not offer fine and performing arts activities. Mr. Nardulli would like to see
instrumental music, guitars, drumming, arts and crafts, theater, and performances. He believes the
program once hired a drill-dance instructor, but she was rude and unpopular and was asked to leave. Mr.
Nardulli says he reads in Beyond the Bell publications about art and performance classes at other ASPs
and wonders why AWFFK has none.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

Mr. Nardulli has not provided any specific information about teachers’ opinions of AWFFK. He says they
know little about the program although he feels some teachers are pleased pupils have a safe place after
school “to keep them out of trouble.” There is little communication between AWFFK and the day school staff. “Brief notes about student progress…or social behavior” would be an improvement, Mr. Nardulli says.

Mr. Nardulli says the program “serves an important need for our parents,” who put a premium on safety and security. Some parents also say homework time is beneficial because many families have no one in the home to help with homework. They also want more enrichment and creative classes and longer hours. **They want the program to last until 6 p.m. instead of closing at 5 p.m.** AWFFK has waiting lists at every grade level even though it does very little recruiting.

**Agency and District Support**
Mr. Nardulli met a traveling AWFFK supervisor after contacting the agency about some issues and he says she is actively involved. He believes he has little impact on planning. Agency staffers try to fix problems brought to their attention: for example, a leader who rode a skateboard received a reprimand. The principal has had no need to bring issues to Beyond the Bell and does not know any personnel there. He also has no firm opinion on oversight improvements. “I don’t know what oversight is possible,” he said.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Even though Mr. Nardulli believes AWFFK needs to improve its staff training considerably in homework strategies and behavior management, he spoke favorably about the holiday program and the fact that teachers and counselors see the program as a resource for needy pupils. However, it could do much more.
Case Study Observations  
A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK)  
Union Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Union Elementary School (a K-5 school) in mid-city Los Angeles. The sponsor is A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK). The ASP coordinator is Mr. Oscar Guzman.

Highlights
This program is especially strong in sports and physical activity. Grade-level clubs are active in team sports and exercises. Soccer is among the children’s favorite activities. In addition to this and other traditional sports, the ASP offers lacrosse. These activities are well structured and equipped. Other forms of physical activity include creative exercise stations, calisthenics, jungle-gym play, and dance.

Observers saw engaged children enjoying themselves in these activities. Staff members supervised them closely, with attention to safety and proper play. They also demonstrated skills, offered encouragement, and played with the children. These activities were an important opportunity for children to develop fitness while enjoying after-school time.

Homework
Because field study took place between standardized testing and the end of the school year, observers had limited opportunities to view homework help. Most observed sessions occurred outdoors, and the quality was inconsistent. Staff members circulated and provided assistance. They answered questions and clarified instructions for children. However, few children actually did homework. Those who had no homework had books to read. Some did read; others colored. Still others wandered around, chatted, or played. The areas often rang with loud conversations, and people came and went through the area.

A group of first- and second- grade children had homework in the outdoor lunch area while another group arrived for snacks. During the observation, six children with homework sat together at one table. They appeared to be off-task. The staff member sat at a nearby table, reading a story to the rest of the group, with her back to the six with homework. The children hearing the story stayed mostly engaged in the activity. The staff member passed out reading journals, but the children did not use them.

Mr. Guzman acknowledged a need to improve homework assistance. He said coaches check the homework, “but sometimes, they don’t know how to help the students.”

Academics
The ASP offered one activity for academic enrichment during the field study period, a literacy class led by the school’s literacy coach. Mr. Guzman said this was among the younger children’s favorite activities.

During the observed session, a group of third-graders wrote journal entries on what they liked about a book they had just read. The children brought their journals to the literacy coach. She corrected the entries and gave the children feedback. In comparison to the ASP staff, the coach was much more strict and authoritative, and she got much more activity from the children. They seemed to learn and enjoy this time.

As the children left, the literacy coach said she leads a 30-minute session with a different group each day, serving both AWFFK and City Year, another program. She said she likes working in the ASP because more of the children’s personalities emerge after school. She said the staffers are “rock stars” in the eyes of the children.
Sports and Recreation
Sports and physical activity are very prominent at this ASP. Children participate in traditional team sports like soccer, kickball, basketball, and softball, and in lacrosse, which is rare in ASPs. They also have many different, creative exercise activities.

Observers watched first- and third-graders playing soccer. A staff member played alongside the first-graders, teaching them the rules of the game and showing them how to make a goal. The third-graders then played a game and a staff member supervised. He encouraged the players and reminded them of the rules of the game. He also resolved conflicts that arose among the children. Mr. Guzman said soccer was among the students’ favorite activities.

Observers wrote that the children enjoyed themselves in the kickball, basketball, and softball games, and they played cooperatively. Staff members also played alongside the students and provided assistance. The kickball game was noteworthy for the staff member’s insistence on safety through pre-game stretching and warm-up exercises.

Lacrosse activities occurred on two observation days. Children in the fourth and fifth grades participated. One day involved drills. Under the supervision of three coaches, the children had a relay race by running while cradling the ball in the netted portion of their stick and then handing the stick to a teammate. After the race, each child had a stick and practiced cradling the ball in the net. This was a challenging activity, and they stayed focused and engaged. Another day, the children played a game in a small, fenced area. One staff member supervised, encouraged the children, and gave pointers.

Children also participated in many exercises and physical activities, including some traditional games and some activities created at the ASP. The traditional activities included handball, calisthenics, and tag. First- and second-graders also played on the jungle gym. Staff members supervised, counted repetitions, and reminded children of safe practices. The children seemed to enjoy themselves in these activities.

Some of the more creative activities involved exercise stations. Staff members drew from the ASP’s wide variety of exercise equipment to create stations. The children worked through them individually or in groups. The activities included jumping rope, doing pushups, kicking a ball, and stretching against the resistance of an elastic band. Coaches supervised and encouraged the children, who got a good dose of exercise. Children waiting their turn were not as active. During one observation period, 15 leaned on a fence while three exercised. They watched passively, rarely cheering for their peers.

A group of 15 first- and second-graders participated in a modified version of “musical chairs.” The staff used hula-hoops instead of chairs. When the music stopped, each child had to sit inside a hoop or be out. Rather than merely walking around the hoops, the children skipped, marched with knees high, hopped like frogs and bounced like kangaroos.

Arts
The ASP had a variety of art offerings. In addition to crafts activities, the children also practiced singing and dancing.

One of the crafts activities involved re-drawing illustrations from the Dr. Seuss book *Oh, the Places You’ll Go*. The children worked in two teams, preparing this artwork for an end-of-the-year presentation. Another group used construction paper, pipe cleaners, and glue to make creations of their own design. This activity occurred near the end of the day. Children tended to be quiet and subdued.
Children in the second grade practiced a Mariah Carey song for an end-of-the-year performance for parents. They read the lyrics, practiced pieces of the song, and then put all the pieces together. Some of the children had already memorized the lyrics.

A group of girls worked on their dance routine for the performance. A staff member led them through steps and joined them in dancing to the hip-hop music. They worked on parts and then the whole routine. The girls appeared to be engaged and enjoying themselves. The staff member was encouraging and energetic. Mr. Guzman said dance is also a favorite among the children.

Other Enrichment
The ASP offered other enrichment activities. An observer saw a group of first- through third-grade children participating in a version of Dance Dance Revolution. With two staff members supervising, four children would participate at one time and others waited patiently. The song indicated where dancers should step on the mat, so along with exercising, they needed to listen to the song. The children enjoyed this activity.

Another day, when there was no homework because of testing, the children either colored or read books. Mr. Guzman said the children like board games, but observers did not see this activity.

Mr. Guzman wants to offer discussions and activities around health and nutrition. He received agency approval for a game called Fitness Scholastic and will establish it in September. He also won approval for a mobile kitchen.

Engagement and Classroom Management
The children’s engagement varied greatly across activities. The highest levels of engagement were evident in the literacy class and some of the physical activities. Lacrosse, dance, and the jungle gym engaged the children and kept them entertained. Conversely, other physical activities involved low engagement. Children participated in a game of kickball, but were not very active or involved in the game. Also, during an exercise station activity, many children milled around, waiting their turn. Engagement could also be a challenge during homework time. Observers noted children chatting, wandering around the area, and playing during some homework sessions.

Observers rarely saw disruptive children. The activities either engaged or bored them, but they did not bother others. Low engagement was probably due to a lack of proper skill levels or adaptations. The wandering children sometime presented a challenge to safety and security.

The great gap in engagement occurs between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. Sign-out goes on throughout the afternoon, and activities often end by 4:45 p.m. By 5 p.m., almost all children and staff members have left, though some children remain an hour longer. The final hour consists of childcare rather than enrichment. Supervision duties rotate among staff members from AWFFK, Youth Services (YS), and City Year.

Staff
With the exception of homework assistance, Mr. Guzman expressed confidence in the staff of this ASP. Mr. Guzman earns $16.00 per hour; fitness specialists earn $15.00 per hour; and grade-level coaches earn $12.00 per hour. He said it is not difficult to keep positions filled. There is a wait list, and a substitute fills vacancies until the agency hires a permanent staffer. The ASP also has high school volunteers who help the staff twice a week for two hours a day. He also there are no issues with securing specialized staff and substitutes.
Both new and experienced staff members receive training on safety procedures, first aid, and grade-level activities. The agency also provides homework training and IMPACT training. Staffers also address various issues in weekly meetings. Mr. Guzman said staffers would most benefit from training on homework assistance in math and English. “It will help to refresh their memory and familiarize them with elementary math and English,” he said. With few exceptions, observers saw staff members fully engaged in the activities and with the children.

**Material Resources**
Although most program activities occur outdoors, Mr. Guzman is generally satisfied with the ASP’s material resources. He said there are enough materials and equipment. Staff members request materials in their monthly meetings and get them by the date needed.

An observer noted that the ASP can use between one and four rooms, depending on the time of day. Mr. Guzman said there are two dedicated rooms. He also requested use of the science room, which the school approved. Staff members put 20-25 children in each room. That is more than usual, due to the suspension of the City Year program.

AWFFK has requested more rooms. The ASP has access to the library only when the literacy coach is present, and students cannot take their backpacks in for security reasons. In a recent conversation about increasing space allocations for the ASP, the principal mentioned that staffers need to keep children organized and need to clean up after them. The ASP has not requested the use of the computer lab.

Mr. Guzman also expressed general satisfaction with the snacks and janitorial services provided by the school. He has no complaints about the snacks. He said there are always enough. However, he said, the oranges are usually rotten and he would welcome more variety, including more fruit. He is satisfied with the cleanliness of the school and noted that the new principal has made improvements like changing the benches in the lunch area.

**Relationship with the School**
Mr. Guzman said he has a strong relationship with the school’s administration and limited contact with teachers. The primary contact is the principal. He said he knows the principal’s expectations and works to meet them. If he needs something approved, the principal is open to what he has to say. They speak almost every day, either in person or by telephone. Common topics include the introduction of new activities, the use of a room, and the need for other resources.

Mr. Guzman praised the school’s review of safety procedures. He said the assistant principal created emergency folders and has practice drills and procedure reviews with the staff.

Mr. Guzman said neither he nor his staff has much contact with teachers, and he considers that a weakness in the ASP’s relationship with the school. Staffers learn of homework assignments from students. If one says he or she has no homework, the staffer writes a note to the teacher, and the response to that indicates the truth. First- and second-grade students have homework packets, which makes homework easier to track. Mr. Guzman mentioned collaborative planning with the school’s literacy and math coaches.

The principal shares the school’s API scores with the ASP, but not scores for individual children.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Mr. Guzman said the ASP has positive relationships with parents, and there is good communication with them. When the need arises, staffers talk with parents when they come for their children, or they send
letters home. The topics are behavior issues, absences, timely pick-up, and coming events. He worries when parents are not committed to following through with their children regarding their behavior. Mr. Guzman has asked the agency about conducting parent conferences in the near future.

The ASP staffers know the community because some live in it. Partnerships with local business and/or community organizations are early in their development. After a referral from an ASP staffer, a nearby recreational facility invited the ASP to use their space whenever necessary. Also, the ASP is planning a field trip to the grocery store to learn more about nutrition. Despite these initial contacts, he reported that there is no communication yet with organizations or businesses in the community.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Mr. Guzman spoke positively of relationships with the agency and Beyond the Bell. The agency regularly fulfills his requests for materials and equipment; Beyond the Bell staff members have “been informative.” Because program activities end by 5 p.m., the ASP collaborated with YS and City Year staff to provide childcare until 6 p.m.

**Attendance**
This ASP has grown during 2007-08. There was a waiting list of 20, but the ASP opened a new group to accommodate these students. The interview data were not clear on whether this new group opened during 2007-08 or was in the plans for 2008-09. Also, some of the children had transferred to City Year, but when that program was suspended, AWFFK gained them.

ASP staffers talk with parents and children to promote attendance. If a child is absent, the staff calls the parent. There have been incidents of parents coming to pick up children who are not at the ASP. The frequent communication with parents has improved attendance. To attract new students, the ASP has introduced new activities. Staffers also made fliers and delivered them to the teachers, or personally visited classrooms to talk about the ASP.

**Safety and Security**
Safety and security seemed sound at this ASP. Mr. Guzman expressed satisfaction with security for children and said it has improved with the arrival of the new principal. He said staffers are careful with ASP property and do not let children into the storage bins. Other safety measures are in place, such as the emergency procedures review and having staff members sign first- and second-graders into the ASP each day. Staff members also provide close supervision when the children are outside.

Although the data were not definitive, there might have been gaps in sign-out procedures. One day, a girl said her parents had arrived and left the classroom without an adult and with the staff member’s approval. Another day, an observer wrote:

> Sign-out sheets were not visible anywhere. I asked Mr. Guzman and he said the person in charge of attendance was absent. Therefore, each coach had the sign-out sheets for their particular group. I only saw one coach with the sheets and a few parents signing their children out from this class.

**Conclusions and Comments**
The AWFFK program at Union Elementary School shows strength in physical activity, staffing, safety, and arts. The ASP offers a broad and creative set of sports and physical activities. Children play actively, develop skills, and enjoy themselves. Staffing is stable at the ASP. Staff members provide supervision and encouragement, promote skill development, show enthusiasm, and often participate alongside the children in physical activities. The staff members pay attention to safety during physical activity and
generally supervise the children closely. Although observers saw few activities in the arts, those activities generally were positive and educational for the children.

Space and homework/academics are areas where the ASP could improve. Despite an ostensibly positive relationship with the school, the ASP has limited access to classrooms. Thus, homework assistance often takes place at an outdoor lunch area, which causes distractions. Student engagement and supplementary activities for children without homework are challenges during homework time. The school’s literacy coach offers an effective literacy enrichment class, but children can only participate in this activity for 30 minutes per week. Observers did not note any academically oriented activities beyond homework assistance and the literacy class.

Mr. Guzman spoke of positive relationships with parents, the agency, and Beyond the Bell. He indicated a need for improving relationships with the school’s teachers and surrounding community. An ASP’s most important relationships are with the participating children. This ASP evidenced positive and engaged relationships with its children.
## School Site Profile

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<td>152 N. Vermont Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90004</td>
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| Principal             | Ada Snethen Stevens |

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 43.7% |
| Total: English Language Learners               | 952   |
| 858 Spanish                                    |      |
| 49 Filipino                                    |      |
| 24 Korean                                      |      |
| 20 Other                                       |      |
| 1 Russian                                      |      |

## After-School Program Profile

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<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>A World Fit For Kids</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2007 | 585 |
| API – 2008 | 641 |
At Virgil Middle School, assistant principals coordinate and supervise ASPs. Ms. Snethen and Mr. Valdez describe A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK) as a successful and well-coordinated program that responds well to Virgil’s needs.

AWFFK uses its strong focus on athletic activities to attract participants. Ms. Snethen and Mr. Valdez say the ASP makes strides each year to better integrate with Virgil programs. Examples include: (1) hiring Virgil teachers to support the music and rhythmic gymnastics P.E. program; (2) a concerted effort to increase safety during ASP hours by tightly controlling adult non-students’ access to campus; and (3) contributing as an active member of the Virgil Resource Coordination Team at IEP and SST meetings.

Administrators do not often see such involvement from ASPs in the IEP process. AWFFK program leaders assist the Virgil SST team by providing specialized information on student needs, concerns and social interaction as seen through the eyes of after school staff. Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen do suggest improvements and share similar views on the ASP’s strengths and weaknesses. But generally, they are pleased with AWFFK.

**Components**

- **Homework assistance** is adequate but could improve through the use of smaller groups and more personnel working in more rooms. Staffers need formal training from the agency and school leaders to align homework assistance to school expectations, particularly in math. They also need more training in student behavior management. Both assistant principals expressed interest in contributing to this training.

- **Academic Enrichment** is a weak element of this ASP. Suggestions to help build pupil academic skills include classes in science, history, journalism and environmental education. Access to the library and the Internet should improve. Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen also suggest organizing a gardening club.

- **Sports** are the focus of AWFFK. Even so, Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen believe more variety might attract students and improve their skills. Compelling pupils to maintain a C average for competitions and tournaments lends credibility to the program and support for the homework assistance element. Administrators suggested a bike club, a running program, softball and added intramurals with other schools. Ms. Snethen wants a track and field component with cross-country and year-round running. “Kids get engaged through sports,” she said.

- **Fine and Performing Arts** would benefit from more student performances in the existing groups and field trips to see musicals, band performances and plays.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

- **Teachers** like the homework assistance and the three additional hours spent on English after school. They also want smaller groups, better training and more focus on individual needs. They like AWFFK because it engages students in productive activities instead of letting them go home “to empty apartments.”

- **Parents** express satisfaction with AWFFK. They value the homework help, like the staff and find comfort in the safe, structured atmosphere. They have said how much they appreciate the campus supervision that
AWFFK has added. They do want more family events and more activities where their children can participate in concluding performances.

**Agency and District Support**
Both assistant principals say the communication with AWFFK local and agency staff is excellent. They know whom to contact in case of problems. Minor issues with students are handled at the site “before they become problems,” and there has been no need to involve agency personnel. They say the agency is active and responsive. The administrators and the agencies have meetings where they talk about what the program is doing and what the administrators want, Mr. Valdez said. “They are very collaborative,” he said. “They have formal meetings at least twice a year and meet informally anytime.”

Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen do not have much contact with Beyond the Bell, but they see the atmosphere as collaborative and believe they just have to voice their concerns to get a response. Beyond the Bell should continue what they are doing and “whatever message they send to their subcontractors is good.”

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
AWFFKs is receptive to school staff suggestions and focuses on improving each year. Both Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen note year-round recruiting efforts to maintain attendance, always a challenge at middle school sites. Room sharing is not a problem for AWFFK. Virgil teachers, long burdened with Year Round issues, are used to sharing and changing rooms throughout the year. They also share facilities with Adult Education and other programs. Whatever minor issues arise, they are taken care of immediately.
Case Study Observations  
A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK)  
Virgil Middle School  

Introduction  
This program takes place at Virgil Middle School (a 6-8 school) located in mid-city Los Angeles. The sponsor is A World Fit for Kids (AWFFK). Mr. Jonathan Valencia is the site coordinator.

Highlights  
The core of this program is sports and related physical activities. Sports tournaments are a major incentive for students to attend the program. They have to practice each day to play in the weekend tournaments.

Observers saw students play basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball and baseball, competitive dance, and cheerleading. The students showed skill, knowledge of the activities, and fair play. They were serious competitors, but always exhibited good sportsmanship.

This program emphasizes the strong connection between competitive sports and positive social development. During competition, the students demonstrated maturity beyond their years. They cooperated, encouraged each other, showed respect, and were gracious in victory or defeat.

Homework and Academics  
During the mid- to late June data collection period, observers saw no homework assistance or academic enrichment. Mr. Valencia said the program offers homework assistance, though there was no evidence of academic enrichment earlier in the year. Students have to maintain a 2.5 GPA to participate in sports. He said this is one of the most challenging aspects of the program, and student motivation is a real issue. “The kids can’t play in the tournament if they don’t have good grades,” he said. “We focus on that a lot and talk to them. Some good athletes are not able to play because of their grades.”

In the coming school year, the ASP will acquire classrooms for homework assistance, a first for the program. Mr. Valencia hopes that will help.

Sports and Games  
Mr. Valencia listed basketball, football, and soccer as the students’ favorite activities. Basketball is the most popular sport for both boys and girls. There is girls’ football, but soccer is more popular among them.

Although all tournaments were over, observers saw students playing basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, and baseball. There also was a practice for the cheerleading team.

Students and staff members played basketball in the school’s gym. Because it has air conditioning, the gym was a good place for the students on a hot June afternoon. The basketball activities varied in intensity with the number of players.

One day, eight students shot hoops at each end of the court. It seemed like a desultory practice, with not much instruction. One staff member was very involved with the students. The other spent the time text messaging on the cell phone. Another day, the staff and 10 to 20 boys played a series of games. Because of an upcoming girls’ tournament and school dance, only one girl was at the program that day. Three coaches, Mr. Valencia, and a Youth Services (YS) staff member led the activity and played in the game. An observer wrote:
The staff got the game started after just a few minutes in the gym. Throughout the session, the group spent much more time playing than organizing themselves or waiting. Each initial team had two staff members and three boys. Five boys initially stood on the sidelines, but they began rotating in after about five minutes. Eventually, the teams had one staff member and four boys.

The boys were skilled and played seriously. There was none of the histrionics and yelling so common to pick-up basketball. The sportsmanship among the boys was noteworthy. Although in early adolescence, they were very positive and respectful. The young players showed more maturity than I've seen in many basketball games among adults.

Staffers played hard and with good humor. They passed to the boys quite often. They were good role models. Although the staff did not do much coaching at the beginning, that changed over time. During the first game, Mr. Valencia shot baskets with a few boys on a side court. He talked with them, and other boys came by to see him. It was obvious that the kids were comfortable with him.

Although the quality of competition varied from game to game, the games stayed positive and friendly. One coach, a dominant player, became more active over time. This reduced opportunities for the kids. But generally, there was a good balance between staff initiative and putting the kids first. If a student bested a coach in a one-to-one play, the other coaches howled.

A week in mid-June was devoted to the Junior Olympics. There were many different competitions, including volleyball and soccer. There was volleyball doubles for boys. Twelve boys participated at the beginning of the session. They began playing after a knowledgeable coach gave a brief overview of tournament rules. The coach was very involved in his role of referee. He provided little coaching or encouragement for the players.

The doubles structure was difficult for this group. Not all of the boys were familiar with this the game in this form. Also, they could not cover the court very well. It was rare for the ball to go over the net more than twice in live play. Another Junior Olympics sport was three-on-three soccer. There were nine boys and one staff member. The boys on the sideline rotated into the game. All played hard and seriously.

Another day, 13 students prepared for an upcoming soccer tournament. They began with stretches and running. The focus was on exercise, but not specifically on soccer. At times, though, the coach pulled the students into a group and coached them on the upcoming weekend tournament.

An observer watched a softball throwing practice. There were two lines of players and they threw the ball back and forth among themselves. The coach corrected and encouraged the students with comments like “Good catch!” and “Watch it before you throw it.” The group size varied. Some students played jump rope. Others did sit-ups. A player told the coach that her shoulder was hurt. The coach nursed her and called the office for ice.

The observer also watched a baseball game. There were no bags for bases, but the catcher and batters did wear protective gear. A staff member coached the players. He explained a sacrifice play and told one player to do it, even though the boy did not look happy.

There also was a cheerleading practice. A staff member coached a boy on perfecting his moves as they waited for other team members. She showed him how to control his moves, cup his hands, and extend his movements. The staff member was very helpful and encouraging, and the boy was receptive. Later, one
team member led the others in stretching and jumping jacks. Then, they practiced their routine while staff members coached them on their moves.

**Arts and Other Enrichment**
The one art activity during the field study period was a dance competition that was part of Junior Olympics. The only other non-sports enrichment activity was a cooking class. There were also transition times in which other activities were available.

A staff member teamed up with a YS coach to lead the dance competition. Events included best freestyle, high kick, drill down, and best toe touches. A staff member taught the steps, demonstrated, and allowed a few practice rounds before each event. About 20 students, mostly girls, watched the competition. Between four and seven girls participated in most of the events.

Observers wrote:

The freestyle event was contemporary dance to hip-hop and reggaeton music. Mr. Valencia reminded the girls to “keep it clean. Basically, nothing your dad would not want to see.”

During high kick competition, four girls did timed kicks in a chorus line fashion. The drill down involved a military-style routine. The staff member called out commands and the girls followed. When one missed a step, she was out. Toe touches involved jumping splits where the girls touched their toes. With soccer and volleyball competitions over, the dance competition was the final activity on campus for the day. Some of the more athletic boys participated in the toe touches competition. They were good jumpers and able to compete with the girls. The boys seemed a little embarrassed but tried hard and showed respect to the girls. There was much cheering when the boys joined the activity.

Perhaps the best aspect of the dance competition was the positive social development. The girls cheered for each other and sometimes hugged before individual matches. The boys and girls also cheered for each other and stayed positive. They enjoyed the activity and acted maturely.

Participation was a weak spot in the dance competition. The same girls competed in each event and won the medals. They appeared to have serious dance background. Many more girls only watched the competition, but did not participate.

The data collection also included one observation of a cooking class. There were 15 students in three groups. Each group had an electric frying pan on a table in the corner of the room. They made curried chicken over rice. A teacher from the day school taught the class and two staff members assisted. The students wore plastic gloves and did the cooking. The teacher told them how to properly cut and cook the chicken. The recipe was posted on a white board. The students liked this class and enjoyed themselves.

This ASP took place in the school’s physical education area. At the beginning of the program each day, there was an extended transition time as non-AWFFK students left the area. Staff members set up for the day’s events. Although some students played sports during this time, most stood waiting. Staff sat at the sign-in tables.

Mr. Valencia wants to establish a ballet class, a skate park, and a “Chop Shop” that involves making toy cars. But he expressed some concern about space availability.
Engagement and Classroom Management

Students enjoyed the activities and stayed engaged. In many ways, they modeled how an ASP should work. However, there was almost as much watching and waiting as there was active participation. Observers wrote:

- On the first day of the Junior Olympics, students stood or wandered around before Mr. Valencia initiated any activities.
- Three basketball courts were set up for soccer, but only one game was on. At least 20 boys shot baskets in other courts but did not engage in organized activities.
- During volleyball doubles, there were almost as many boys watching as playing. Eventually, someone brought colored jerseys and then boys rotated in on teams.

Staff members rarely needed to manage the students’ behavior. The students were too involved in playing the games and learning skills to misbehave. They showed dedication and internalized rules for fair play and safety, especially during basketball and the dance competition. The students often seemed to manage themselves.

Staff

The program has enough staff to fulfill its objectives. Mr. Valencia said he has no problems keeping positions filled. Each staff member has been at the site for at least a year. Five staff members have been with the program for five years or more. “High school students help,” he said. “Our former students come here and work with the teams and give high school input into activities.” All the staff members earn $12.00 per hour, except for Mr. Valencia, who earns $16.00 per hour.

YS staff members augment the ASP’s personnel. Mr. Valencia said the two programs mix, functioning as one.

Mr. Valencia said both new and seasoned staff members attend the same training, which includes safety, CPR/first aid, and adolescent behavior management. Mr. Valencia gets additional training in staff relations. He said staff members have received training in student behavior management, classroom management, and understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments “all this year, usually every year.” He believes staffers might benefit from more safety training. “You’ve got to run safe activities, have a safe environment,” he said. “We get a lot of sports injuries.”

Obtaining specialized staff or substitutes is not an issue for Mr. Valencia. “We have such a big staff,” he said. “We don’t use substitutes. Another will cover if one is absent.” He has some staffers who specialize in certain sports, and he said the agency provides adequate training to the rest.

The only area of concern is providing high-quality homework assistance. Most staffers, he said, are university students or recent graduates. “The challenge is getting kids to do the homework,” he said.

The staffers know the students by name and relationships seem positive and comfortable. They supervise sports activities, provide coaching, and ensure safety. “You’ve seen it yourself,” Mr. Valencia told an observer. “Everyone working here gets involved. We hope it carries on to next year. I just think we have great coaches and we all get along.”
Material Resources
The program does not lack for equipment and materials, but it does have a shortage of space. “Everything we asked for, we received,” Mr. Valencia said.

The ASP has no classroom space, but will start the 2008-09 school year with eight classrooms for homework assistance. This allows for a 22-to-1 student/staff ratio. The space allotment was the result of a month of conversations between the agency and the school. Several agency administrators supported Mr. Valencia’s request. The compromise involved moving some seventh-period/homework classes so the ASP could have classrooms near the gym.

Despite the lack of classroom space, the school provides other resources for the program. “We have access to the computer lab and we have a computer class,” Mr. Valencia said. “The computer teacher works with us after school, [staying] here until 5 p.m. The library is open, but we have not taken the kids there. It’s on the other side of the campus…too far.”

Mr. Valencia is satisfied with the quantity and quality of snacks. “The kids say they want better food, like a school meal,” he said. “Usually, it’s cookies, juice, and fruit.”

He is happy that custodians clean the playground. “We implemented a no-food-after-school policy, so there’s less trash,” he said. “The gym is always clean.”

Relationship with the School
Mr. Valencia said the school supports the ASP. His primary contact person is an assistant principal, though. He also works with other administrators. He said their relationship is great, and his contact is always available. “He gives us ideas,” he said. “He announces to the school when we win at a tournament.” They communicate in person, by phone or through messages. Common topics are safety procedures, fire drills, and sports.

Staffers also have good contact with day school teachers. “They participate in teachers-versus-students games,” Mr. Valencia said. “We help them out with tutoring.” Some teachers also lead enrichment activities:

  Toward the middle of the year, teachers bring their seventh-period classes and we run physical activities while they supervise. The teachers do the academic and we do the physical. For students-versus-teacher soccer, we needed 15 teachers and they promote it to the kids. We do that with all the traditional sports.

The school does not share students’ testing or assessment scores with the ASP.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
The program has strong connections with both parents and the community. Mr. Valencia said staffers communicate regularly with most parents. They talk at weekend activities and at pick-up time, usually about safety, improving skills, and setting goals. The program tries to involve parents in weekend tournaments. The program also recruits and announces special events through letters. Even with all this, Mr. Valencia worries about “the kids that are not in weekend activities. Then we don’t get to know the parents as much. We need to get a few more parents involved.”

Mr. Valencia said staff members know the area because they once attended Virgil or other nearby schools. Also, the ASP plays in leagues and tournaments at local parks. “We take the dance team to the
local festival,” he said. “We play in leagues all over the city,” including those at the YMCA and local parks.

During the 2007-08 school year, a local bike shop led a bike club. Also, a local veterinarian’s office allowed the ASP to use its parking lot for a car wash fundraiser. And local trophy shops provide discounts on medals and trophies “It’d be great to get more businesses to help us out,” Mr. Valencia said. “Fundraisers, that’s one of the weak points.”

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The ASP’s relationships with the agency and Beyond the Bell are quite different. Mr. Valencia said the agency is supportive. “They’re always here or giving training at their office.” We’re small, so we can just call and get somebody.” However, the ASP has little to no contact with Beyond the Bell.

Attendance
Observations of this program took place at the end of the school year. Few students attended on some days. Tournaments, which were a major incentive for attendance, were over. Mr. Valencia said the program was much busier a few weeks earlier.

The ASP’s own activities recruit students and encourage attendance. “We have a lot of tournaments and that keeps the kids coming back,” Mr. Valencia said. “We do promotions during lunch time. Our kids wear their jerseys to school.” Absences are a rare problem. “We have a lot of kids who are here five days a week,” he said. “The coaches are demanding. You’ve got to practice to play.” The program has no wait list.

AWFFK works closely with YS. In the words of Mr. Valencia, “We’re one big team.” Although the nearby P.F. Bresee Foundation program serves Virgil students, he does not consider that program to be a competitor.

Safety & Security
Mr. Valencia said the ASP had a security problem at the beginning of the year, but school administrators solved it by hiring more security guards and closing a gate. Though the area is “full of gangs,” there have been no fights for six months.

Security for property also improved over the year. “We haven’t had any vandalism lately,” Mr. Valencia said. “We used to have graffiti, but that stopped. We had training on how to walk the campus and meetings on how to keep our eyes open.”

Mr. Valencia mentioned taking attendance for unaffiliated students. Observers noted that many students on the site seemed to have no organized activities or involvement with any program. This did not present a security problem.

Conclusions and Comments
Although data collection occurred late in the year and many activities had already concluded, important characteristics of this ASP were evident. The major strengths of this program are the staff and the sports activities. Staff members are experienced and knowledgeable. They build skills and engage the students in a positive manner. The students are comfortable with them. The students participate actively and skillfully in a variety of sports and related physical activities. Most importantly, they enjoy playing with their peers and the staff.
The atmosphere promotes positive social development for the students. They act like good sports and display a noteworthy level of maturity, even when competing against each other.

The ASP seems very successful in filling its niche. Dedicated students derive important benefits. It is likely, though, that some needs are going unmet. Those not interested in sports would have little to do in this program. Also, the students eliminated at the beginning of the year might be the ones that most need to be involved in an ASP like this. The ASP and the school should consider ways of reaching a broader population.

Within the program, there were times when participation was less than optimal. There was a lot of waiting-around time, and some students stayed on the sidelines. Improved planning could promote greater participation.

This ASP has good relationships with administrators, parents and the community. The agency has also been supportive.

Between this ASP and Bresee, Virgil enjoys a rich array of after-school activities. Probably no other middle school in the city can equal these offerings. However, the two programs do not really function in concert. Instead, they tend to siphon students from each other, even though there is little overlap. At some point, the managers of these agencies should meet and discuss whether it would be worthwhile to integrate the programs. It could result in a richness and response to student needs unparalleled at LAUSD.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Emerson Middle School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1650 Selby Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90024</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Principal               | Katherine Gonnella |

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 1183
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 58.9% Hispanic
  - 21.3% Black
  - 11.8% White
  - 5.5% Asian
  - 1.9% Filipino
  - .4% American Indian/Alaskan
  - .2% Pacific Islander

- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 20.5%

- **English Language Learners**
  - Total: 243
  - 205 Spanish
  - 16 Other
  - 7 Korean
  - 9 Farsi
  - 4 Pilipino
  - 1 Cantonese
  - 1 Russian

## After-School Program Profile

### After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)

**After-School All-Stars**

- Ana Campos
- anacampos@la-allstars.org
- 323-957-4426

- **# ASP Students**: 256
- **Average Days of Attendance**: 65
  - % < 36 Days: 46%
  - % 36-71 Days: 12%
  - %72-107 Days: 16%
  - % > 107 Days: 27%
  - % of Capacity: 66%

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 762 |
| API – 2007 | 757 |
Ms. Gonnella spent hours and considerable effort last year notifying Beyond the Bell of her dissatisfaction with After School All Stars at Emerson Middle School. As a result, the agency was replaced and a new one assigned to her campus. “School work was not a priority for them,” Ms. Gonnella said. Low enrollment was the norm, with an average of 25 students each day. Program leaders left classrooms messy and broke a window in the cafeteria.

“Last year, there was virtually no academic enrichment,” Ms. Gonnella said. “After a minimal effort in homework assistance, they played video games, played music, or had free play. The after-school staff never made any overtures to connect with teaching staff. There was no effort to communicate. They did their own thing and did not respond to suggestions from the principal.”

Ms. Gonnella says this year’s replacement ASP is much better. Initial enrollment is high and there is a waiting list. A review of program elements from last year’s ASP reveals an informal, highly casual approach by the Agency, minimal offerings, poor supervision, and no communication--- all factors that lead to the ultimate removal of ASA from Emerson Middle School.

Components
Successful homework assistance should include communication between the ASP staff and teachers, Ms. Gonnella said. Program leaders should know homework assignments and should have agency-provided training in classroom management, study strategies and tutoring. “They must have this to gain the respect of the students,” Ms. Gonnella said. ASA had none of those elements.

Academic enrichment did not occur last year. This year’s ASP incorporated Ms. Gonnella’s suggestions, adding enrichment classes that emphasize literacy, technology and fun reading exercises. Ms. Gonnella wants to see science lessons, filmmaking classes, and computer instruction to teach research skills.

Last year, sports did not coordinate or cooperate with Youth Services. The principal believes sports should include formal and informal activities so students engage regardless of whether they are competitive. Staff should survey the students to learn their skill level and interests. Ms. Gonnella likes intramural competition and supports skill development, especially for students not often involved in athletics. She wants lacrosse or other non-traditional sports offerings.

In fine and performing arts last year, the only positive comments Ms. Gonnella provided were in reference to a music experience provided by program leaders who were in a rock band. They brought instruments to campus and played almost every day, sometimes instructing a few students. “The students seemed to like the staff because they didn’t ask much of them,” Ms. Gonnella said. “They just played music all afternoon.” This year, Ms. Gonnella wants greater variety in creative and performing arts classes, especially theater. She hopes there will be a drama production.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Except for complaints about the mess in their classrooms, Emerson teachers had no comments about After School All Stars. They knew nothing about what occurred and saw no impact from the program in their classes. Effective homework assistance on the other hand, added the principal, would get positive
recognition from teachers. She said some parents liked the music element if their students were among those that learned to play an instrument. Some parents complained of too little supervision.

**Agency and District Support**

Ms. Gonnella reported a total lack of support for ASA by the agency. She found it passive, non-responsive, and without direction or resources. She said her many suggestions went unheeded, including her requests for more monitoring. Beyond the Bell, however, was very responsive “to our multiple problems.” She was very happy with the support she received and pleased with BTB actions.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

Ms. Gonnella said she felt ASA should be not be placed at any school unless there is extensive monitoring by the District. She felt supported by Beyond the Bell with their decision, after her complaints, to replace this program. Her new ASP reacts to her suggestions and conducts sound programs with an emphasis on academic support. It also offers a variety of activities.
Case Study Observations
After-School All Stars (ASAS)
Emerson Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Emerson Middle School (a 6-8 school) located in Westwood. After-School All-Stars (ASAS) is the sponsor. Mr. Cole Strom leads the program.

Highlights
An impressive supply of equipment and materials distinguishes this site. These items include sports equipment, drums and electric instruments for the rock band, video game consoles (Xbox and Wii) and computers for playing video games, board games, a D.J. turntable, and a mobile kitchen cart for cooking class. Many activities, including those that most engaged the students, revolved around use of the equipment. For example, students got very involved with basketball, the video games, the D.J. turntable, and the musical instruments.

Homework & Academics
The first hour of the ASP was Countdown, considered the academic portion of the day. During this time, students worked on homework or other academic activities. The program has access to three adjacent classrooms. Data collectors observed homework time in each on two days. Students had no homework on the other two days because of testing and the approaching end of the year, so they socialized during Countdown.

The students showed moderate engagement during this time. Many worked on homework, discussed schoolwork, or read. Those who had completed their homework or did not have any worked on a new activity, Time Stat/Quo, consisting of worksheets created by the staff. These had multiple-choice questions on numerical facts from Time magazine, like the number of calories in a Big Mac or the number of steps in a mile. The questions did not reflect academic content at the middle school level. The students seemed engaged and interested. Staff members corrected their Stat/Quo work. Students also played board games and socialized.

On one occasion, as the students finished up their homework and the Stat/Quo sheets, they began talking with one of the adults. He was a student volunteering from UCLA. The students asked what it is like to be on the college swim team, as well as how he decided where to go to college and how he is paying for college. The volunteer answered their questions and explained how he won a sports scholarship.

Supervision and support varied across classrooms. Conflicts between students and staff were common and disruptive. Although noise levels fluctuated, they were often too loud to promote concentration. In one classroom, the regular teacher tried to finish her work and instill some order. She walked past the observer and muttered, "You should have been here five minutes ago." Later, boys in one corner of the room became disruptive. A staff member scolded them from the opposite corner of the room. In one group, the staff member played a game of Battleship with one student and chatted with another while the rest worked on homework. Although he did exercise some classroom management, he did not leave his seat or engage any students in academic conversations.

The sixth-graders’ room proved most challenging. There were about 25 students in the crowded, noisy room, and others came and went. Games in the back of the room distracted some students. Their conflicts with staff members about when to use the games added to the noise. About half of the students worked on assignments or Stat/Quo at any one time. A female staff member distributed papers. Boys repeatedly
called out her name in a loud and demanding manner. It seemed something of a game. They continued even after a male staff member and the site coordinator told them to stop. As she finished, she told them that she would not answer “if you scream my name.”

Staff members offered some academic support and corrected Stat/Quo sheets, but most of their time was devoted to behavior control. The site coordinator said volunteers do the tutoring. Staff members focus on supervision or one-to-one help. The ASP does not offer activities focusing on academic enrichment.

**Enrichment**

Blast-off followed Countdown and snack time and offered a broad range of enrichment and recreational activities. These included cooking, model car building, playing hip-hop D.J., performing in a rock band, and playing video games, basketball, and football. The site coordinator said students like the band and D.J., video games like Xbox 360 and Wii, and sports.

The site has computers and video game consoles. Data collectors observed students playing tennis, bowling, and auto racing games on the equipment. Up to three played at one time and others sometimes watched them.

Three students built model cars. They followed directions and pictures to assemble the models and the staff member helped them. This activity clearly engaged the students.

The site coordinator wants to add gardening, drill team, and a student store. Challenges seemed to involve working with the school: getting administrators to install an irrigation system, taking over the school’s drill team and replacing the current leader, and coordinating with the school’s current student store.

**Sports and Recreation**

Data collectors observed organized basketball and football activities. Whether playing or on the sidelines, staff members provided structure and supervision. Participating groups ranged from six to 25 students, usually boys. The students seemed to enjoy themselves.

**Arts**

The cooking class had four girls on one day and three on another. With instruction and supervision from a staff member, they learned to make salsa and barbecue chicken salad. For the latter, two girls stood by and watched as the third browned boneless chicken breasts on an electric grill. The staff member sat close by coaching the cook and talking with the students. There seemed to be a special bond with this woman, who was old enough to be their grandmother.

Other students arrived and the staff member began serving salads. She told the observer that she was trying to get the students to eat healthier. As the cook sat down with her salad, the staff member said something about this being good “for when you get married.” The girl replied, "When I get married, he better cook for me!" Everyone laughed. Later, the staff member asked her if she cooked at home. She said that she sometimes does. The staff member asked if her cooking did not please her mom. The girl nodded. "I hear what you're saying," the staff member said.

The hip-hop D.J. class had eight students. The session began with the staff member setting up a dual-turntable CD player. He had problems setting it up. They were about 20 minutes into the session before the first student could to try his hand at the turntable. The staff member demonstrated and explained D.J. techniques for three students. A boy and a girl attempted some. While these students focused on the activity, the other five carried on an animated conversation. They received little supervision or enrichment.
The rock band is an important activity at Emerson. The site coordinator proudly showed an observer some photos of the day the band performed at UCLA for an agency-sponsored event. Two band members joined the conversation and talked about the crowd response. This class was in session during each of the four days of observation. Up to six students participated. Others watched. A staff member demonstrated parts of songs and filled in as vocalist or drummer when band members were missing. The band’s music included original compositions by the band members. The band members worked well together.

The staff member was supportive and encouraging in the development of the students’ music skills and teamwork. He also allowed room for competing priorities. One day, the band’s usual vocalist became engrossed in reading Elie Wiesel’s *Night*. She decided to continue reading through practice. The staff member supported her decision.

The rock band members had their difficulties. An observer describes a practice session:

> When I arrived, the boys were playing a credible version of Black Sabbath's "Iron Man." The staff member was rapping some original lyrics over the music. The final lines repeated the sentence "knowledge is great."

> Between songs, the staff member demonstrated a bass line and told a guitarist about the guitar part. There was tension between the staff member and one guitarist. The boy did not want the band to play a song he wrote because they were not going to play it the way he wanted. He seemed calm but insistent about the matter. While continuing to instruct another guitarist and without turning around, the staff member told the boy, “Dude, don't be like that,” and, "You're being a baby." Finally, he told the boy to go to another room. The boy put on his jacket and calmly walked out of the room.

> The staffer asked a colleague to watch the room. He then went out after the boy. About 20 minutes later, when I was leaving the site, the two talked outside with the site coordinator, who told the boy to apologize to another boy, and acknowledge the staff member’s authority to the band, before returning to practice.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Observers saw four levels of engagement in the program. At the highest level, students directly participating in enrichment activities like the rock band, cooking class, or sports usually were highly engaged. Countdown was at the next level, with about half of the students actively involved in schoolwork or Stats/Quo at any one time. The third level reflected students watching others participate in enrichment. The lowest level of engagement occurred among students who chatted between bungalows, and along a wall near the playground, during activities.

Smaller student groups required little classroom management by staff. Countdown, with 20 or more students in one room, required more effort. Staff members spent more time and effort on classroom management than homework assistance during Countdown.

**Staff**

The site coordinator seems pleased with staffing and support at this site. He told an observer program leaders earn between $10.00 and $13.00 per hour depending on experience, and it is not difficult to keep positions filled. High school volunteers help in homework and sports, and UCLA student mentors serve as tutors a few days a week. These volunteers and tutors provide homework assistance while the staff
member manages the class. The site coordinator said he has no trouble finding substitutes or specialized staff.

There are quarterly, organization-wide trainings for all staff members. New staff members also receive orientation and regional training. The site coordinator said the quarterly training addresses homework assistance and other academic areas. The site coordinator said staffers could benefit from training in classroom management and emergency procedures.

**Material Resources**
The program has the use of three classrooms. One is dedicated; the other two host classes during the day. Although the classrooms are large enough, they can get crowded and noisy. Sometimes students had to sit on crates or on the floor. An observer noted that furniture in the dedicated ASP room consists of cast-offs. A number of chairs are broken.

The site coordinator reports limited access to other campus facilities. The library closes at 4:30 p.m. The program has not requested use of the school’s computer lab because it closes after school. The program does have access to substantial outdoor space for sports. The facilities are clean. The site coordinator reports that the students hate the snacks, but the staff finds them acceptable. He recommends more variety.

The site coordinator has talked with an assistant principal about adding more space for program use. He said he has stopped asking because nothing ever happens.

If the ASP lacks space, it has plenty of equipment for sports, music and entertainment. The cooking cart includes an electric grill, a microwave oven, drawers for equipment, and a sizeable countertop.

**Relationship with the School**
The site coordinator has a tenuous relationship with the school. On the final day of data collection, June 17, 2008, the program’s status for 2008-09 was still not clear. A staff member announced to students that the ASP would not be back at Emerson next year, but the site coordinator told an interviewer that same day that the principal has not yet decided whether to cancel the program.

The site coordinator worries about safety and security and said he gets “minimal administrative support.”

The program has contact with assistant principals and teachers. The site coordinator noted that he speaks in person with one assistant principal each week. His primary contact at the school, another assistant principal, tends to require an appointment. The frequency of communication with this administrator varied from multiple times per week to none. Staff members coordinated with the two teachers whose rooms the ASP uses. Teachers also participated in cooking and gardening classes. A staff member gave an English teacher a Jeopardy game and helped her learn to use it. The site coordinator spoke of a great relationship with some of the teachers.

The site coordinator’s comments regarding additions to the program reveal friction with school administrators:

> He would like to have a drill team, because there is already practice after school. The challenge would be finding the right person to lead it. He would also like to have a student store similar to the store the school currently operates, but with ASP students operating the student store so they could acquire business skills. The challenge would be working it out with the school. Advertising and merchandise choice would also be issues.
Relationships with Parents and the Community
In contrast to the relationship with the school, the ASP has positive relationships with parents and the community. Communication with parents most often occurred when they arrived to pick up their students. They talked about upcoming events and other developments. Some parents stayed as long as an hour to watch the activities. One parent brought all the materials for an activity and made cake.

The site staff members know the community because they live nearby. The site coordinator said business owners strongly support the program and neighbors have not complained. Jamba Juice donated smoothies and Albertson’s donated the cooking cart.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The site coordinator has positive relationships with the agency and with Beyond the Bell. The agency has provided training and material resources. He said the site has ample supplies and gets everything it needs. However, he wants an agency administrator to visit the site. There is a positive relationship with Youth Services at the site. Their participants came to the ASP for homework and the Youth Services site coordinator checked on them.

Attendance
There is no wait list for this ASP. Staff members recruit new participants during lunchtime once a week. The program also hosts five or six special events during the school year. The site coordinator walks the area during program time “to find all the strays out on campus.” The program also relies on student word-of-mouth. The school has suffered an enrollment decrease, and that has affected program enrollment.

Safety & Security
The site coordinator worries about safety and security on campus, noting there are no security personnel past 4 p.m. In addition, the classroom where the program stores equipment and materials was the subject of four break-ins during the school year. He expressed concern that many people at the school have keys to the room.

Many students stayed on campus after school, but not to participate in ASP activities. Some were involved with West Youth Services, but many others appeared to participate minimally in ASP activities. The site coordinator spoke of patrolling the campus, finding “strays” and including them in attendance. It is likely that these students were supposed to attend the program but in reality did not participate or receive much supervision.

The cooking and rock band classes presented safety risks managed in very different ways. Though they used a hot grill and sharp knives, the girls in the cooking club were in little danger. The staff member provided close supervision and maintained a calm atmosphere in the room. The members of the rock band faced a different type of risk. They played their music at very high volume in a bid to imitate their rock music idols. The noise level, sustained for extended periods, likely exceeded district safety standards.

Conclusions
The ASP depends on its material resources. Inadequate classroom space constrains homework and academic programming. But the wealth of recreation equipment provides opportunities for interesting enrichment activities. Those few students who participate in them become deeply involved, while others only watch and chat.
Some students in Countdown appear to have no homework or to have finished it early. Many do not attempt academic work within the hour. The classes are crowded and noisy.

An ongoing concern for the program was the school campus. The site coordinator said space limitations and security concerns interfere with the program. In addition, school administrators do not support the program.
# Site Profile

## Art Share Los Angeles

32nd Street/USC Performing Arts Magnet

*Source: LAUSD*

## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site Profile</th>
<th>32nd Street/USC Performing Arts Magnet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>822 w. 32nd St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90007</td>
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## Principal

Laverne Brunt

## School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.0% Hispanic</td>
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<td>22.8% Black</td>
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<td>2.6% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3% Filipino</td>
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<tr>
<td>.1% Pacific Islander</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 16.6% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 113 |
| 98 Spanish | |
| 7 Korean | |
| 6 Other | |
| 2 Armenian | |

## After-School Profile

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<tr>
<td>(central office location)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tracy Kelly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:tracy@artsharela.org">tracy@artsharela.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-687-4278</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th># ASP Students</th>
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<td>Average Days of Attendance</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 72-107 Days</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 762 |
| API – 2007 | 737 |
Ms. Becker, supervisor of this ASP, spoke with enthusiasm about many Art Share Los Angeles elements, especially the opportunity to enlighten students about art and creative expression through meaningful activities. She was also candid in pointing out several weaknesses, although the deficits did not appear to detract from the value of the experiences or outweigh program benefits.

A review of program components and extra-organizational relationships shows an energetic and successful program which could be enhanced through staff guidance and organizational modifications. Ms. Becker said the program could improve in the following areas: (1) training staff in class management; (2) coaching the homework staff to help them understand and implement “differentiated” instruction; (3) a renewed effort to communicate with teachers; (4) a program to offer academic assistance based on CST scores; (5) some scheduled aerobic exercise for the students each afternoon and (6) additional performing arts classes.

Components

Homework assistance, in Ms. Becker’s view, should help participants primarily in math and English. She believes more training could help Art Share staff be much more effective in this area. Learning how to form groups to differentiate homework activities could allow staffers to focus on individual students’ needs and empower pupils to learn through helping each other. Ms. Becker says the focus of homework assistance is lost if all students are expected to do the same thing. Better management is also needed.

The Magnet Coordinator would like to see a period of exercise or outdoor activity scheduled each afternoon before students settle in to additional academic activities. They need to release some energy after school lets out.

The program does not offer specific academic enrichment classes, but Ms. Becker hopes that, with her help, staff can use CST data to identify deficit areas. This information can help refine homework help and allow development of a plan to offer test readiness next spring.

Fine Arts activities are “fabulous,” Becker said. The program offers a wide variety of experiences and instruction in visual arts, drama, and performing arts. Future additions could include music and dance. Supplementing current activities with dance would serve to provide the exercise Ms. Becker believes would improve student attentiveness. She would like to see a final dramatic performance added to parallel the annual arts show.

This ASP does not offer sports activities, but Ms. Becker stressed again the need for some aerobic break or opening exercise. She also suggests an occasional competition between the various on-campus after-school programs, like Youth Services, YMCA, Art Share L.A., and Blast. There are no difficulties coordinating these programs and Ms. Becker commented that Youth Services “takes a back seat” to the numerous components of Art Share Los Angeles which enrich students’ lives.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

Teachers echo Ms. Becker’s opinion that Art Share staff needs training in class management, perhaps provided by the school and the agency together. They are pleased, on the other hand, that 32nd Street pupils have a safe, supervised place to spend each afternoon. The teachers also want to see some type of data-driven endeavor that addresses academic weaknesses and coaches students to improve their CST test scores. As with all ASPs that use teacher classrooms, there is ongoing friction over missing materials and messy classrooms.
Parents are happy with homework assistance and a safe, supervised program. Ms. Becker has had no complaints from parents, but she has heard them express a need to integrate dance and music with other fine arts sections. During the period of recruiting, parents asked for a program telephone number.

**Agency and District Support**
Ms. Becker does not believe she has any influence on Art Share Los Angeles agency planning, but did not express concern over this. She finds the agency staff responsive, quick to resolve issues and easy to call. To date, she has had no need to ask for interventions. Beyond the Bell helped her set up the elementary program. She found the staff helpful and said they do their best. The few minor program problems have been resolved through agency support.

Other improvements could include more money from the agency to hire day school teachers and a get-acquainted meeting or professional development gathering, to improve rapport.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Ms. Becker lauded Art Share Los Angeles for its annual art show. But she said student attendance in the program suffers the same problem here as in other middle schools.

“They attract enough students at the beginning of the year, but fall off because students don’t want to be monitored and parents can’t make their students go,” she said. “It’s different with the elementary…."

Ms. Becker would like to see a stronger, yearlong recruitment effort for the program, which serves a broad spectrum of students. She repeated that she is happy to have Art Share Los Angeles at her school, and hopes that it continues.
Case Study Observations
Art Share Los Angeles (ASLA)
32nd Street/USC Performing Arts Magnet School

Introduction
This program serves middle school students at 32nd Street/USC Performing Arts Magnet School (a K-8 school) in south Los Angeles. The sponsor is Art Share Los Angeles. The site coordinator is Ms. Lizette Gastelum.

Highlights
The program this year was led by a community-based arts organization and took place at a magnet school for the performing arts. Accordingly, the program focused on enrichment in the arts. Observers witnessed students painting, drawing, acting, producing videos, editing photos by computer, and learning photography. The students took their activities very seriously. Staff members supported their work and didn’t have to focus on classroom management or motivating the students, because the arts activities themselves did the job.

Homework
There was limited observation of homework during the data collection period. There was no homework during two observation days in June. (One was the last day of school; the other day was dedicated to preparing for the students’ art show.) On one of the two May observation days, the eighth-graders reported that they had no homework because of state testing.

The observed homework sessions were separated by grade level and had many positive attributes. The -sixth-grade group asked many questions and stayed focused on homework. The seventh-graders helped each other with their homework. During this session, parents came to pick up their students. One told the staff member, “I am so grateful for this program.” In both groups, the staff members were attentive and helpful. When students finished their homework, they worked on art projects, like making flowers from construction paper or using Photoshop software.

The eighth-grade group had no homework one afternoon, but the alternative activity was not readily discernible to the observer. The session is described below:

None of the students have any homework to work on. They say their teachers have not given them homework because they just finished taking the CSTs. All the students sign in. The room is very quiet. One other student comes in and says he is going to get a board game. Immediately, the other students tell him to be quiet because they are "being evaluated." The instructor is also quietly sitting at a table doing some paperwork. He does not indicate to the students what they should be doing. It seems as if they are waiting for me to leave in order to begin whatever activity they have planned.

The site coordinator spoke of homework assistance as a strong area for this ASP. She was asked whether it was a challenge to have staff at this site who can provide high-quality homework assistance. She responded:

No, because all the teachers know their strengths. If there is something that one cannot do, he or she refers the student to one of the other teachers that is good at it. I help a lot, too. I think homework assistance is good. It doesn’t need much improvement; maybe just more time for the kids to ask the teachers things.
Academics and Sports
Observers did not view any activities related to academics, sports, or physical activity. Beyond homework assistance, all of the programming was arts enrichment. Observers only observed two typical days at the site. Each of the other two days focused on a single activity. It is possible that the observers missed academic and sports activities, but the site coordinator did not mention either of these areas in her interview.

Arts
For the students and the staff, this is an arts program. When asked about the ASP activities that students like the most, the site coordinator said, “They love the art. They are really involved in that and they love to make the art.”

Throughout the spring semester, the ASP prepared for an end-of-year art show. During three data collection days, the students’ activities focused on this culminating event. One afternoon consisted of the students setting up for the art show, which was to be that evening. The projects for the show included a visual arts installation, photography projects, and a video project. Observers witnessed students’ activities in each of these three areas.

On one day when students prepared for the visual art installation, five students worked on drawing and painting. An observer noted how quiet the class was. Also during this time, one of the students told the observer, "art makes me think. I use what’s around me to create art." Another day, four students worked on planning the installation itself. They painted a bird’s-eye view of the cafeteria so they could decide how they would use the space. The class was very quiet as the students concentrated on their work.

Eight girls kept busy with photography projects. Two girls took pictures of each other wearing masks they had made. Two other girls used Photoshop to edit pictures the group had taken. The four other girls made flowers of construction paper for another series of pictures they would shoot. The instructor laid out some pictures the girls had taken so they could choose the ones they liked best. The images were of the girls posing with each other using some of the items they had made in the class, such as masks or signs. Each photo had a caption on it. For example, in one of the pictures a girl is holding a book and the caption reads, "Don't be a cheetah!" (which was a play on the word "cheater"). Later in the day, when these girls finished their homework, they returned to making flowers and editing with Photoshop.

There also was a class on video making. One day, the subject was old fables. Another, it was a dog and his shadow. The students managed the project, which included choosing a director and actors. A 12-year old boy was the director for the video on fables. “The instructor is very flexible and supportive,” said an observer. “He allows the students to come up with their own ideas and supports and encourages those ideas.”

Asked what activities she would like to add, the site coordinator responded:

I would like to challenge them more when it comes to art. They don’t want it easy. They want fun stuff . . . but they want to create more challenging art, like sculpture or something -- just more challenging art projects. I haven’t had any challenges in this area. Our teachers are very capable at doing this stuff.

Other Enrichment
When it was impractical to conduct regular activities, staffers relied on movies and card games. On the last day of school, the program had 11 students in the sixth and seventh grade, and no eighth-graders. The
students watched a movie and ate snacks. All staff members were in the room and the students were to stay there until it was time for them to go home. Another day, a staff member played cards with the one student who was still on site and waiting for a parent at the end of the day.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**
Observers consistently saw the students engaged in productive activities during homework and arts enrichment time. This included both individual and group work. The students took responsibility for their projects.

The observers’ notes contained very little related to classroom management. Interesting activities engaged the students, and the staff members facilitated their creativity. The only challenge to classroom management was tardiness, but the program has a procedure in place. Students arrived late to the video production class during both observations. Those who had a note could stay in class, but the others had to leave and get a note. An observer noted that “one girl seemed very bothered that she was called on being late. She stomped off to get a note …. Kids said to her, ‘Don't be late next time’.” The program also used field trips as an incentive for students to arrive on time.

**Staff**
The site coordinator spoke positively about staffing at the ASP. “I don’t have a problem keeping the positions filled,” she said. “The teachers really like what they do.” Asked whether she had had problems securing substitutes and specialized staff, she replied:

> No, we’re good for the most part. The teachers are here and they are on time. If they need a substitute they let me know well in advance. All of our teachers are great artists and we’ve never had a problem getting good people.

The site used volunteers in the past, but stopped because they were not consistent. The staff members at the site earn salaries. The site coordinator earns $1,300.00 per month and the other staff members earn $1,200.00 per month. The work schedule for all of them is 3 p.m. to 6 p.m..

All staff members, both new and experienced, received summer training and ongoing training during the school year. “It is nice that we train every summer,” the site coordinator said. “It’s nice to reflect every summer.” She also said she observes classes and works with the staff to improve practices. Asked about training in student behavior management, classroom management, or understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments, she said staffs receive all three, especially behavior management. She said more training in classroom management and communication with parents would be most beneficial to the staff.

Observers said the site was well-staffed and personnel were actively engaged with students. They provided assistance for homework and materials for art activities. Staff members also gave the students choices, listened to them, and encouraged their ideas and creativity. “It’s great to see the teacher taking direction from the kids,” an observer said.

**Material Resources**
Observers said the program has classroom space for its art activities, as well as materials and equipment. But the site coordinator said things could improve in this area.

> It takes a while for us to get supplies. Maybe it’s our fault for not asking for things in a timely fashion, but when we ask for stuff it takes a while to get to us.
The program has enough space and “no issues” in that area. They have access to computers in the classrooms, but the library’s early closing time limits access for the ASP.

The site coordinator said the snacks provided by the school are “okay.” “The kids will always want better stuff, but it’s fine,” she said. “A little more variety would be nice.”

She seemed resigned regarding the school’s cleanliness and janitorial services. “By the time we get here, what can we expect?” she said. “I see [custodians] working all the time.”

Relationship with the School
The site coordinator communicates well with the school and considers that an ASP strength. She is not sure of her primary contact’s title. She calls her a project manager. They talk in person and see each other three times a week to review general operations and bring up specific issues. She is pleased with the contact person’s follow-through.

“We have a great relationship and she’s open to giving me whatever I need,” the site coordinator said. “She also refers kids to me and offers suggestions. I can talk to her. She’s great.”

The site coordinator sees weakness in the level of staffer communication with teachers. “I make sure I get monthly calendars for [staff members] so they know what is going on on campus,” she said. “I tell them how important it is to keep a good relationship with the teachers.” Even so, she sees more room for staffers to reinforce what teachers do during the day. There is no uniform method for staffers to learn of students’ homework.

We go by the students, unless I know something is going on . . . a lot of the times, the teacher will tell me. Like I know that all the eighth-grade teachers have assigned a history research paper, so we know the kids have to work on that . . . . I also read the boards and see what is written on the board in terms of homework. The kids are a good way, though, because if one says that he doesn’t have homework, but the other does and they are in the same class, then we know.

The school does not share students’ testing or assessment scores with the program, and the program does not do its planning with the teachers. The site coordinator did comment, however, on her efforts to work with the teachers. “I have tried to help with the GATE portfolios and I submit stuff in their boxes to let them know that I can help if they need anything,” she said.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
The site coordinator described positive relationships with the parents, but no relationship with the community.

She said parents must first sign out the students with her and then sign out in the classroom with the staff member if they are taking students home. Thus, both the site coordinator and the staff member have a chance to talk with individual parents every day. She also noted that parents sometimes bring supplies to the program. “We don’t really have any weak point in this area,” she said.

The program has no partners among community organizations or local businesses. However, the site coordinator did say the ASP is “pretty involved with the USC community” because of the school’s strong link to the university.
Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell

Although the site coordinator expressed concerns about not receiving supplies promptly, she said she has a good relationship with the agency. “We work very well together,” she said. “We have no problems.” She knew less about the ASP’s relationship with Beyond the Bell. “I’m not really in contact with them,” she said.

Attendance

The site coordinator believes the biggest problem facing the ASP is attendance.

There’s a lot of kids here that we could service, but because this is a magnet school, the kids are bused in and they have to be bused out. A lot of parents cannot come to pick up their kids because they work . . . so they rely on the busing.

The program uses multiple techniques to encourage attendance and attract new participants. Among them:

- I check for tardies and absences and communicate with the parents. We also offer incentives like weekly walking field trips. This gives the kids an incentive to be on time so that they can go on the field trips. To attract new students, we go to the classes every semester and promote the program. We pass out flyers and put posters up around the school. I put notes in the teacher’s boxes. We also put flyers and posters up in the parent center. The parent center is really supportive. They put out applications for us in their office and we also put stuff up at the Y.

Although there is no competition from other ASPs, there are factors that negatively influence attendance. The site coordinator said early dismissal days, especially professional development Tuesdays, affect attendance. Also, one of the other staff members told an observer that attendance tapers off as the week progresses. The ASP has no wait list and observers sometimes noted low numbers of students.

Safety & Security

Observers noted student involvement with staff members and saw no problems related to safety or security. But the site coordinator saw a problem because of the school’s location just across Jefferson Boulevard from the USC campus:

Well, I’m used to having security on campus 24/7. That’s not the case here. There are adults all over the place, but no security. And the thing is, it is so open here because of USC. The campus is open and all kinds of people are walking around. If I had a security problem, I would probably go to the custodians. So yes, it’s hard with USC’s open campus because the kids want to go and hang out there . . . if they do that, it is hard to make sure they are safe.

Conclusions and Comments

This program fills a unique niche: it is an arts program at an arts school. The students participate in a variety of substantive art projects, including painting, photography, and creating videos. Observers saw students actively engaged and producing significant projects. An end-of-the-year art show served as a focus for activities during the data collection period.

The program exhibited other positive aspects. Students were focused and active during homework time. Staff members were attentive and supportive. The program had enough space, equipment, and materials to support its activities. There was a strong connection with the school’s administration.
The site coordinator suggested some areas for improvement, the most significant being security. Others included improving the relationships with teachers, the community, and Beyond the Bell.

By its very nature, a niche program responds to some needs and not others. The exclusive focus on the arts was the program’s greatest strength and its severest limitation. Given the attendance challenges, planners should consider expanding enrichment offerings to attract more students.
### Site Profile

**Boys & Girls Club (BGC)**

**Blythe Elementary School**

*Source: LAUSD*

### School Site Profile

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<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Blythe Elementary School 18730 Blythe St. Reseda, CA 91335</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Randy Haege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 468
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 70.9% Hispanic
  - 10.7% Asian
  - 7.9% Black
  - 7.7% White
  - 1.9% Filipino
  - 0.6% Pacific Islander
  - 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan

- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 52.3%
- **English Language Learners**
  - Total: 245
  - 200 Spanish
  - 29 Other
  - 9 Vietnamese
  - 5 Pilipino
  - 2 Farsi

### After-School Program Profile

| After School Program Provider Agency (central office location) | Boys & Girls Club
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                              | Jan Sobel
|                                                              | [jansobel@aol.com](mailto:jansobel@aol.com) |
|                                                              | 818-610-1054 |

- **# ASP Students**: 203
- **Average Days of Attendance**: 108
  - % < 36 Days: 15%
  - % 36-71 Days: 15%
  - % 72-107 Days: 17%
  - % > 107 Days: 53%
  - % of Capacity: 122%

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 709 |
| API – 2007 | 729 |
Mr. Haege describes a pleasant, popular and routine ASP without distinctive activities or vision. Boys and Girls Club (B&GC) at Blythe offers conventional, moderately well-supervised activities including group homework assistance, offered in the small auditorium. Besides that venue, the staff has the use of one empty classroom for limited academic enrichment. On rainy days or during extremely hot Valley weather, participants are crowded together under the covered lunch area, considered to be a “facility” for both Youth Services and B&GC.

Mr. Heage has many ideas for element upgrades. Still, he is generally happy with the program. Staffers are organized and responsive, self-reliant and good communicators. He likes the coordinator and says she is active and dedicated. They appear to have an excellent working relationship. This year the agency provides more materials, more equipment, and added staff. In the review of program components, Mr. Haege describes B&GC as a smoothly functioning ASP, and he hopes the agency will plan to add activities that are more challenging in the future.

In his recommendations, Mr. Haege suggests several ideas for upgrading the skills of homework help staff. Significantly, providing additional teacher classrooms is not among them. Training is needed to build academic capacity, but Mr. Haege believes the program leaders are competent to deal with student behavior, despite some pupil suspensions last year. Mr. Haege considers B&GC an adjunct to Blythe Elementary, and staffers are working to improve the program.

Components

**Homework assistance** could improve if program leaders had training in district language arts and math standards. A “coach” for each grade level would be even better, as the added staff would reduce the ratio of leaders to pupils and would increase familiarity between the children and the adults. Mr. Haege believes staffers need to be more developmentally aware.

Plans this year include securing a laptop computer lab for academic enrichment. Mr. Haege also mentions the need for more word games and improved science instruction, perhaps even a science fair. He would like to see daily lessons in science or ecology and, eventually, monitored internet searches.

**Sports and athletics** offerings need more variety. There is a need for more skill development, more varied outdoor activities, and more team sports. Mr. Heage knows B&GC holds tournaments on weekends. He would like to see this kind of competition during ASP time. Three or four sports-related activities, perhaps including tae-bo or field hockey, should be going on at the same time besides soccer.

**Fine and Performing Arts** offerings include some drama, dance and arts and crafts in the late afternoon. More and better materials have improved this element, and Mr. Haege is happy with it. He likes activities that keep the children engaged.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

Teachers do not often comment upon or seem to know very much about B&GC except to say the program needs more structure and better supervision. Even so, they consider it a positive addition to the campus. If it were not there, they say, children “would be running around the streets.” Mr. Haege believes teachers support homework assistance. He acknowledges that, even though the program offers optional academic
enrichment activities, there is little carry-over to the regular school curriculum. Only eighty children participate, so there is little likelihood that standardized test scores are affected.

B&GC is not viewed as an integral contributor to the life of Blythe; the only unanimous opinion teachers have is their wholesale reluctance to have the program operate in their classrooms. Mr. Haege supports this view but points out that next year construction will take several classrooms out of commission, forcing a decision about where to put B&GC.

Parents like the organized activities for their children and the safety of the sign-in and sign-out practice. The program has a waiting list from the opening day of school. The only complaints registered have been by frequently late parents who must pay a fee for their tardiness; parents would like to have a morning program, too.

**Agency and District Support**

There is communication with the agency. Mr. Haege is on their mailing list and he gets a telephone call once a year. Office staffers know whom to contact in the program but have had little need to do so. Mr. Haege says B&GC should thrive if the coordinator’s suggestions are taken into account. Mr. Haege has had virtually no contact with Beyond The Bell, but says it should spend more time observing ASPs.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

It is clear the coordinator is the strength of B&GC. Because of her involvement and commitment, the program has added staff, equipment and materials. She has convinced the agency and the principal of her ability to improve B&GC.
Case Study Observations
Boys & Girls Club
Blythe Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Blythe Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Reseda. The sponsor is the Boys & Girls Club (BGC) of California. Ms. Veronica Perez is the site coordinator.

Highlights
This site had a warm, caring staff of coaches. Some very positive and significant activities occurred at this site: a focus group for female students to help them regarding their self concepts and make the right social decision; and a well developed soccer program that not only taught the techniques of soccer, but also encouraged cooperation, teamwork, and good sportsmanship.

Homework and Academics
Several observers commented on the homework period. Homework assistance was conducted as a group exercise in the small auditorium where four tables were set up on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The very loud level of noise and the facility (the room itself, as well as the small number and short length of tables for some grades) were not optimal for growth or learning to take place.

According to one observer, the homework session was chaotic. An announcement was made over the public address system, but couldn’t be heard due to the noise level. It only increased over the 40-minute period. The site coordinator reminded everyone to quiet down three times during the homework period. When some parents arrived to pick up their children, they shouted above the noise to get the attention of their children. One staff member stood in front of her group sending text messages and doing paper work periodically. She was not paying attention to her table of students. The only male coach disappeared periodically, arm-wrestled with students, or walked around. His group looked bored. He did not provide help for anyone even though four of the students at his table were doing homework.

In another observation, the fourth-grade leader demonstrated an excellent rapport with the mostly boys’ group and showed interest in their work. Another observer said:

The relationship between the program leaders and the students is warm and positive here; if the pupils actually learn anything from this group exercise it is because they are willing to cooperate and please the coaches.

One day, an observer noted that when the bell rang signaling the end of the school day, students went to the bathroom, drank water, and then lined up according to grade level. The coaches then took all students into the auditorium for homework session. The students were seated by grade level, except the fourth- and fifth-graders, who sat in the theater-style seats. These students talked to their friends, ran around, and yelled at each other.

Only the second-graders were completing homework that had been assigned by their classroom teachers. Additionally, the coach working with this group was the only staff member who provided one-on-one help to students struggling with adding fractions with unlike denominators or completing sentences in the correct tense. There was no alternative work offered to students who did not have homework. Some of them ran through the auditorium, while others stood on the stage.

On Tuesdays, the after-school program was displaced from the auditorium (for staff development) to the covered lunch areas where it was cold, uncomfortable, and extremely noisy throughout the 45 minutes. In
the covered outdoor lunch area, the third-grade group worked steadily and students helped each other. The coach helped her group and told the observer that it is much better than when they had the multi-purpose room. It was noted by one observer that the fourth-grade homework group was more distracted than others because of the proximity of the Youth Services group to the covered lunch area to which BGC had been displaced. The Youth Services students sat, got up, wandered, talked, and disturbed others.

During one observation, it was noted that the Youth Services coordinator took a seat in the covered lunch area and students gathered around to get help with homework. They obviously liked him, although he was not affiliated with this program. It was unclear what the Youth Services students were doing while their coordinator helped with homework. The observer noted:

The entire atmosphere during this shortened Tuesday session was one of casualness, loose schedules, lax supervision—but warm and friendly.

A science activity was observed. Students were making a whistle, the Tingler. The teacher modeled and the students copied. Each student was given two small rectangular cardboards, and they had to carefully tape parts of it. The teacher helped them. Some students, while taping, were saying silly things, so the staff member would ask a question and guide the conversation. For example, she asked, "If you had special powers, what would they be?" Students took turns to answer. This strategy helped to avoid silly behavior from certain students.

The site coordinator at Blythe felt confident that she had conquered homework issues. She said her coaches did a sound and consistent job with this daily hour. She felt that the best procedure that she utilized was a personal rubber stamp that each coach had in their possession. The coach looked over the students’ homework and stamped it as completed before they could leave the room to do other activities.

**Arts**

An observation watched first- through fourth-graders doing a butterfly project. They were directed to color a butterfly picture, cut it out, decorate it, and glue the finished product to a large popsicle stick. The site coordinator shared a beautiful finished sample with them.

During one observation period, it was noted that the second-grade coach interacted with her students as they made “secret bells” using hangers and twine; three students created their own game of plastic blocks towers; two students shared a coloring book; two students listened to their iPods; and others played board or handheld computer games.

An observer watched a group in the auditorium during the final 45 minutes of one day. Coaches rolled out a rug, and students selected games from shelves located at the back of the auditorium stage. There were also arts and crafts materials such as colored pencils, crayons, Play-Do, construction paper, etc. Everyone who came in seemed to know what activity he/she would select. This was a comfortable and amiable time for the coaches and kids. Each gravitated toward what he/she enjoyed and everyone had a good time.

Another observer saw the last hour of the day in the multi-purpose room. She noted:

There are games, arts & crafts, clay modeling, and musical chairs. These are the kids that stay until closing and the staff keeps them busy. For all the wild and crazy loose supervision, parents coming and going, and pupils all over the fields and blacktop earlier, the [students are] back in their room and having a warm, friendly time together until 6 p.m.
Sports and Games
Sports activities observed included soccer, volleyball, and basketball. Overall, these activities were organized, supervised, and the coaches encouraged the students.

Soccer was very popular at Blythe. Students participated at every grade level of play and were supervised at all times by one or more coaches. There were drills, formal games, and informal games during almost all hours of the program, except for the 40 minutes used for homework help. Students had a choice of activities during the enrichment period, and boys, in particular, almost always selected soccer.

The outdoor favorite for many girls was volleyball. The coach had a very organized game and watched carefully as the contest progressed, reminding participants how to rotate into the server position, etc. She demonstrated the techniques of getting the ball over the net and helped whoever needed assistance. Playing volleyball allowed everyone to participate or at least have the hope of it. The team members enjoyed the activity. There were a few female Youth Services students involved in this game as well. It was a good exercise and the group was well-led.

On the flip side, some sports events were observed that were not ideal. During one observation, the site coordinator brought out a soccer ball and instructed the only male staff member to play soccer with his group. They discussed whether it was too hot. He decided to sit on a bench with his students. Again, his group did nothing. The male students began playing soccer by themselves. During another soccer observation, two coaches ran this activity with help from the Youth Services Coordinator. There appeared to be no effort to teach skills, but just to rely upon their own knowledge. There was also no warm-up, although the weather was cold.

When asked what activities students liked most in this after-school program, without hesitation, the site coordinator said that soccer was the favorite activity at Blythe. She noted that she purchased additional portable goals this year because of the high interest. Her view regarding the popularity of soccer was confirmed as, aside from the first hour of homework help, there were always multiple games of soccer observed.

Other Enrichment Activities
A small focus group of fourth-grade students called Smart Girls was observed. In this activity, the coach brought up questions and issues that helped the girls talk about safety, self-esteem, relationships, and appropriate choices. During this observation, discussion focused on what self esteem was, and why it was important. It was a positive exchange between the students and the staff, who provided guidance and support. The staff members were empathetic and caring. The success of this event showed the strong and trusting relationship participants had with the coaches after being together for eight months.

The site coordinator believes it would be a good idea to have special speakers or programs to deal with gang awareness, life skills, etc. She believes these speakers would help her participants prepare for middle school and the challenges they will face as they grow up.

Engagement and Classroom Management
The staff demonstrated varying levels of engagement with the students. Some staff members were highly engaged with the children. There was an obvious rapport, mutual respect, and apparent true enjoyment of being together. A few staff members interacted differently with their students. As an example of the latter, one observer noted:
Although there were different activities like sports, science, and art, about 10 to 12 students did not participate in any activities. They sat with staff members and talked to them. Staff members did not engage them in any activity.

The level of engagement by students appeared to vary from activity to activity. The engagement level in homework was not strong. However, the engagement level in sports, particularly soccer, was strong. Additionally, the Smart Girls program demonstrated a high level of engagement of students with the topics at hand and the staff in guiding the discussion of the students.

**Staff**

Staffing was an area of concern at this after-school program. The site coordinator earned $14.00 per hour. The program leaders/coaches earned $9.00 per hour (which was up from minimum wage that was paid two years ago). The pay increase for this position helped retention somewhat. However, turnover of coaches, per the site coordinator, continued to be a problem that “comes and goes all year long.”

The site coordinator stated that she had fairly reliable staff right now and has not had serious problems this year. She added that the Youth Services coordinator helped out and operated as a part of the overall after-school program.

The site coordinator was aware of a BGC plan to have a dance instructor who would go to various sites, but she had not seen that happen yet. She thought that the students would find this a fun activity. Substitute teachers were an ongoing concern. The site coordinator stated that she could cover if one is out, but she also had the ability to call the BGC to provide help on minimum days.

There had been parent volunteers who used to come early to pick up children, but the site coordinator stated that they ended up sitting and talking to one another. She put an end to this practice. “It was more trouble keeping an eye on the volunteers than it was a support to the program,” she said.

New staff members were provided with a one-day initial training by BGC in the overall philosophy and basic strategies for working with children. It was not clear what specifically was taught in this training. Any other training for this program was provided by LAUSD. The site coordinator said she tried to do day-to-day training with her staff to provide them with skills in classroom management, developing rapport with children, and how to handle day-to-day difficulties faced by the coaches, but felt that more formal training would be beneficial. She encouraged her staff to become self-sufficient and to work with their problem children rather than run to her for every difficulty.

The site coordinator had been invited to a few regular staff development meetings sponsored by BGC. This training ensured that rules of behavior stressed by the day school were also carried out at the site. There was no training for staff in homework assistance or in understanding the LAUSD curricula. Most of the coaches were warm, attentive, friendly, and caring with the students. The students turned to them to help with conflict resolution. During the Smart Girls focus group, an observer noted:

> Coaches may not be trained in group behavior, child development, or class management, or know how to promote better language arts skills, but this one is very good at knowing how to talk with young girls to help them see how choices and behavior impact life experiences. It's an hour well spent.

On another day, when asked what came next after homework and snack, three different coaches said they were not sure. Tuesday's shortened schedule upset both the children who were very lively and loud and the staff who seemed confused. Only the site coordinator seemed to know what came next program-wise.
One day in the lunch area, someone threw a box of orange juice which hit the floor and splattered on the back of an observer. No adult noticed. The staff then discovered there was pizza in the teacher’s lounge. All but one of them disappeared, leaving the students unsupervised. A kindergartener was hit by another student and ran to a coach crying.

The site coordinator said she would like more help with special needs students and some way to assist the children in her program that were neglected, in foster care, and one who was wheelchair-bound. She felt that inadequate training for both her and her coaches had occurred to really assist these very needy children. She said she would like more assistance—maybe more personnel—to help.

**Material Resources**

The site coordinator said she had everything she needed for the program as it was organized: games, soccer balls, arts and crafts materials, a small “boom box”, a play rug, etc. She was satisfied with the auditorium, covered lunch area, and the one dedicated classroom that the program had. Compared to another program at a neighboring school where there was just the covered lunch area available, she felt “pretty good” about her facilities. The site coordinator said she never had a discussion with the administration about seeking additional facilities. She never considered using the regular school computers and was not even sure they had any.

The snacks were not very popular. There was not enough variety or substance. The site coordinator stated that she didn’t even know that they were entitled to snacks for her first two years with the program. She learned through another coordinator that they were provided, and so she sought out the cafeteria manager and asked her to order snacks. She particularly disliked some type of berry juice that was provided. She said it was “straight sugar and the kids don’t like it either.” She said they never get milk.

The site coordinator said the auditorium and her classroom were always cleaned up when the after-school program staff arrived, and she worked hard with the coaches and kids to have them clean up their areas before leaving. She had no suggestions for improvement.

The students were permitted to use the restrooms whenever they wished. They went unaccompanied. An observer visited the girl's restroom where several students were clustered (one lying on the floor). They were there, not missed, for a long time.

A science activity with bubbles was observed in one room.

It was open to all students. There were almost 30 students and chairs had to be found. The room had been made available just this year. Before, they had nothing except the multi-purpose room. The room was cluttered with boxes and stored materials and it was hard to get around, but everyone had a good time.

**Relationship with the School**

The principal was the site coordinator’s main contact. She said that in her last three years she had been very pleased with their relationship. The site coordinator found the principal very supportive. She said that she saw the principal almost every day as she checked in at the office. They talked informally and most often about facilities, special schedules, and any particular problem with individual children. She felt that the principal was available to her whenever she needed help.

The site coordinator communicated with the school’s classroom teachers at the end of the day and also during breaks in the regular hours. She said that once in awhile she delivered notes to parents from teachers who were having trouble communicating with parents. Sometimes a teacher would tell the site
coordinator that a specific child was not doing homework or needed some extra attention. The students were also known to tell on each other about who had homework and who didn’t. She said that she was the only person from the after-school program who talked with teachers unless they came to the program and sought out a specific coach.

The site coordinator said that there was no joint planning to coordinate program activities with the classroom teachers. The site coordinator and the coaches only received generalized information about group CST and assessment scores from the school. She received no individual test data from the participants.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

The site coordinator said communication took place with parents when they picked up their children. She said she knew every parent and could talk with them about both positive and negative issues early in the process. She said she discussed issues from time to time but also tried to emphasize positive events and behaviors that took place. The site coordinator sent out flyers to announce special events like the Talent Show. She had made very few calls to the home this year—maybe twice—for support with challenging students.

The only problem that the site coordinator had with parents was when they sent an older sibling to pick up children and they didn’t notify her. She called and straightened out the problem.

The site coordinator said that she didn’t really know very much about the community around the school. Her best view of what went on and what was taking place in the lives of her students was through day-to-day contact with the parents.

There was some community/business involvement. Best Buy volunteered for a week when they first opened and a sorority at CSUN had been involved with food and toy drives at Thanksgiving and at Christmas. The site coordinator identified needy families from her program and this sorority helped fill baskets at Christmas. She said that the regular school turned down the opportunity to work on this program and that was why the after-school program got involved. She said that it was “a big success; much appreciated” and that she hoped it would take place again next year. The site coordinator said she liked the connection with the CSUN sorority but has made no special effort to seek out other help with events or fund-raising.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The site coordinator was not entirely happy with the support from her agency. She said that sometimes she had to pay for items out of pocket and then got reimbursed (this was a different response than earlier when she said she had everything she needed).

She was also unhappy about the rate of pay and the fact that she had to provide on-the-job training. Additionally, she stated that there was too much turn-over.

The site coordinator did not have much to say about her program’s relationship with Beyond the Bell. She stated that an observer had come a couple of times.

**Attendance**

The site coordinator said each child was signed in on preprinted attendance sheets. She said the parents later signed the child out on these same sheets. The site coordinator transferred this information onto a spreadsheet which she forwarded to her agency at the end of the month. The site coordinator thought that the procedure worked fine and had no suggestions for an improved method of keeping attendance.
The site coordinator said word-of-mouth seemed to attract participants to this after-school program. She also said t-shirts have been created to advertise the program to the school at large. The site coordinator was not concerned about the number of participants. She stated that there is no waiting list because the agency reset the cap at 140. The site coordinator also noted that BGC kept the overall student-staff ratio at 20-to-1.

The site coordinator believed attendance was “pretty solid” and her program had no competition from Youth Services or any other after-school program. She felt that a Talent Show held during the fall temporarily increased attendance within her program.

The program ended at 6 p.m., but the majority of the students were gone by 5:15 p.m.

**Safety and Security**

The coordinator was satisfied with security at the time of the interview. She said she had spoken with the principal about a plan to check the students in and out only through the auditorium. The site coordinator also said that she had to ask for specific gates to be closed to increase security.

The site coordinator said that the security of the physical property of both the after-school program and the school premises was satisfactory. She said she kept her games and art materials at the back of a small stage and there had been no problems in this area.

An observer noted that parents came on the premises via an open, unsupervised gate and got their children without signing out. No one seemed to notice. Another observer noted:

> While I am watching, I notice for the second time, in as many visits, the open gate to the covered lunch area. Directly inside, seated and lying on low brick walls are three pupils this time, waiting for their parents or grandparents or whomever, to pick them up. These children are both program members and Youth Services pupils who come and go with little, if any, notice.

**Conclusions and Comments**

This was an after-school program with earnest and caring coaches and a coordinator who felt confident in her abilities, what she could offer, and the support she received, except for special needs pupils. She was satisfied with a fairly marginal program in terms of how it operated. Additionally, she was not aware that gates were left open, students assembled unsupervised in bathrooms, and that her dedicated classroom really did not facilitate learning. She did not seem aware that other sites had much better facilities, or that sometimes parents simply collected their children off the blacktop and took them home with no sign-out. However, the participants enjoyed their time here and so did most of the coaches. It was a very comfortable environment and there was very little dissension. The most effective time observed was the final hour—the students and coaches were all cozy and together in the auditorium, playing games, sitting on the rug, listening to music, and sharing their day together.

When the site coordinator was asked if they ever used the room made available to the program this year for homework, she said they had tried it, but control was much better in the common room. Perhaps the capability of eager and willing, but largely untrained staff to effectively help with homework in a meaningful way was an overly optimistic expectation. Based upon observations made, it would be difficult to say that separating these students for this 40-minute exercise would actually result in better growth during homework help. It appeared that the group could not be effectively contained and kept focused because of the skill level of the coach/program leader.
The program had only one classroom, the multi-purpose room, and covered lunch areas. They did the best that they could with these facilities. This program had a uniformly warm, caring, cheerful, and attentive staff, but their organizational skills were weak. A better result would probably be possible with better facilities and more highly trained staff.

Security was an issue at this site. The lack of physical supervision over these children was a concern. Despite the assurances of the coordinator that students were only released with parent signature through the auditorium, exceptions to this were observed.
### School Site Profile

| School Site (location) | West Hollywood Elementary School 970 N. Hammond St. West Hollywood, CA 90069 |

| Principal | Jim Hum |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>School Demographics (2007-08)</strong>*:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.8% Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9% Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3% Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.3% Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 25.7% |
| --- |
| English Language Learners |
| Total: 78 |
| 68 Spanish |
| 5 Other |
| 2 Farsi |
| 2 Russian |
| 1 Pilipino |

### After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>Boys &amp; Girls Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Sobel</td>
<td>jan <a href="mailto:sobel@aol.com">sobel@aol.com</a></td>
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| # ASP Students | 126 |
| Average Days of Attendance |
| % < 36 Days | 106 |
| 18% |
| % 36-71 Days | 6% |
| %72-107 Days | 13% |
| % > 818-610-1054107 Days | 63% |
| % of Capacity | 93% |

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 825 |
| API – 2007 | 800 |

*Source: LAUSD*
Mr. Hum provided a comprehensive, knowledgeable overview of his school’s Boys & Girls Club (BGC) program. He believes it provides a safe, orderly, and cheerful environment but struggles to deliver focused, consistent activities for academic support and enrichment.

At West Hollywood, Champions Sports, a for-profit program, shares its popular enrichment responsibilities with BGC. Without such classes as karate, cooking, dance, art, drama and journalism, B&GC would scarcely qualify as an all-inclusive school-based ASP. BGC will end its relationship with the school next fall, but Mr. Hum does not know why. He is understandably concerned about declining enrollment and the placement of a new agency in his school next year. Parents here want a safe, engaging program from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. every day and will look elsewhere to enroll if they can’t find it at his site.

The strength of BGC, according to Mr. Hum, is that it improves socialization among students. Those who don’t participate in the program follow the example of those who do, which leads generally to more orderly behavior and respect for teachers. Mr. Hum knows staffers are inexperienced and untrained, but considers them bright, caring, creative and supportive – a pleasure for children to be around. Next year, he wants all the activities to include time spent on language development, reading improvement and math skills. Mr. Hum says ASPs have untapped potential “to move many children to the next level…in academic growth, if the time were used to its best advantage.”

**Component**

Mr. Hum considers the homework assistance only adequate. The staff is patient, but the agency needs to give them more training to better familiarize them with site instructional objectives. Staffers could also attend in-service conferences and faculty meetings where the school’s vision is discussed. More attention needs to be paid to ELLs and to students with the lowest standardized scores.

Academic enrichment is not the province of BGC, nor is fine and performing arts. Though pupils enjoy a wide range of engaging enrichment classes through Champions, Mr. Hum prefers more project-based activities that meet district standards in language arts and math, with more reading and writing opportunities. His fledgling orchestra program could benefit from adding a supervised practice element. Mr. Hum also believes students from his diverse community would benefit from a cultural dance class.

Mr. Hum considers the sports component no more than average. It misses chances to teach P.E. skills, fitness, and the rules of games and competitions. Mr. Hum finds the Youth Services program sub-standard. He complains that the very pupils drawn to its informal, inconsistent format are those who need nurturing, social and academic guidance. These goals are not a YS staple.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers at West Hollywood believe BGC is a positive place for children and appreciate the improved pupil behavior. However, they see a need for improved articulation about homework, a lack of programs for test readiness and no support for school instructional goals. They see some benefits in the homework program but complain that assignments are often not completed.

Parents echo the teachers’ view of BGC’s limitations. They ask Mr. Hum for less busy work and many more enrichment offerings, and they want activities to connect to the school’s instructional program. They
do support the excellent safety and supervision measures in place at West Hollywood and acknowledge
the caring staff.

**Agency and District Support**
Mr. Hum is not happy with the B&GC agency personnel and their function, which is a mystery to him.
He cannot talk about their involvement because he never sees it. He has resolved all issues himself and
even buys materials for the B&GC leaders when they ask. That is an agency responsibility. If BGC were
to stay, communication would have to improve significantly.

Fortunately, few serious problems have occurred, and the only conflict has been the routine room sharing
concern. Beyond the Bell has had little contact with Mr. Hum, because he has raised no issues with the
organization. However, he is vocal in his support for what they do. “I want Beyond the Bell to know that I
regard their support and administration of the many ASPs which serve my school and others as impres-
sive, consistent and vital to thousands of pupils and their parents,” he said.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Mr. Hum has been very pleased with his site coordinator. She monitors and supports an excellent staff. He
believes their inclusive and positive attitude toward all children almost makes up for their inexperience. He
hopes BGC will work to deepen staffers’ grasp of what elementary schools need for the academic,
intellectual and experiential needs of students. That will allow the program to move beyond the club for-
mat. Of course, he hopes for a sound program next year, with an experienced and caring staff.
Case Study Observations  
Boys & Girls Club (BGC)  
West Hollywood Elementary School  

Introduction
This program takes place at West Hollywood Elementary School (a K-6 school), located in West Hollywood. The Boys & Girls Club (BGC) is the sponsor. Ms. Cynthia Torres is the site coordinator.

Highlights
BGC at West Hollywood Elementary conducts a typical elementary after-school program on a site built in 1910. The multi-level campus has many staircases leading to bungalows, the main building, blacktop areas, and a small grassy field. Supervision of student groups in this sprawling campus is a concern, but the ASP addresses it well. Observers saw an adequate number of supervisors for all indoor and outdoor activities.

The strength of this program is the staff of three welcoming, capable, engaged program leaders. There is a cheerful atmosphere with expectations of high achievement. The positive connection of leaders to their charges is evident in the quality of classroom activities, in reactions to minor calamities, and in the energy each displays. Nobody appears to be coasting here.

The eclectic mix of students can be a challenge. Sometimes, Ms. Torres has to seek the principal’s help in solving a problem with parents. But staff members work enthusiastically with all ethnicities and capabilities, putting together a successful elementary program typified by warmth, caring, and close attention to students’ needs.

West Hollywood also works with two other ASPs: Youth Services and Champions Sports. This campus has the commercial version of the Champions program, at a cost of $200 per month per child, reflecting the affluence of the surrounding community and the determination of parents to provide for their children the most dynamic, safe, and stimulating program available. BGC, which is free, has its own agency-prepared activities, a sound organization, and popular leaders, as well as the support of an involved principal.

Homework
Because field study occurred in May and June, when schools schedule standardized testing, observers saw little homework activity, as the district directs teachers not to assign it during the testing period. Program leaders had to provide other activities to replace homework, which normally consumes about one-third of the afternoon. The nearness of the end of the school year also resulted in less homework than usual and students concerned more with end-of-year trips and performances than with studying. Nevertheless, staffers seemed prepared with academic worksheets prepared by the agency. Observers wrote:

Only four students needed homework help today. Twelve second-graders sat in individual desks and worked on language arts questions. They also completed fill-in-the-blank questions about a map and quietly worked on addition and subtraction on a pink worksheet on the desk. One pupil kept telling the teacher, “I need help! I need help!”

The staff member here said students are exhausted from testing and they are given time to wind down after the whole week of testing. This is why they are not working on homework today.
The first- and second- graders in Mr. Brian’s session do not have homework, so they reading a book of their choice. The leader gives each a sheet of paper and asks them to write about the story they are reading and then draw a picture relating to their book. Mr. Brian asks leading questions about the books, like, “What was discovered?” and “What message did the author want you to know?”

Fourth- through sixth-graders normally do homework at this time, but only two in the group had an assignment. They worked while the rest of the group chatted about Lakers playoffs, Dodgers games, and the apparent lack of homework for the first-graders.

Homework hour for 18 first-graders during this final week of school takes place in a clean and airy classroom. A young man is helping two students as I walk in with Ms. Torres. He is so focused he does not even look up. All the students are doing something: painting, coloring, filling out picture worksheets, looking at books, or talking about their activity with neighbors. It is a pleasant, enthusiastic, and controlled setting. Ms. Torres speaks highly of the program leader, who evidently enjoys working with this level. I drop by again later in the hour and there is no change in the noise or engagement level of the kids. They obviously like it here. Also in the room is a one-on-one aide. Of all the people in the room, she alone looks bored and uninvolved.

Ms. Torres said homework assistance is not a problem for the staff members, who all have previous experience with tutoring and as teaching assistants. She said students sometimes attend a tutoring program during homework time called ELP. “We still count that time as program time,” she said.

**Academic Enrichment**

Kindergarten students are separate at this ASP, with their own room, their own playground, and their own snack time. They also have “enrichment,” which sometimes looks similar to what they do for “homework.” Observers wrote:

These kindergarten students are doing enrichment activities. They are coloring a worksheet with words in it. The children behave well, enjoy themselves, and are full of energy.

The kindergarten children are about to start reading and discussing a “Weather” booklet. The staff member asks, “Remember what you guys do on Fridays?” This tells me that the children read and discuss their books on a routine basis. “Yes, reading,” one child responds. “That’s easy.”

Observers also watched other grade levels:

Second- and third-graders review the different places where people and animals live, and why these places are appropriate for them. All students participate and join in the discussion.

The students in the fifth and sixth grade answer questions ranging from history topics to math problems. Both staff and students answer aloud when they have the correct response. The leader uses a deck of cards that have ready-made questions and answers for the students.
Sixth graders play Scrabble and other word games during enrichment hour. They enjoy the games and each other’s company. The group mirrors the school in ethnic composition: 30 percent Anglo, 50 percent Hispanic, and 20 percent Indian, African-American, Filipino, and Asian. Ms. Torres says the economic level is a little higher than at other sites where she has worked.

**Arts**

One observer asked Ms. Torres about the uniform “class lesson” enrichment activities and why there was no specialized staff or more variety.

Ms. Torres tells me that enrichment activities have ended because the Champions program left three weeks ago. Champions included BGC pupils in dance, drama and other enrichment activities. The students all got along and enjoyed the activities provided by this agency for which parents pay a fee every month. The lack of these opportunities, as much as the end of the year, may have contributed to the much lower attendance now.

Because of this, observers did not see any activities in either fine or performing arts. Some sixth-grade ASP students practiced for a play performance in late May, but it was an activity sponsored by the day school.

Particularly for the kindergarten and first grade pupils, coloring and painting exercises take place almost every day, especially if there is no homework. Observers saw many coloring activities at all grade levels inside classrooms and outside on the lunch tables.

**Sports and Games**

Outdoor activities take place during the last hour of regular days, and as free play on Fridays. Observers saw kick-ball, jump rope, jungle gym use, “octopus tag,” and general running around. BGC works with Youth Services (YS) to provide some outdoor activities.

After snack, the fourth- through sixth-grade group played an informal game of kickball with the YS students. They enjoyed running and kicking the ball with their peers. A staff member sits with me in the covered cafeteria area. She says the students always ask to play with the YS students who stay until this time of day, and she lets them. Staff members from both YS and BGC supervise students.

Mr. Brian’s second- and third-grade group is on the yard playing kickball. It is late afternoon and they are enjoying a free play activity. He throws the ball to them and they kick it back to him, using him as a goalkeeper.

This ASP follows the common practice of abandoning the regular schedule of homework and enrichment exercises on Fridays, permitting students to have “free play” in both indoor and outdoor locations. Observers saw well-behaved and well-supervised children involved with many board games, a 100-piece rain forest puzzle, coloring, card games, action figures, Lego blocks, books, and connect-the-dots handouts.

Ms. Torres said the students prefer the arts and crafts activities, the indoor games, and the outdoor sports.
Engagement and Classroom Management
Students seemed engaged when they worked on homework or the agency- and leader-prepared worksheets.

What was missing were segments of time where children could be learning new material, experiencing intellectual discovery, and gaining new skills. Such engagement often occurs not during homework time, but during well-designed, challenging, unusual performing arts classes or in activities such as chess.

In that sense, the children at West Hollywood Boys and Girls Club are not engaged when they do not get the classes shared with Champions. Regrettably, it is at just this time of year, when the academic program has shut down, that time is available for other paths to learning.

Observers did not see serious instances of misbehavior. End-of-year delirium was in evidence, but program leaders and Ms. Torres did not complain of class management problems.

Staff
Paid employees are Ms. Torres and the site supervisors who work four hours per day. Ms. Torres did not provide salary information. She said retaining staff here is not difficult, and neither is finding substitutes or specialized staff. The ASP has no volunteers here but does have them at another BGC location in West Hollywood.

Ms. Torres said all staffers get Beyond the Bell training, and there are monthly meetings on-site to review class materials, professional boundaries training, district policies and safety procedures. Experienced staffers attend professional development workshops where they can seek out other training. The ASP covers the cost. She said staffers received training in classroom management, but she is not sure of the provider. Staffers also get literacy training every Friday. At the site, she held a discussion of how to launch enrichment activities. She said nothing about district courses.

Ms. Torres could not point to a single type of training that she believed would benefit her staff as a whole. “Everyone on my staff has different needs,” she said. “One needs computer training; others need help with recreational activities.”

Observers commented on individual leaders who seemed to have a special knack for working with elementary children or enthusiasm for their work:

A special education aide who has been with the school for fifteen years is very pleasant, confident, knowledgeable, and eager to talk about her job and the ASP. She said she spends more time with these kids than she does with her own family.

Material Resources
Ms. Torres is happy with the ASP’s access to classrooms, and the program also has access to the library. The school does not have a computer lab. She is also satisfied with the cleanliness of the areas of the school the ASP uses.

“We have a very close relationship with the janitor,” she said. “We always clean up after being in the classroom and all the janitor does is pick up the trash.”

Ms. Torres said she has plenty of equipment and materials from her agency. She also said she is “pretty satisfied” with the snacks the school provides. Her only complaint is the amount of time kids have to eat them, which she said is sometimes as little as 15 minutes. She believes it should be at least 30 minutes.
**Relationship with the School**
Ms. Torres’s primary contact at the school is the principal, with whom she has a very close relationship. She also said she has access to two teaching assistants. They communicate mainly in person, and sometimes schedule meetings. Usual topics are use of facilities, parent issues, and upcoming events. She also mentioned a parent who is very close to the agency director.

The ASP has good communication with the teachers, Ms. Torres said. They speak face-to-face and teachers keep staff members informed of homework assignments. Some students also have calendars to keep a record of homework. Some parents have asked that their students not receive homework.

The ASP staff does no joint planning with teachers to coordinate activities. School administrators share CST and assessment scores when auditors request the information from the ASP. The information is not individualized.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Ms. Torres said the ASP has very good communication with parents. They have individual discussions and “don’t really send letters home.” She said she involves the principal when there is a potential confrontation. “Parents can get very demanding,” she said. “I think the demographics seem to bring parents here who pretty much feel that they are entitled.”

Ms. Torres said staff members sometimes participate in parent/teacher conferences. Some of her leaders have been with the ASP for more than a year and know the children from previous years.

Ms. Torres could not think of any relationships the ASP has with community groups or local businesses, except for an afternoon PTA program whose schedule was adjusted to allow kids to attend BGC. Other than that, the only relationships are with Champions and YS.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Ms. Torres said her agency is very supportive. “We are very, very close,” she said. As for Beyond the Bell, she said she does not have direct contact and has never needed to speak to its officials directly. She believes her director occasionally communicates with Beyond the Bell by e-mail.

**Attendance**
Ms. Torres said sign-in sheets record not only if the children attended, but also what time they arrived. She submits them monthly to the agency. To minimize absences, she distributes a program policy that asks students to attend five days a week. If there are absences, she calls home to find out the reason. Students also have an “unmet requirement sheet” that leaders check at the end of the week. If something is missing, they give the information to the parent.

The ASP began the year with a wait list of 20, but that had dropped to five by May. “Every time a child drops, they get replaced,” Ms. Torres said. She said attendance drops around the holidays because of family trips. Also, Champions does draw some students away from the ASP.

Ms. Torres wants a photography class and computer courses. Hiring someone with the expertise for these classes might be a challenge, she said.
Safety and Security

Ms. Torres is satisfied with student security at the school. “The janitor locks the front,” she said. “We only allow the students to go to the auditorium bathroom at certain times.”

She had no comment regarding the safety of program property.

Conclusions and Comments

Despite the fact that the ASP leaders and Ms. Torres are such positive employees and take extra care to keep BGC children involved at all times, the ASP leaves much to be desired academically. Observers did not see the literacy program. However, they saw many hours spent on board games, puzzles, toys, and recreation, both during free play on Fridays and at many other times.

On the other hand, children stayed occupied, interested, and sometimes deeply involved in their activities. There were no significant incidents of misbehavior. Observers saw staff members strive daily to use homework and enrichment time in a positive way, applying worksheets and exercises that helped participants in math, language arts, and science.

To be fair, the time of the observations did not give this program a full opportunity to display either homework or enrichment sections, which the Champions program offered. Until May, the two ASPs seemed to have a cooperative agreement that gave Champions the responsibility for fine and performing arts activities. Ms. Torres and her staff seem very committed to preserve the status quo. Comments about “the Hollywood club” suggest that, to them, it is acceptable to replicate a community-based club as a model for an ASP ostensibly held accountable not only for fun activities, but for academic assistance and enrichment.

This site may warrant further observation, and Beyond the Bell may want to provide input on this decision. As a safe and upbeat destination for young people, it succeeds, and the ASP leaders are a strong unit. As a provider of academic assistance and arts enrichment activities, this ASP falls short.
# Site Profile
**Boys & Girls Club (BGC)**  
**Wilmington Middle School**  
*Source: LAUSD*

## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Wilmington Middle School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>1700 Gulf Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilmington, CA 90744</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Veronica Aragon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### School Demographics *(2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 2089
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 94.2% Hispanic
  - 1.6% Black
  - 1.4% Pacific Islander
  - 1.4% White
  - .6% Filipino
  - .5% Asian
  - .2% American Indian/Alaskan

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 29.2% |
| English Language Learners                       | Total: 609 |
|                                               | 603 Spanish |
|                                               | 3 Pilipino  |
|                                               | 3 Other     |

## After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency</th>
<th>Boys &amp; Girls Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(central office location)</td>
<td>Mike Lansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mlansing@bgclaharbor.org">mlansing@bgclaharbor.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>310-549-8323 x230</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># ASP Students</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>46%</td>
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</table>

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 674 |
| API – 2007 | 638 |
Wilmington Middle School is home to an after-school program full of elements for students ages 12-15 that are not common in other Beyond the Bell ASPs.

The Boys & Girls Club (BGC) and Ms. Aragon share responsibility and credit for a committed organization that: (1) enjoys the support of former Board of Education member Mike Lansing; (2) serves 150-300 young people; (3) counts Wilmington teachers, paraprofessionals and teacher volunteers as part of its staff; and (4) has a waiting list.

Ms. Aragon has many more positive comments about this ASP than complaints. Ms. Aragon said the program has caring leaders and the agency is “doing a great job.” “The program is already running great,” she said. Regardless of whether everyone connected with BGC shares her level of enthusiasm, there is no denying that the improvements the agency made this year, including the variety of popular activities and annual festivals.

**Components**

Homework assistance, called Power Hour, occurs in the cafeteria. Students without assignments have access to the library and the computer lab. Ms. Aragon says students get targeted homework help from teachers of algebra and English, while BGC staffers provide more general help. BGC staff has shown improvement this year by checking individual assignments with more diligence. Ms. Aragon wants all homework staff to learn AVID, a tutoring program focusing on college awareness and preparation. She wants more teachers hired for the homework component.

Academic Enrichment includes a popular computer element and a RIF book give-away. High-profile events produced by the agency include the Festival of Books, the Harvest Festival, and the Renaissance Faire, for which students prepare and present projects. To further enhance and deepen the appeal of academic enrichment, Ms. Aragon would like to see cultural events that highlight Wilmington’s ethnic composition, which is overwhelmingly Hispanic (more than 90 percent). She also wants to see a greater variety of daily academic enrichment sections.

Sports are considered a strength, with soccer, volleyball, basketball, and flag football. Ms. Aragon is pleased with the organization and delivery of these athletic experiences, but she believes students should also have a choice among non-traditional sports such as ping-pong, badminton, track and field, and golf. Many teacher volunteers support the program through Kids Run LA, and many adults and students from the school train for and run in the Los Angeles Marathon.

Among fine and performing arts offerings, BGC has a hip-hop dance program. Ms. Aragon wants culturally relevant additions such as folklorico and mariachi. Improvements this year include the end of the Friday movie.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers like homework assistance but want stronger connections with classroom instruction and better communication. Ms. Aragon suggests a weekly report on individual students. Teachers believe students who participate in the ASP try harder.
Parents value the homework help and the safe, structured, and supportive environment of BGC. They also want cultural celebrations and activities. They have voiced few complaints.

Agency and District Support
Ms. Aragon has nothing but praise for the support she gets from the site coordinator and the agency. Both are active and visible. She believes staffers consider her ideas. The agency also helped solve a supervision problem last year.

Ms. Aragon hopes the agency will add a sports and academic recognition event this year, with trophies for standout students. She says she knows whom to contact at Beyond the Bell if there are problems, but she has never felt the need. Besides, she says, “Youth Services is such a small part of the after-school activities at Wilmington.” Mr. Lansing’s support is a great resource.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
A strong feature of Wilmington’s format is the presence of school deans and assistant principals during ASP hours. Mention is not made of how school staff, certificated or administrative, are compensated for these hours, or if they are compensated. But she does suggest that Beyond the Bell devote money to pay for extending the hours of key supervision personnel.

Ms. Aragon considers BGC an integral part of the life of Wilmington Middle School. A big part of the credit, she says, goes to BGC’s teachers and paraprofessionals. They encourage students to participate and help with recruiting. They also help maintain order during activities and athletic competitions that they themselves enjoy. Ms. Aragon only wishes she could bring even more students into the program.
Case Study Observations  
Boys & Girls Club (BGC)  
Wilmington Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Wilmington Middle School (a 6-8 school). Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor (BGC) is the sponsor. Ms. Sonia Espinoza is the site coordinator.

Highlights
The most notable aspect of this program is the functional connection to the school. Members of the school faculty and staff extended their regular school day roles into the after-school setting. For example, music teachers led after-school music activities, and a physical education teacher supervised the game room. The school librarian led a book club. The assistant principal, who supervised and supported the program, was responsible for the school’s intervention programs.

The functional connection also extended to non-credentialed staff members. The school’s computer technician supervised the after-school computer lab. The program’s site coordinator works during the day as the school’s textbook clerk. In that dual role, she has secured many textbooks and other reading materials for students’ use after school.

The teachers and librarians worked actively with the students during homework assistance and other activities. They took their work seriously, but also seemed to enjoy this less formal time with the students.

Homework and Academics
The program’s first hour is known as Power Hour and Power Study. Power Hour was homework time, with assistance from teachers and other staff members. Those students without homework that day participated in Power Study. This involved remaining in the same area as the Power Hour students and studying textbooks. The school’s teachers provided extra textbooks for each grade and each of the core content areas. Observers watched this hour in two different contexts.

Power Hour/Study typically took place in the school cafeteria. One afternoon, there were more than 80 students in the room, supported by three ASP staff members and up to six of the school’s certified staff members.

After signing in, students sat at tables and took out work. They spent their time socializing and working. ASP staff members supervised sign-in, distributed word-search sheets, and circulated to manage the room and assist with homework. Teachers and the librarian moved throughout the room, actively supporting students in their homework. Although there was some horseplay and much conversation, the students tended to remain seated in groups. Some of the students retrieved books from program’s cabinet for Power Study. Others were on their cell phones. Overall, about one-quarter of the students worked diligently. The volume of chatter never went below a dull roar.

During another observation day, there was a teachers’ meeting in the cafeteria. Staff divided the children by grade, having Power Hour/Study in two classrooms and the library. An observer noticed a group of about 30 sixth-graders with two staff members. One staff member looked over homework to ensure completion, but did not check the quality of the work. (The site coordinator informed the observer that parents were responsible for reviewing the accuracy of homework.)

Staff members talked to students in both English and Spanish. Students who had finished their homework were to read a magazine. Some students made shapes with paper. There was a contest for who could be
the most quiet and the prize was popcorn. The observer noted that students were very engaged in their activities. Staff members clearly related to the students and had the room under control.

The site coordinator said the biggest challenge to effective homework assistance was that “kids just don’t want to stay for homework.” The site coordinator expressed satisfaction with the quality of homework assistance, with teachers and college students available to support homework and ASP staff having teacher’s editions of textbooks. Her suggestion on improving homework assistance was to have individual classrooms divided by grade, each with 20 children.

Arts
The site coordinator said music was one of the students’ favorite activities in the program. Observers noted two very different music classes.

During the first observation, there were 11 students and one staff member in the school’s music room. There were three electric guitars, a piano, and drum set available for use. The school’s classical music instruments were in cubby holes against the wall, but unused by this group. Three students at a time played electric guitars and one student or staff member played the drums at any one time. The staff member, who looked to be enjoying himself, taught drumming one-on-one and each student got a turn. The rest of the students watched and looked bored. Students engaged in pairs around instruments. For example, there were two students at the piano, but they did not seem to be playing music; it sounded more like banging. The observer described the room as “a cacophony of noise” and said there was no organized direction of this group.

The second observation involved an organized ASP music program. Two of the school’s teachers led a group of 25 students. (The school’s chorus teacher also worked with this group when one of the other teachers was not available.) One of the teachers told the observer that this was a returning group of students. Observation notes indicated they there were the band teacher’s fourth-period music class.

After roll call, the students sat in groups by instrument and assembled their instruments. A girl distributed music books while some students practiced and others used their instruments to make noise. The two teachers stood at the front of the room. One conducted and coached; the other helped with classroom management and provided individual assistance. For example, one boy could only get squeaks from his saxophone. The second teacher demonstrated proper technique and the boy soon was able to produce clear notes. While helping this boy, the teacher demonstrated and explained for all of the students with reed instruments.

Using music from a CD as a model, the first teacher directed the group through a brief series of notes. The group became more synchronized as they continued to practice. Although it was often challenging for the teachers to maintain the students’ attention and cooperation, this was an organized music class with appreciable learning.

At the request of the principal, the ASP worked to create a marching band. This seemed to be a point of pride for the after-school staff. The site coordinator said she wants a drill team to go along with the marching band. She also wants baile folklorico and mariachi.

Sports and Recreation
The site coordinator identified the computer lab and games as among the activities that students like the most. Observers viewed these activities, as well as team sports.
Computers were an important part of this program. Observers noted students playing video games, watching movie clips on the internet, and browsing the Internet. In addition to the computer lab, the game room and library also had computer equipment.

In the computer lab, about 18 students played games individually. A few students browsed the Internet, looking at different sites. Staff members walked around the room viewing the computer screens as students played, but rarely interacted with the students. Classmates taunted one student with comments such as, "Have you lost weight?" and "Why do you wear glasses?" The staff member seemed to be unaware of this taunting or was ignoring it.

The observer could discern no organized activity or learning during this session in the computer lab. The computer lab leader explained that students use the computer lab to do whatever they need to do for school, like homework, PowerPoint presentations, and essays. Most know what they need to do, he said. It’s “all pretty fun” and his role is just to help. He also noted that he has a remote desktop and could project any student’s monitor screen onto a large video screen. This allowed him to monitor student activity and discouraged students from going to inappropriate web sites.

In the library, students used the computers to do research and watch music video clips. During one observation, a student announced to no one in particular, “I am bored.” Later, she said, “I already went into the internet, what else can I do?” This was a Fun Friday and there were likely few other activities from which to choose.

An observer described the game room as a cramped space. During one observation, a group of students played a football video game, while another group played caroms. The staff member was kind and empathetic with the students. In return, the students were respectful to him. The students and the teacher got along very well during this observation and one student even volunteered that the staff member “is the best teacher.” The teacher jokingly responded, “I'll pay you later,” and all the students giggled.

Another observation involved similar activities (video football and caroms). The teacher supervised the students and knew what was happening in the room, but remained at his desk. He kept the activities organized, but did not get up to engage the students in what they were doing or help them improve their skills. Additional visits to the game room included observations of students playing foosball and other table games. In order to play foosball, each student needed a hand stamp to show that he or she had completed the day’s homework. Another observer noted that the teacher stayed connected with the students and they talked to him about their problems. The boys seemed very comfortable with this teacher.

A group of 10 boys and girls, in two teams, played softball on the field. A teacher pitched to both teams and another after-school staff member played catcher. These adults were positive and encouraging to the students. They made sure the game was safe and fair, while also coaching the students on softball techniques. The students were cooperative and seemed happy. They played hard, cheered, and even provided some coaching for their teammates. It was after 4:30 p.m. and the teams dwindled as players went home. In addition to the players, a few students sat on nearby benches chatting.

Under the supervision of a staff member, a group of students practiced soccer on a grassy field. This coach told an observer that they had recently won a tournament and now the students were “all into the sport.”

The site coordinator told interviewers she would like to add recreational activities like a model car club and an on-site skate park.
Engagement and Classroom Management

Student engagement and classroom management varied across activities and observations. Engagement was strongest during the single-classroom homework session, sports, the computer lab, and some games. Although staff members were very much engaged with students during Power Hour/Study in the cafeteria, engagement among the students was low. Most talked or played, but a minority actually did school-related work. Engagement seemed especially low during the initial observation in the music room.

One consistent theme in the observations was that students were energetic and active. Although it was sometimes challenging for staff members to keep the students engaged, the students were rarely disruptive. Students kept their behavior to a manageable level and staff members maintain a close watch over their groups.

Staff

Recruiting for all positions was “very good” according to the site coordinator. Some staff members have been with the program for four years and several of the school’s teachers also worked for the after-school program. The pay scale was $40.00 per hour for the teachers and $12.00 to $14.00 per hour for other staff members. The site coordinator said keeping positions filled was “not very hard at all” and she could call the agency when the site had a need for substitutes or specialized staff. She noted volunteers were very helpful. These volunteers—primarily parents—served as an extra set of eyes, helped with events such as the RIF Carnival of Books, kept students in line, and recruited in the school’s parent center.

The site coordinator said LAUSD provides training for new and experienced staff members. The training included such topics as sign-in, emergency procedures, dress code, snack procedures, whom to call in specific situations, and sexual harassment. These training sessions were mandatory for all staff members and the site coordinator described them as very helpful.

BGC provided training on CPR and first aid. The site coordinator said there was no training in behavior management, classroom management, understanding LAUSD curricula, or homework assignments. She believed that the staff would benefit most from training on leading activities that would keep students more interested and involved, and training on managing student behavior. She also explained that the training on behavior management was needed because many of the children had low self-esteem and/or were in special day classes due to emotional disorders. It would be important for staff members to learn how to talk to these kids. She gratefully noted that the assistant principal and school psychologist have helped the program in working with the children’s various needs.

Observations indicated that staff members were very engaged with students during the homework and academic portion of the program. Teachers circulated and actively assisted with homework. Other staff members helped with homework while also managing sign-in and watching the doors to the cafeteria. Staff engagement with students was not as consistent during enrichment activities. Observers noted that staff members actively engaged students in some music and sports activities. At other times, staff members were less engaged during music, sports, and computer activities.

Staff members wore identification cards, but did not have uniform shirts. One observer noted that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between staff members and middle school students. During the final observation, the site coordinator stated that they were having special shirts printed and the staff would be in uniforms soon. These would be Club Jag shirts, signifying the on-campus identity of this after-school program. (The school mascot is the Jaguar.)
Material Resources
Both observations and the site coordinator’s interview responses indicated that the program had ample materials and equipment. These included books, sports equipment, musical instruments, and miscellaneous program supplies. The only area for improvement mentioned by the site coordinator would be to have more recent games available.

Although the program had access to the school’s library and computer lab, it did not have classrooms for homework assistance. The site coordinator said having classrooms by grade level would be very beneficial to the program, especially for homework. For the 2008-09 school year, the principal approved the creation of a Club Jag room, as well as supervised access to the school’s new fitness center.

The site coordinator offered mixed opinions on the janitorial and snack services provided by the school. She was not so happy with the cleanliness of parts of the school that her students use. She said the janitorial crew was understaffed, but complained the cafeteria was sometimes dirty on professional development Tuesdays. She said one way to improve this service would be to pay janitors to clean up after and before school. The site coordinator also reported that the appeal, quality, and quantity of food for snacks was very satisfactory. The snack-related paperwork was burdensome, though. She stated that snack period could improve if participants were not required to throw away good food. Policies require her to throw away, rather than give away or save, extra snack food. She explained that the program was wasting food while some of the children did not have enough food at home. “That breaks my heart,” she said.

Relationship with the School
The site coordinator said she has great relationship with her primary contact at the school, an assistant principal. They spoke in person every day about the students. Late on one afternoon, an observer noted this assistant principal seated in the cafeteria having a warm conversation with the site coordinator.

The connection with the school extends beyond the assistant principal. Many teachers and the librarian worked in the after-school program. The school’s computer technician led the program’s computer classes and the site coordinator herself is the school’s textbook clerk. She stated that the strong points in the program’s relationship with the school were being on-site, as opposed to an off-campus BGC, and having classroom teachers on the after-school staff. She could identify no weak points in the relationship with the school.

The program communicated with classroom teachers in person and via memos. The program staff members reviewed the children’s “homework agendas” for a list of homework assignments on a period-by-period basis. The program also collaborated with classroom teachers. For example, teachers who work in the after-school program bring projects and planning from the regular school day. Also, after the school’s English/language arts test scores fell, the program increased its focus on reading.

English teachers gave books to the program, so that students could read more and write one-paragraph summaries. The school’s literacy coach provided students’ test scores to the program. The librarian donated a magazine collection to the program in order to encourage boys who might not want to read a book. She also initiated a Goosebumps Club. The weekly club meetings, focusing on the popular Goosebumps series of children’s horror books, involve book discussion and related games. This group replaced the Harry Potter Club. A great source of pride for the program was that club’s personal meeting with author J.K. Rowling, which was arranged by the librarian.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
The program communicated with parents primarily through memos and phone blasts. Parents were very involved in this program. As noted above in the Staff section, parents have supported the program as volunteers. That was the major strong point in the relationship with parents; the weak point was that some parents limited students’ participation in the program by not allowing them to stay for the full three hours.

The staff members were very familiar with the community because all of them live in the area or attended this school when they were young and in middle school. Some of the local businesses have provided support for the program. Hollywood Video, for example, provided free rentals, popcorn, candy, bottled soda, and gift cards. Also, a local market donated Granny Smith apples. The site coordinator would like to get more local merchants involved with the program and do more outreach to the community.

A challenge has been that many community members already donate to BGC and she must not ask for additional donations to an individual program site.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The agency was a strong source of support. The program was well stocked with materials and equipment. The agency also provided substitutes and specialized staff when needed. At the beginning of the 2008-09 school year, the site coordinator noted that support from the agency was increasing. There was a new teen center and the agency provided a college-bound program on the Wilmington Middle School campus.

The site coordinator said they don’t really deal with Beyond the Bell. She would like to have a better relationship with Youth Services, so they could collaborate and do more together.

Attendance
Attendance was taken daily using a sign-in and sign-out method. Methods to minimize student absences, encourage students to attend more days each week, and attract new students to the program were incentives, coupons, fast food, and Fun Fridays.

Recruitment strategies included passing out flyers at events, having program staff members who work there during the regular school day, the sixth-grade orientation, and having two feeder schools with BGC programs. Because middle school students get bored easily, the program’s retention strategy has been to “do our best to try to bring in programs they might enjoy.”

The program has had more than 200 students in attendance and has no wait list. Special events such as RIF have increased program attendance. Attendance decreased during the weeks of standardized testing.

Safety and Security
The site coordinator rated security for both students and property as good. She noted that a security officer patrols the campus and the gate to a busy street has been closed. Even after taking a moment to think, she was unable to offer any suggestions for improving security at the site. Although observers noted some unsupervised students around the music room, observational data predominantly supported the site coordinator’s statements about security and safety at the program.

Conclusions and Comments
BGC at Wilmington is a large program for a middle school. Observers noted enthusiastic staff members and a close connection to the regular school day. Credentialed staff members provided homework assistance and enrichment opportunities.

Additional assets of the program included extensive equipment and materials, especially books, a safe campus, parent volunteers, and community support. Classroom space for homework seemed to be the
only resource that the program was lacking. Plans to add a skate park, drill team, model-building club, baile folklorico club, and mariachi club would do much to supplement the program’s limited offerings for enrichment.

Despite the program’s wealth of physical and human resources, the quality of activities was largely inconsistent. There were times when children were highly engaged in productive activities. Other times, students were active and supervised, but rarely engaged in productive work or play. Between these extremes were times when some or many students engaged in productive activities while staff members struggled with classroom management. The challenge for this program will be to transform its many resources into a consistent set of high quality and well-managed activities for students.
# Chapman Elementary School

**School Site Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Chapman Elementary School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>1947 Marine Ave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardena, CA 90249</td>
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**Principal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Cindy Miller</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**School Demographics (2007-08)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>61.1% Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.1% Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.8% Asian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0% White</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1% Filipino</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0% Pacific Islander</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>.7% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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**English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Language Learners</th>
<th>36.8%</th>
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**English Language Learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>126 Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Vietnamese</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Cantonese</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Other</td>
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<td>1 Pilipino</td>
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**After-School Program Profile**

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alex Sztuden/Elize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:asztuden@brainfuse.com">asztuden@brainfuse.com</a>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:elize@brainfuse.com">elize@brainfuse.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>866-272-4638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| # ASP Students | 159 |
|               |     |

**Average Days of Attendance**

| % < 36 Days | 18% |
| % 36-71 Days | 20% |
| %72-107 Days | 33% |
| % > 107 Days | 30% |
| % of Capacity | 92% |

**Academic Performance Index Change**

| API – 2008 | 763 |
| API – 2007 | 776 |
Ms. Miller is deeply concerned about the capacity of Brainfuse (BF) to provide a comprehensive, quality ASP at Chapman Elementary School. She is dissatisfied with nearly every element: staffing, training, communication, sports supervision, homework assistance, and academic enrichment.

The ASP is poorly organized, with program leaders who appear to have no background in working with children in groups. Ms. Miller believes the program lacks structure, and staffers see themselves merely as babysitters without a responsibility to support learning or even to supervise children on the playground.

Ms. Miller has met numerous times with the site coordinator, but this person has failed to follow through with many decisions reached in these meetings. Students often drop out of the program, so continual recruiting becomes necessary. This is uncommon for elementary ASPs. Brainfuse needs to make significant strides so it eventually can support daytime learning, help with homework, teach fundamental sports skills, handle basic behavior disruptions, and stage culminating events.

Components

Because homework assistance leaders lack training and have not been subject to agency expectations, they are unable or unwilling to help students with assignments. They often tell students to go to their parents with questions. Parents in turn complain that their children are not getting help with homework. Ms. Miller believes training in district core curricula for math and reading might help solve this problem. Chapman literacy and math coaches can provide this training if BF compensates them.

BF provides no academic enrichment activities. Ms. Miller wants creative, language-based experiential activities that help students develop language arts and math skills. Students might benefit from well-designed enrichment not available during the day. She wants reading groups and writing exercises like pen pal projects, journals, or diaries. The program promised academic enrichment early in the year, but has failed to produce it. Ms. Miller, who is new to the school, said she will have to involve herself directly and deeply to make the program be successful.

BF and Youth Services combine their students for sports and games. However, after BF staff deposit students on the playground, they leave and let YS take responsibility for exercises and supervision. YS personnel have complained about the lack of support they get from BF. They do not work as a team. Ms. Miller believes BF should teach children to play games and build athletic skills. She suggests drills in kicking, hitting, and throwing balls, techniques that would prepare children for organized sports and drill team. She believes BF should offer these activities now. She also wants basic yoga and some rhythmic activities.

In the fine and performing arts, Ms. Miller wants music, chorus, piano (keyboards.) She says BF has keyboards. “Students should be taught to use them,” she says. Also, they should teach children to play recorders and percussion instruments. Ms. Miller wants painting, arts and crafts. The ASP might also teach art concepts and art history. Another weakness of BF is the absence of any plan for staging culminating activities, a common element in many ASPs. Ms. Miller wants at least one of these each semester, to highlight student talent through Reader’s Theater, drama, poetry, art exhibits and shared student writing. No basic activities to support productions exist.
Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers say they are happy to have a safe place after school for students to do homework. However, there is no relationship with the daytime program and no evidence of help or tutoring. Teachers also say they see no benefit in their classrooms from participation in BF.

Room sharing causes friction. The principal had to meet with the coordinator and agency to establish some guidelines and pair program leaders with volunteer teachers.

Parents say BF is a safe place for their children. But they say staffers need help managing the children and there seems to be no consistent structure. Some parents say the program should leave the school. Many have expressed disappointment because promised enrichment has not occurred. They complain regularly about a lack of structure and homework help. BF refers many students to the day school because of behavior issues.

Agency and District Support
The agency needs to monitor the program and the coordinator and communicate more regularly with administrators. Ms. Miller wants to be more involved in agency decision-making and tells officials of her desire to help with hiring choices. The agency should also develop a training program. Beyond the Bell is helpful, but Ms. Miller wants more transparency in budget and policy monitoring. Currently, both are working on a security problem.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Ms. Miller questions whether she alone should be responsible for improving BF’s many deficits or, indeed, if the program can improve. She believes the ASP can contribute more to its own development.
Case Study Observations
Brainfuse (BF)
Chapman Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Chapman Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Gardena. Brainfuse (BF) is the sponsor and Ms. Esther Hong is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Enthusiastic staffers and engaged participants characterize this program. Everyone seems to want to be there. Children and staffers enjoy the activities and being with each other.

Homework
Homework assistance is a priority at this ASP. Ms. Hong said staff members are “prepared to work with kids and teachers with homework.” Homework assistance is not a challenge here, she said.

“Staff member praises students for doing a good job and is also very attentive to students’ needs,” wrote one observer watching a class of 10 kindergartners. “She gets close to students and helps by taking their pencil and showing them how to write.”

In another instance, an observer watched fourth- and fifth-graders. The observer wrote that the staff member exercised very good control of her students and practiced good class management.

During another observation, students came up to the staff member’s desk to ask for help and get instructions. The staff did not move around the tables offering help, and those who did not ask got no attention. Some students appeared to pay attention to other things besides their homework.

Academics
Students engaged in academic enrichment activities in the computer lab, once they finished homework.

During one observation, first- and second-grade students chose a book for silent reading. If they did not want a book, a staff member gave them workbooks to practice spelling and phrases. The kindergarteners colored.

On a Friday, when there was no homework, students used a workbook called English Language Arts Standards Review.

The ASP has access to the computer lab, which contains 20 computer stations. One observer watched students work on a handout while looking up words on the dictionary.com website. The students showed respect. One girl asked permission before getting up to sharpen her pencil.

Another observer watched fourth- and fifth-graders in the computer lab working on an activity called Action Fraction. The game had five challenge levels. The goal was for students to move from Level 1 to Level 5 as quickly as possible. The first three students to finish their work correctly were the winners.

Students who engaged in academic enrichment showed interest and a high level of engagement. It was difficult to detect the level of engagement of the younger students who only colored.
Arts
Observers watched two crafts activities. The first involved kindergarten students making butterflies using their own handprints. An attentive staffer helped them draw their hands on the paper.

During another observation, students used construction paper, crayons, glue, and pencils to color outlined fish drawings. The staff member is a teaching assistant during the day, and this is her classroom. Ms. Hong said the ASP got use of the room because of her. Normally, the principal does not allow the ASP to use this room.

A group of fourth- and fifth-graders discussed an upcoming play they were planning for first-graders and kindergarteners. "Who wants to be the Three Little Pigs?" the staff member asked. All raised their hands excitedly. Later, they wrote out the play on a blank piece of paper.

Ms. Hong said students most like piano and computer classes. She wants to offer field trips, but faces serious liability barriers.

Sports and Games
Sports are a significant part of this program. Observers watched students play baseball, kickball, and handball. The students also ran on a track, did jumping jacks, and played freely. They communicated with staffers and enjoyed themselves, and staffers in turn offered encouragement and positive reinforcement. Sometimes, staffers had students play sports before homework time, to burn off nervous energy.

During a game of relay races, one staff member clearly had full control of a group of younger students. Another staff member did not have as much control of her group. Students ran from one line to another on the blacktop without much apparent supervision.

An observer watched students play games like Simon Says, Uno, Connect Four, and Monopoly. During Monopoly, the staffer explained the game and participated. An observer watched six children play with two Legos sets, while a staff member focused on other activities. The ASP only had access to this classroom because the staffer uses it during the day.

Students used the computer lab for both academic work and video games. The students stayed quiet and the staff member kept good order, monitoring their screens often.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Staffers showed a high degree of engagement with the students, and each showed respect for the other. Staffers moved among the students and interacted positively with them. The teaching assistant reinforced lessons from the day program.

The students seemed to like the ASP. They reacted positively to other students and staff members. When parents arrived to pick them up, they eagerly showed them what they did.

Staff
Teacher aides in the ASP earn $15.00 per hour, and lead teacher aides earn $18.00 per hour. Ms. Hong said she has no problems keeping this positions filled. She also has no problems finding specialized staff and substitutes.

Staffers who also work in the day program know the students well and are very comfortable with them.

Staffers get an orientation, Impact and CPR training, and some instruction in team building, coaching and communications skills. There is no training in behavior management, classroom management, or LAUSD
Ms. Hong wants staffers trained to help students stay focused on homework. She also wants an incentive program for students.

All ASP staffers wear nametags to distinguish them from Youth Services (YS) staffers.

**Material Resources**
Ms. Hong said the ASP has enough materials and equipment to support all activities. The ASP has access to the computer lab, but not the library.

Ms. Hong’s major concern in this area is a lack of classroom space. Teachers do not want to allow use of their classrooms, and Ms. Hong has stopped bringing up this topic in discussions. All homework assistance occurs in the cafeteria, in groups divided by tables. Ms. Hong prefers classrooms separated by grade level. She believes there are too many students in one space.

Ms. Hong said the snacks are very boring and wants more variety.

Ms. Hong is not satisfied with the cleanliness and maintenance of the areas that students in the ASP use. She wants janitorial staff to “do their jobs.”

**Relationship with the School**
The primary contact for the ASP is the principal, and Ms. Hong said it is a great relationship. They communicate weekly, in person and via e-mail, about student behavior, diets, and events.

Ms. Hong believes the space constraints are the most serious issue affecting the ASP’s relationship with the school.

Teachers and staffers talk when the teachers drop students off to begin the program. They also have weekly conversations regarding homework. However, there is no joint planning or coordination of program activities with the teachers. The school shares CST and assessment scores with the ASP via printouts, which help ASP staffers determine students’ needs.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Staffers communicate with parents via monthly flyers and daily conversations. The usual topics include early dismissal and student performance. Ms. Hong said parents like and support the program. However, she complained that parents sometimes “don’t push their kids to excel.”

Ms. Hong said the ASP’s highlight is the strong relationship between students and staff.

Most of the staff live in this area and work at the school. Local businesses and community groups do not currently support the program. In the past, older, more established businesses have supported the ASP. Newer ones have not, although whether they have been approached is not clear. Ms. Hong wants both financial and in-kind donations.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Ms. Hong says the ASP has a strong, trusting relationship with the agency. She said Beyond the Bell personnel are responsive and accessible, but she does not believe they know very much about the problems the ASP faces.

**Attendance**
ASP staffers use sign-in and sign-out sheets to take attendance. Parents also use them when they pick up their children. Ms. Hong is happy with the procedure.
There are 90 students in the program and 95 on a wait list. Staffers ask a student to leave if he or she has three unexcused absences. That creates a vacancy for the next student on the wait list.

Sign-out is difficult to verify. One staff member appears to have her own sign-out sheet that she writes on as parents come for their children. One observer saw no sign-out sheet for parents at the blacktop area. Ms. Hong said the variety of activities and the involved staff help with recruitment. Incentive Days, Fun Fridays and a party at the end of the school year also attract students.

Ms. Hong said an intervention program and some field trips might have interfered with attendance this year.

**Safety and Security**
Ms. Hong believes the school is a secure place for the students. She also believes the physical property of both the school site and the after-school program is safe.

**Conclusions and Comments**
Ms. Hong is enthusiastic about her program. She said she and her staff love what they do, are grateful for what they have, and hope to keep the program going.
# Site Profile

**Carney Educational Services (CES)**  
**Graham Elementary School**

## School Site Profile

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<th>School Site</th>
<th>Graham Elementary</th>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Mary Harris</th>
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## School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>824</th>
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</table>
| Student Racial/Ethnicity | 95.4% Hispanic  
|                        | 4.4% Black  
|                        | .1% American Indian/Alaskan  
|                        | .1% Asian |

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 58.0% |
| Total:  | 476 |
|        | 476 Spanish |
|        | 1 Farsi |
|        | 1 Other |

## After-School Program Profile

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<th>After School Program Provider Agency</th>
<th>Carney Educational Services</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:carneyed@aol.com">carneyed@aol.com</a>/lauraand@juno.com</td>
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<table>
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<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 668 |
| API – 2007 | 649 |
Carney Educational Services (CES) conducts an unexceptional, routine ASP at Graham Elementary School. Mr. Valles is new to the school, but he has already identified numerous weaknesses. He considers CES an independent adjunct not integrated with the school.

Mr. Valles has had several meetings with the site coordinator and area representatives to discuss program leader training, activity upgrades and improved supervision. In these meetings, he has said ASP homework and enrichment time should focus on increasing fluency, reading comprehension and math competency. He says they have a captive audience and an opportunity to carry on the work of the school for an additional three hours. Program leaders, who are young college students, need training in positive disciplinary methods so that more learning can take place. CES is a safe environment with a supportive structure, but it is an ASP in transition that offers a less-than exemplary curriculum at the moment. Mr. Valles hopes to improve that, but he has not yet succeeded.

**Components**

Mr. Valles says CES participants receive generic homework assistance, but would benefit more from individual tutoring based on the district core curriculum. He believes the school and the agency should train ASP staff in improving writing, math skills and reading. Such strategies should align with the day school program. Mr. Valles believes the ASP should promote the same academic priorities and initiatives as the regular school program and serve as an extension of the school day.

Mr. Valles has seen no academic enrichment opportunities in the program. He wants an educational field trip each semester and enrichment classes pertinent to the students’ culture. He also wants chess offered to develop analytical thinking.

**Athletics and games** should connect to seasonal sports such as basketball, football and soccer. That part of the program should enhance skill development so students can reach a level that allows them eventually to compete with other schools. The after school sports program should provide instruction in sports that students will see in later grades, like volleyball and track and field.

All ASP students ought to be involved daily in fine and performing arts activities. CES offers only a percussion group. Students need creative activities through which they can discover and develop personal skills. Each semester, the ASP should produce a culminating art, music or drama presentation so parents can see their children’s talent showcased. Skills CES should be concentrating on include art skills, stage presence and music: experiences that support young talent and help build self-esteem in all students. Mr. Valles also suggests a cheer class, ballet folklórico and hip hop dance.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Graham teachers have not told Mr. Valles of any impact they see on their students from CES participation. Those that share classrooms with the program complain it leaves them a mess. Even though the site coordinator made a presentation to the faculty and helped develop guidelines for classroom cleanliness, teachers still complain that ASP leaders need more training in classroom management. They also want a program to reinforce readiness for standardized testing and a closer alignment with the school curriculum.
Parents value the free after-school care and consider CES a safe environment. They like the help with homework completion. However, they do see the need for improved supervision and a lack of expertise in enrichment activities. They want a better-trained staff and more connection between the ASP and the day school.

Agency and District Support
Mr. Valles established communication early on with the agency coordinator and area representatives. He wants monthly meetings to gauge the ASP’s progress and for CES to schedule monthly professional development training meetings for staffers, but he has seen little effort to act on his suggestions. He believes Beyond the Bell should monitor personnel recruitment more closely and review the program quality more rigorously. He also believes either BTB or the agency should pay for more custodial time.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Mr. Valles cannot comment on the quality of the ASP last year or on the level of administrative influence or involvement. He wants expanded enrichment, a better-trained staff, more funding and better connections to the regular school. He plans to be very active and involved because, he says, “It’s my job.”
Case Study Observations
Carney Educational Services (CES)
Graham Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Graham Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Los Angeles, and Carney Educational Services sponsors it. Mr. Stephen Sencion is the site coordinator. He has been at this location for only two weeks.

Highlights
The watchword here is change, and it starts with a site coordinator that has just recently come on board. Despite his short time here, Mr. Sencion appears to have experience and has already made an evaluation of what works well and what needs to change. He is most concerned about staff interaction with students and wants to make this a priority. He will have to set new expectations and clearly explain the consequences of not meeting them. He will need support from his supervisors and the agency. But turning the program around will not be easy. Observers witnessed deeply ingrained habits.

Mr. Sencion noted the lack of continuity and communication from the outgoing coordinator. If any records existed regarding community contact, they left with that person. Mr. Sencion suggested developing a “manual” to ensure the transfer of the entire program’s relevant information to the succeeding coordinator. This suggestion might be relevant across all Beyond the Bell programs.

Mr. Sencion also noted Carney’s practice of sending highly talented staff members who specialize in a particular area to mentor less experienced staff members. Such a practice might benefit other programs.

Homework
The cafeteria is a focal point for homework assistance. While some observers saw some staffers strive to help students and be flexible with them, others saw brusque program leaders who were “a bit rough with helping students” and “too demanding and very harsh with students.” An observer noted that one program leader showed “a controlling attitude and demanding personality.”

During another session, an evaluator watched students socializing rather than working on homework. There was not enough homework material, and students at a nearby table crowded around a video game, “yelling, screaming, and getting all excited with the game.” Staffers appeared disorganized.

Another observer noted the following:

Students are outside at the lunch tables. Students are talking with each other more than concentrating on homework. These students are right next to another group that is playing with the ball by kicking it around to each other. It looks like recess. Because students are not paying much attention to their homework, they are not being challenged.

The observer said staffers had insufficient and disorganized materials. They seemed “to be hanging out with the students. Staffers are not encouraging students to do homework.”

A staff member asked how many students had finished their homework. All the students raised their hands. She said, "Great! Pull it out so I can check it." The students then began making excuses and finally acknowledged they had not finished it. This teacher controlled the situation well.
One observer witnessed the beginning of a homework session that Mr. Sencion had to manage because the responsible staffer was late. He had to keep the students in a covered outdoor lunch area, rather than their regular classroom, so he could continue to supervise the rest of the program. "You guys are very loud," Mr. Sencion said. "Be very respectful of each other. After homework, we can talk, but you need to be quiet now." Mr. Sencion helped individual children as he moved among them. When one finished his homework correctly, he told him, “Good job!” The group later left with their regular program leader when she arrived.

Mr. Sencion acknowledged, “Some staff have it and some don’t in terms of skills/knowledge” for homework assistance. He said he has seen staff members feed students the answers rather than helping them work through the problems. He said he wants to raise this issue with his supervisor to explore whether better training might help. He said he would rate the homework difficulty a seven on a 1-10 scale, 10 being the most difficult.

**Academics**

Observers twice watched students playing a math game called Around the World after they completed homework:

A student stands up. A teacher gives the student a math problem. He/she needs to figure out the answer in their head. Some students are whispering the answers to each other.

Observers watched about 30 kindergarteners and first-graders doing numbers, spelling, drawing, reading, and playing. The children pretended to be the teacher while they waited in the cafeteria for another room to open up.

During one observation, 20 students learned music, rhythm, and beats. The teacher hit the desk and the students copied him and added other rhythms. The students appeared to enjoy this activity.

During another observation, 15 students learned music and keeping the beat. Some students created lyrics for songs. The students made sounds with their hands, mouths, books, and pens. They appeared to enjoy themselves.

Enrichment classes included art, music, drawing, and dance. Mr. Sencion said he likes to start Fun Fridays, when there is no homework, with an arts/crafts activity. He described one in which the students made paper helicopters, decorated them, and threw them in the air.

**Sports and Games**

An observer noted that two staff members watching a soccer game were “a bit harsh with the students.” One staff member, speaking to a student, said, “What did I tell you? What did I tell you?” The child appeared intimidated by the staff member.

One observer watching children on the playground equipment noted the following:

The children are mostly entertaining themselves. One staff member is on her cell phone. The assistant site coordinator comes over to the playground equipment area to set some order. She tells the students to go up on the steps one at a time. After the assistant site coordinator leaves, children once again crowd the steps and the upper level of the playground equipment. A staff member appears to be watching but not controlling the activities of the children. Another staff member comes over. They are talking together.
There is low interaction with the students. Children are running from the apparatus to the blacktop and into the covered lunch area. No one stops them.

An observer during a hockey game noted that it appeared routine and unchallenging to them. The staff member managing this area appeared to be “just watching students, not coaching them in the game.” The staff member seldom called students by their names. The observer noted that the staffer was not encouraging them. “He hardly relates to students,” the observer noted. “He is not too involved or motivated in playing the sport.”

One observer noted that all students playing on the monkey bars at a particular time were having a hard time holding on. This staff member was not encouraging students. She sat back at a bench and used a cell phone as she watched them.

All of the games were videos. Students played a band video game using a very large screen in the auditorium. The observer said it was very dark in the room and the music was very loud. “The game is too explicit for these young children,” the observer said. “One female in the game is shown wearing a black bra, and a male is shown with tattoos all over his arms.” Another group of students played a video game on a television. The observer said the students “seem to be getting on each other’s nerves.” She noticed what she termed “frustration:"

Students are in the cafeteria playing a video game on television. They are very rowdy and loud. They are not being respectful to each other or friendly.

Another observer noted:

Students awaiting their turn to play the video game are too noisy. They are distracting those playing the video game.

Several observations of Carney sports and games occurred. They included games of handball, soccer, hockey, kickball, and playing on the jungle gym and slides. Mr. Sencion said he likes physical activity for the students at the end of the day, like sack races and track races. Students seemed to enjoy themselves and cooperate during these activities.

Mr. Sencion said the students love video games, but he would rather they not play them all the time. They should be a treat. He does not believe these games are educational, and in any case, having to wait in line to play them causes problems.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

The staff did not appear highly engaged with the students. A number of observers saw little or no interaction. At times, students argued with each other or engaged in dangerous horseplay. One observer saw two small children fighting and kicking each other while a staff member ignored them:

A staff member sits with her back towards these conflicting students and does not appear to notice that one student has apparently hurt the other one by kicking him.

Another observer watched staff and students on the blacktop:

The staffer is trying to maintain order. However, it looks more like chaos than control. A few students run on the blacktop, but no one stops them. Children are chasing and making stomping motions at the pigeons, scaring them away.
During snack time, an observer saw a staff member yelling at the students. "Sit down!" yelled the staff member. "Put it away!" Staffers tried to keep the area clean. They repeatedly yelled at students to pick up trash. They also picked up trash themselves. The students were loud, and the staffers were, too. There appeared to be no connection between them. There was no discipline or order here. Staffers constantly reacted to students and seemed on the defensive. They seldom if ever told any child to quiet down. There was no activity to control the volume of their voices or their movements around the area.

Staff members speak mostly English to students, but also some Spanish.

Staff
Mr. Sencion is just beginning to implement changes after spending his first two weeks assessing the program.

Mr. Sencion said regular staffers earn $13.00-$15.00 per hour. Assistant coordinators earn $17.00 per hour, and coordinators start at $20.00 per hour. There are seven staff members each day. Mr. Sencion said it is extremely difficult to keep positions filled. “The staff is not reliable,” he said. “There are absences and tardiness. Each day is a challenge.” Mr. Sencion has tried to deal with performance issues, but hiring freezes are common at CES, and he believes it is better to have someone than no one.

Recruitment of specialized staff and substitutes is a difficult challenge, Mr. Sencion said. He said substitutes often exceed his regular staff members. If a staffer lets Mr. Sencion know in advance of an absence, he can usually get a substitute. But there is a hierarchy of help, with the highest-ratio programs at the top.

Both Beyond the Bell and CES conduct training, Mr. Sencion said. New staff members learn emergency procedures. There is also Impact Training, which covers classroom management and what might be termed enrichment. This training occurs when there are enough people to comprise a class. CES also sends teachers to observe other, more experienced and talented teachers. Experienced staff members get some training. Mr. Sencion said he recently went to a training session at the Science Museum.

Mr. Sencion said there is on-the-job training, some mandatory. Other classes can be limited, so the site coordinator has to choose staffers to attend. There is no training in the LAUSD curricula and homework assignments.

When asked about what kinds of training would most benefit the staff, Mr. Sencion said he wants to emphasize the proper way to talk to students. He sees a lot of screaming, yelling, and inappropriate wording. He wants to discuss scenarios when it is and is not appropriate to raise one’s voice, what words to use, what tone, etc. He expressed some doubt about conducting the training himself.

No training occurs during staff meetings. Mr. Sencion said issues of punctuality and paperwork dominate them.

Material Resources
When asked about the cleanliness of the parts of the school his students use and the quality of janitorial services, Mr. Sencion said:

Kids are not the best cleaners. The staff cleans up what they don’t clean up. They need to make sure that the place is in as good shape or better shape than when they found it. The custodians don’t do a thing, but complain about the after-school program.
Some of the students are responsible for handing out snacks. Mr. Sencion said that they love doing this. Mr. Sencion rates the quality of the snacks a 10 on a 1-10 scale. “It is pretty good, based upon the appeal of school food,” he said. He does not see a need to change anything in this area.

Mr. Sencion said CES gets enough classroom space for its needs. Also, materials and supplies are sufficient to support the current offerings. He said it sometimes takes a long time to get materials and equipment, but he can make special requests, and they get results. Mr. Sencion does not know if this ASP has access to the school’s library and computer lab.

**Relationship with the School**

Mr. Sencion said he got a complaint from a teacher about a hallway bulletin board that had been torn down. She said she wanted no Carney students in the building. He tried to explain that the culprit had not been determined, but the teacher insisted it was a Carney student. “You run a great program,” the teacher sarcastically told Mr. Sencion before walking away. The assistant principal later clarified that the teacher had no authority to bar anyone from the building.

Mr. Sencion said that his primary contacts are the principal or the assistant principal. His relationship with the assistant principal, until recently, has been positive. Mr. Sencion said he was disturbed about an incident that took place on the day of the interview related to the boys’ bathroom. Mr. Sencion told the assistant principal that the bathroom was locked, and that custodians sometimes are responsible. She refused to believe him or even listen to him.

When asked how he communicates with administrators, Mr. Sencion said they schedule face-to-face meetings. But he goes to them in their offices. They do not come to see him.

Mr. Sencion has talked with administrators about classroom availability, programming updates, and getting permission for some activities. Teachers do not talk to ASP staffers, share CST and assessment scores with them, or coordinate curricula with ASP activities. “As soon as the bell rings,” Mr. Sencion said, “they’re out of there.”

Mr. Sencion said one strength of the ASP/school relationship is that administrators place a high priority on a safe environment for students. As for weaknesses, Mr. Sencion said he sometimes feels as if the custodial staff is “against” the ASP and cultivates an unwelcome atmosphere. However, he singled out one custodian as ”great.”

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Mr. Sencion said staff members talk with parents as they arrive to pick up children. He emphasized that they greet every parent. The person in charge of signing students out also talks with them. When there is fighting or a student is injured, Mr. Sencion always calls home to let parents know.

Mr. Sencion does not live in the community, but many ASP staffers do. Mr. Sencion has contacts in his own community to help him bring items like food or merchandise. He does not know if local businesses or community groups support the program. He said relationships with the community do not appear to exist yet.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Mr. Sencion said the site director is extremely involved in this program, but getting supplies quickly is a problem. Otherwise, he and his staffers have not really dealt with Beyond the Bell, though representatives sometimes visit the program.
**Attendance**
One day, a staffer told an observer that many students had attended but there were also many who were “going off-track.” That day, no activities were on the schedule because they were “in transition in receiving rooms.”

Mr. Sencion said he does not have a lot of experience in recruiting students to the program. He knows Carney sent flyers to parents through a mailing list, and staffers posted some of them in the school office. The program has 160 students and could accommodate more, but there is no wait list.

Mr. Sencion said ASP staffers take attendance. At the end of the day, he tallies the information, and on weekends, he submits it to his supervisor via computer. He sees no better way to do it. He has modified his processes to make it easier to enter data at the end of the week.

Mr. Sencion said he cannot comment on any events that occurred this year that may have affected attendance, as he is new to the site. He works hard to make the program fun, exciting, innovative and creative so students continue to attend. “You make the program fun instead of like a boot camp,” he said. “There has to be a balance.”

**Safety and Security**
Mr. Sencion and his staff are satisfied with student security at this site. “We’re safe,” he said. One observer noted that at dismissal time, an administrator stood by the Bell Avenue gate to let students out. Parents could only go to the blacktop area. After a time, she closed the gate and locked it with a chain and padlock. However, that gate was later open and unmonitored when students left the ASP.

One observer noted an event in the playground in which a child got hurt:

> It appears that she fell down steps on the playground equipment. She is crying. A staff member takes her over to the lunch table and tells her to sit down. The staff member goes on to say, "I told you to not to run around." She leaves the child there and the child continues to cry. The site coordinator comes over to the child when he returns to the area to find out what has happened, asks her if she is all right and if she wants her mother called. The site coordinator ensures that the child's parent is called and provides an ice pack for the child.

During his interview, Mr. Sencion said someone should be at the Bell Avenue gate when the ASP ends. “Having the ice cream vendor right outside the gate encourages students to go out the gate,” he said, even though they are not supposed to do this.

**Conclusions and Comments**
Mr. Sencion is new to this site. However, when asked if he was still in “observation mode” after two weeks on the job, he responded in the negative. He said he observed for three days before he began work, and he believes he is quite familiar with the program. He also said he believes he knows what he needs to do to fix the program. He seems experienced and credible.

The ASP staff members need training and discipline regarding absences, tardiness, interaction with students, attitude, and cultivating a learning environment. Mr. Sencion realizes this is his responsibility. He is not sure that what he might teach them is the right way to operate. Observers note that the behavior he models is critically necessary here. Mr. Sencion may need positive reinforcement. Short-staffing issues need addressing. Mr. Sencion needs the flexibility to dismiss poor performers, and this might not happen if he cannot replace them.
## School Site Profile

| School Site (location) | Sutter Middle School | 7330 Winnetka Ave.  
Canoga Park, CA 91306 |

| Principal | Michael Smith |

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.9% Asian</td>
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<td>.1% Pacific Islander</td>
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**English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 27.4%

**English Language Learners**
- Total: 444
- 411 Spanish
- 13 Vietnamese
- 12 Other
- 3 Armenian
- 3 Filipino
- 2 Farsi

## After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>Carney Educational Services</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mike Carney/Laura Anderson</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:carneyed@aol.com">carneyed@aol.com</a>/lauraand@juno.com</td>
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<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
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<tr>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 689 |
| API – 2007 | 683 |
Administrator Interview
Carney Educational Services (CES)
Sutter Middle School
Michael Smith, Principal
November 2, 2008

Mr. Smith said Carney Educational Services (CES) provides a popular and successful ASP at Sutter Middle School. Teachers and administrators consider it an integral part of school daily operations. Because they trust it, they allow program leaders to use several school facilities, like the cafeteria and the auditorium. Mr. Smith offers suggestions for improved supervision and upgraded program offerings, but he is pleased with many elements and particularly supports activities that build self-esteem and help participants feel valued. Sutter counselors regularly refer students to the ASP.

Communication and organization are also sound. Each month, CES program leaders attend a meeting with Youth Services and L.A. Bridges personnel to coordinate use of facilities and events where all three groups participate. CES has an enthusiastic coordinator and a strong working relationship with its agency.

Components
Homework assistance is satisfactory. Mr. Smith says this initial daily activity occurs in a quiet, supportive and well-managed environment. He does not suggest training in behavior management but does believe program leaders would benefit from some familiarity with teens’ social needs.

Academic enrichment is limited to rotating classes in film study and digital photography. Mr. Smith wants the ASP to bring more variety to enrichment classes. He suggests scheduling relevant field trips and sections on group counseling and conflict management.

Youth Services should be the entity that provides athletic skill building and organizes formal leagues and tournaments. CES should complement these events by offering non-traditional sports such as Frisbee golf, juggling and yoga. Mr. Smith does not want extensive intramurals or other sports competition. He wants to see CES work on activities that build teamwork, character, and self-esteem through games and sports other than soccer, football and basketball. “Highly organized, competitive sports programs take on a life of their own and pull students from other worthwhile after-school activities,” he said.

In fine and performing arts, CES offers guitar, dance and drama classes. At the end of the year, the ASP produced an excellent presentation in cooperation with L.A. Bridges. To offer quality music or art instruction, CES should find talented instructors at a higher hourly wage. Mr. Smith believes that ASPs cannot truly move pupils to higher skill levels in creative fields because they do not provide long-term, continuing instruction. He thinks CES should make better use of its three hours with in-depth, quality teaching. Additionally, it should work with local colleges and universities to bring performing groups to his campus during the afternoon.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Sutter teachers appreciate homework help and think participants pay more attention and complete more assignments. They also say CES is a positive place for pupils to be: it is interesting and keeps them off the streets and away from disturbing local businesses. However, CES could do a better job supervising and communicating with teachers, and it could connect more directly with the daytime instructional program.

Parents like the “babysitting” service, particularly for sixth-graders, and also homework and tutoring help. Parents agree with teachers that CES needs more and better campus supervision. There have been occasions when program leaders cannot find students who are supposed to participate. Sometimes, they
Agency representatives visit the program at least once a month. Mr. Smith finds the agency cooperative, active and helpful. He has had no need to contact them about student behavior, personnel or organizational issues. He believes the coordinator is especially enthusiastic: she schedules events and activities that create a positive exposure for CES and manages a caring, dedicated staff. The principal knows whom to contact at Beyond the Bell but has had no need this year to do so. He found them very responsive three years ago when he had to remove an unsuccessful agency, and he appreciated participating in the selection of the new agency.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
CES enjoys ongoing support from Sutter administrators. Mr. Smith and his assistant principals visit often to let CES program leaders know they are a part of the school. As such, they expect CES program leaders to be organized, caring, and sensitive to the needs of Sutter students.
Introduction
This program takes place at Sutter Middle School in Canoga Park. Carney Educational Services (CES) is the sponsor, and Ms. Vanessa Ixta is the leader.

Highlights
Carney Educational Services (CES) provides an active, well-designed program with sound daily procedures, including an opening meeting for Ms. Ixta to share information, helping participants feel welcome and valued. Staff looks after safety and supervision needs. The program offers several attractive enrichment activities along with formal and informal outdoor sports activities. CES makes a sincere effort, and for the most part succeeds, in cooperating with two other after-school programs that both compete with and complement the events at Sutter. Another impressive feature was the snack break. One observer said:

The snack break occurs at approximately 4 p.m. in the indoor cafeteria. The fact that the ASPs have the use of this facility shows the confidence the administrators have in the ASP staff’s ability to keep order and clean up. Assembled in this clean, open and airy room are all students from three separate programs: Carney, Youth Services (YS), and L.A. Bridges.

Supervisors from each group sit with the kids, keeping them organized. The room is full, but Ms. Ixta tells me each program has its own section. I sneak a peek at the sign in sheets to see if there is cross-pollinating in attendance accounting. There is not.

The largest group here is L.A. Bridges, a mandatory support organization that addresses multiple issues with referred students who receive case management. The director says L.A. Bridges students ‘are always trying to get involved with Carney activities.’ YS leagues are strong here too, and Carney staffers keep track of where students are so they can hound their own members about doing homework when they miss this hour for special tournament practice.

There is an enthusiastic, conscientious site coordinator attuned to the needs of middle school students. She schedules entertaining events and monitors her staff. Even so, she faces declining participation each day as students leave before 6 p.m.

Although there are questions about the level of support CES receives for facilities use, CES generally enjoys the support of administrators, who periodically visit the program. Participants display a positive, cooperative, even enthusiastic attitude during special events. Staffers treat the students kindly. They are young, earnest, college-age program leaders who show interest in their work.

The program offers no supplemental academic enrichment classes, but students do get a chance to participate in many and varied creative activities each week, including filmmaking, cooking and learning to play musical instruments.

Homework and Academics
Observers came to the site in May and June. They reported little assigned homework both during standardized testing in May and as the end of the year approached. Observers saw a positive relationship
between program leaders and students when they did work on homework assignments, even when the session took place outside. Despite the distraction of unaffiliated students walking by and the noise of after-school horseplay, CES students worked quietly and steadily. Other observers who watched homework sessions said program leaders helped students by moving among them, asking and answering questions.

Program leaders use three locations for homework sessions: a large and airy former woodshop classroom, a spacious classroom used by a sixth grade teacher during the day, and a semi-private quad area enclosed by a low concrete wall outside the other two locations. This area also serves as home base for CES. It is here that the program opens with a general meeting each day. The area has several round lunch tables with attached seating beaches, concrete walkways, some grass, and a few trees. On several visits, observers reported no interference by students who were not in the program.

When weather permits, CES participants sit with friends at these round tables and complete homework with the help of the staff. Observers saw the following on days when students had no homework:

Sixth grade homework is in session about thirty minutes after the close of school. The 25 or so sixth-graders finally settle in the large classroom after much commotion. A few get out their homework. For ten minutes, no fewer than three program leaders manage the class: the regular sixth grade homework leader, a second, somewhat older man who seems to have more status than the younger one, and a third person hired recently. She is observing. The second leader has brought eight copies of today’s newspaper and is giving the class a lesson in how to write current events—he talks about who, when, where, why and how. For the most part, the kids go along with the exercise, particularly when bribed with Carney dollars.

The observer made general comments about the challenges faced by this ASP at the end of the year when students are without assignments and sometimes without staff:

Even with one month of school left, because CSTs and other exams used so much time, many teachers do not expect their students to take up where they left off before the interruption of district-wide testing. Routines have been lost and homework has become an event of the past. This ASP, unlike many others observed during June, presented a language arts-based exercise from which students may possibly realize an academic gain. Another program leader was hired. Because of considerable turnover, coordinators feel the pressure to fill open positions, and the overall program suffers.

Even when teachers do not assign homework, it is a regular four-day requirement for CES at Sutter. An observer watched older students:

Seventh- and eighth-grade homework has started. There are about sixteen pupils and I cannot see that even one has homework. They sit next to their friends. Even though they are socializing, they respond to the leaders. They are also about to write a current events essay from the newspaper. The atmosphere is positive, and even with the talking, these kids are not rude or rowdy or resentful. They seem accepting of this activity and their behavior shows they like this leader.

**Sports and Recreation**

Outdoor sports such as flag football, basketball, and softball take place following the enrichment hour. The number of participants varies from day to day depending on the school bell schedule, which students go home with their parents or which ones walk home, and other factors that pull students away after 5
p.m. All observations mention program leaders who are either playing with the students or supervising from the sidelines with tips on techniques or with words of encouragement. In no observation are pupils pictured as difficult, disrespectful, not participating, or not following directions. Students not interested in sports participate in games in the outdoor quad or main classroom. They play chess, card games and board games. Program leaders are always present, sometimes playing with the few students who remain until the program closes.

On Fridays, the site coordinator usually schedules just one activity. She said students like the Friday specials, another example of her “changing up” the schedule. On one Friday, the observer saw the Carney Carnival and made these comments:

At 3 p.m., school has been out for 18 minutes. Program leaders are finished setting up booths and the game store. They have taken attendance. Despite the fact that it is Friday, the program has more than 70 students. They sit at tables and talk with friends while staffers finish preparations. At 4:15 p.m., the five activities have been going for about 40 minutes (after the snack). Kids enjoy the penny toss, the basketball and beanbag games, the balloon pop contest, and a relay. Students remain steadily involved as they move from game to game. The games close at 5 p.m. Students and leaders clean up the area. There have been no problems and the attitude of the kids is positive. They obviously enjoy this program. They relate well with the leaders, who are organized and caring, and with the capable site coordinator.

Arts

Musical instrument instruction appears to be an ongoing priority at this ASP. Reports from the site include the following:

Students are outside in guitar class. Each student has a guitar. The instructor is showing them how to play basic chords. The students appear to be engaged and enjoying themselves.

Seven students and a leader assemble with guitars in the middle of the quad area. They have come a long way, even though they are not highly skilled, began their guitar instruction this term, and practice just two days a week (they do not take these instruments home). The players are not self-conscious even though they have a lot to learn. They like to perform.

After a few minutes of warm-up and tuning, another small group arrives with the site coordinator. They are singers. Now they work on La Bamba together. The guitar players are stronger than the singers, who have trouble finding the right key. Finally, they get together. There is a lot of giggling. This group will perform at a program later this month. It is a good use of after school time—fun, good for confidence and a positive experience for kids led by caring adults.

Students are learning to play the drums. The group comprises five students and the instructor. The instructor is showing students how to put a drum set together. They appear to be very excited and eager to start playing. Once the drum set is ready, the instructor shows the students a basic drumbeat. Each student gets a chance to try this.

Other attractive activities that keep students connected and interested include a video class, a dance troupe (the second most popular activity), a film section, and a fledgling drama group. Also, because it is late May, this ASP, like many others, devotes time to rehearsals for an evening performance. Parents attend, students perform, and the event brings satisfaction and closure for both students and leaders. It is an
exciting and hopeful visual validation of a year’s worth of after-school activity. Observations of various activities follow:

An interesting class called “film” is taking place in the shop room. A knowledgeable leader explains voiceovers and other technical aspects of putting together animated features. He asks good questions and uses a television monitor and a CD of cartoon clips. The kids focus on the discussion. They seem to know a lot about the information they are receiving. The site coordinator tells me this is a relatively new section, thought up during the last week. She talks often about changing the schedule to keep interest high. She is doing a good job.

The newly hired woman who earlier watched a homework experience is starting a drama section. She is earnest and has a pleasant manner with the class. The students seem skeptical of how the experience will turn out. She is giving background information about various forms of dramatic presentation like improvisation and one-act plays. Keeping the interest of middle-school students in mid-afternoon is new to her. She has already lost some.

The students are in a video class working on a project. The instructor reviews what they have worked on. He then tells them he will give them the camera and it will be up to them to come up with an idea, write a script, and decide who will act, direct, etc. He will give them one hour to work. Afterward, they will come together and go over what they did.

Later this month, CES and L.A. Bridges will present an evening performance of dance, music, songs, and drama. This is a rehearsal … and there is a man helping with the microphone who runs up and down the aisle until he gets it right. The student performers are excellent. They have nice voices and dance well.

They pay strict attention to the program leader. She choreographed the dance routine, which won fourth place in a city tournament in April. That the school auditorium, the sound booth, the microphone and other equipment, are available … is a strong indication of a high level of trust or excellent communication. Later, I speak with the person in charge of audio-visual equipment. He is a case manager for L.A. Bridges. These two programs work together on other projects.

Other Enrichment

Observers saw many popular enrichment activities at Sutter CES. These occur in the auditorium, in the outdoor quad, and in the two rooms used for homework. The converted shop room can adapt to classes that require sinks and safety equipment such as fire extinguishers. The site coordinator said the most popular class is cooking. Observers watched this class on two occasions:

The students are in a cooking class; today they will be making strawberry/peach cobbler. Two instructors teach a group of about twenty students. They cut fruit and prepare a glaze for the cobbler.

Today students are making quesadillas in cooking class. The staff has provided all the necessary items: tortillas, cheese, ham, etc. The students make them and then put them on the mini grill. This is what they will eat for snack. The class engages the students.
**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Observers did not see students concentrating on academic exercises. Staffers undertook homework assistance with resolve and sometimes with creativity, but after more than six hours in the regular school program, students could not engage at a high intellectual level.

In her interview, the site coordinator did not regard homework assistance as a challenge. “That is not an issue,” she said. “Before the program leaders get hired, HR tells them that that is a requirement. The staff is well prepared and we have practice tests and things like that which we can use as references or to further help the kids.”

Despite the lack of highly focused homework, program leaders forged other paths to expanding young minds and supporting reasoning and critical thinking. In an effort to reinforce the intellectual benefits of music and performing arts, leaders are intent on keeping students engaged taught interesting classes with stimulating material in an enjoyable environment. It is hard to see how a young person could NOT develop confidence and self-esteem in these classes.

All enrichment activities involved, interested and diverted the students. The fascination shone on their faces.

Because of the ever-changing schedule and the popularity of the leaders, class management appeared not to be a problem. Every middle school ASP requires a healthy complement of energy and diligence from leaders to get students settled down and on task. But observers saw no real disciplinary issues at this site. The site coordinator also expressed no concerns regarding this aspect.

Good organization, consistent procedures, support from the day school, and cooperation with other campus programs contribute to an orderly and calm atmosphere. Many middle school programs could benefit from observing CES.

**Staff**

The site coordinator said her salary starts at $20.00 per hour. The assistant coordinator starts at $17 per hour and the staff starts at $13 per hour. “We have a lot of turnover, at least 50 percent,” she said. “We have consistently lost people due to school or to their getting other jobs.”

Parents volunteer during Reading is Fundamental week and for Thanksgiving and winter shows, when they help with supervision.

The site coordinator said program leaders have to attend two training sessions. One from Beyond the Bell focuses on procedures and policies, and the other, from IMPACT, focuses on motivation and includes conflict management training. “We e cover a lot of the same things [in training],” the site coordinator said. Additional training on classroom management and creativity would help. “We are so bombarded with policies that [the staff] can’t get creative,” she said.

Securing specialized instructors and substitutes is not a problem. “It’s not really an issue unless . . . we need more money to pay them,” the site coordinator said. She wants to offer martial arts to teach the students the difference between self-defense and mere fighting. She also wants more performing arts offerings. “The challenge is that all of that is expensive,” she said,” from the equipment to actually paying somebody.”

**Material Resources**
The site coordinator said she has plenty of materials and equipment. However, even with the two classrooms and the use of the quad area, there are some facility concerns. CES does not have access to the library or computer lab. She said she has tried to initiate discussions about this, but “we just never get an answer.”

The program’s routine access to the indoor cafeteria and the auditorium with all its equipment was a refreshing change from most ASPs. The frequent visits of Sutter administrators may help with teachers’ traditional resistance to allow ASP use of classrooms and auditoriums. This level of communication is a very positive feature at Sutter.

Concerning snacks, the site coordinator had some criticism. She said students get the same snacks often and might appreciate more variety. She also praised custodial staff, who she said stay at the building until 11 p.m. “They do a great job,” she said.

**Relationship with the School**
The site coordinator said she has a good relationship with the school’s assistant principal who is supposed to be her contact. Another assistant principal runs the IMPACT and also helps because he is on the site after school lets out. “I see him every day and we just talk in person about mostly updates,” she said.

Regarding the program’s relationship with teachers, the site coordinator said staffers usually arrive 15 minutes before the end of the school day and talk to the teachers whose classes they use. Regarding homework, the students have agendas that teachers and parents have to sign every day. Staffers also sign off on homework completion in these agendas. The ASP receives no student standardized test scores from the school.

The teachers have few jointly planned activities with the ASP staff, except for a “faculty games” event every semester where both staffs form teams and play sports against each other. The site coordinator cited the program’s safety and engaging activities as a strength. She said its lack of counselors is a weakness, and she suspects this as a reason for losing students to L.A. Bridges.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Program leaders communicate with parents through flyers and information posted on an “information easel” near the entrance. This easel might show information on upcoming events, minimum days, tournaments, trips, and shows.

The site coordinator said parents like that they do not have to pay for anything provided by the program, be it trips, snacks, or supplies, and that keeps their children coming back. But she regrets that the program is not available to students during vacations and summertime, when she believes they need it most. The site coordinator said her staff is very familiar with the surrounding community because they live in the area and have been working there for the last five years. However, there has not been a history of relationships with local businesses. “They have welcomed us to perform for things like Oktoberfest;” she said.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
The agency gives CES capable, trained staffers that work well with students. But the site coordinator said budget constraints sometimes get in the way of enhancing the program so it can keep attracting students. The site coordinator considers Youth Services (YS) and Beyond the Bell interchangeable. She appreciates that it helps put together sports leagues and that there is no friction between CES and YS, even when they share equipment and materials.
Attendance
Program leaders use sign-in and sign-out sheets that the students fill themselves to take attendance. The site coordinator collects them daily, tallies them, and sends them to CES on Fridays. “It’s a tedious process,” she said. “I heard about some centers that have that swiping thing, where students swipe a card. I think something like that would be much better.” She said it would cut about four hours per week in paperwork.

When asked about minimizing absences and building program membership, the site coordinator said the staff uses a buddy system to recruit students. When they bring in friends, students get raffle tickets. If those friends join the program, the students get 10 more tickets per new member. The tickets can purchase items at a CES store. Students get the opportunity to attend field trips if they consistently show up for the program and do well on homework.

There is no wait list for this program. Competition with another older, better established ASP does create attendance issues. “A lot of our kids get referred to L.A. Bridges for case management,” the site coordinator said. “Since Bridges has a waiting list, they come to us in the meantime.” However, there is a rule against program switching unless a counselor or program leader expressly approves.

Safety and Security
The site coordinator does not regard safety as a problem. Observers also noted the calm atmosphere and the availability of many adults during the program. Program leaders have requested no campus aides or school police.

The security of program equipment and personal property is another matter. The site coordinator said staffers leave nothing outside the office because the neighborhood is sketchy. Staffers lock supplies and equipment in the office after use. She wants an indoor closet in the building to store materials. Closets in outside areas have suffered vandalism in the past.

Conclusions and Comments
The site coordinator said her biggest challenge is keeping students until the program ends at 6 p.m. She said the agency has asked her to try harder to retain students until then, but many students walk home and leave at a certain time on instructions from their parents. Some parents who pick up their children after work cannot wait until 6 p.m.

The site coordinator is always available to help set up events and look after details. She supports her staff. She also clearly cares about making the program attractive to students. There is a commitment to homework. Leaders also plan academic exercises. CES at Sutter is a very successful program.
### School Site Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Wright Middle School</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6550 W. 80th St.</td>
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**Principal:** James Stapleton

#### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<tbody>
<tr>
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**English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment:** 8.8%

**English Language Learners:**
- Total: 66
- 58 Spanish
- 5 Other
- 1 Korean
- 1 Pilipino
- 1 Russian

### After-School Program Profile

**After School Program Provider Agency (central office location):**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centinela Youth Services</th>
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<td>Cyd Spikes</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:cspikes@sbwib.org">cspikes@sbwib.org</a></td>
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<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
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</table>

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 738 |
| API – 2007 | 708 |
Mr. Stapleton expressed nearly total dissatisfaction with last year’s Centinela Youth Services (CYS) ASP, also called Pathways to Success. He sees a complete lack of articulation between the ASP and the day school, a need for better structural, organizational and accountability practices, a lack of personnel training in handling adolescent conduct and student groups, and a lack of program supervision.

“What’s needed is a combination of behavior management strategies and added supervision to make sure that students don’t take advantage of the loose organization,” Mr. Stapleton said. “For example, students going to the restrooms get into trouble there, and sometimes go to hang out at other classroom locations. We have had a big problem with trashing of restrooms. There were also problems with graffiti during the after-school hours by students in the program.”

Mr. Stapleton says better planning, organization, and structure are critical to make CYS offerings acceptable and eventually successful. He has constructive ideas to achieve this. One encouraging feature is this year’s, an enthusiastic, hard-working coordinator who attended the school Leadership Council to reassure teachers this year’s program will serve students better. She made, and followed through on commitments to monitor students more carefully and to see that her staffers were better partners in shared classrooms.

**Components**

*Homework assistance* is a group activity delivered in the school cafeteria. It could improve if CYS staff took time to observe classrooms during the day to learn about instructional strategies and curriculum. The coordinator could also follow up with teachers to gather information on low-performing students’ needs and collect data from report cards and standardized tests. Any efforts to improve must start with CYS staff and should not result in more paperwork for the teachers.

Homework personnel need training in behavior management. They should monitor areas both inside and *outside* classrooms to ensure safety and order. Staffers should hold students accountable for completing homework during homework assistance time.

Mr. Stapleton does not know of any *academic enrichment* activities. School administrators have identified math as the area of greatest need, and he would be happy to see any activity that reinforces math skills. Such activities must meet a high standard of behavior management.

*Sports* should consist of planned, organized activities attracting students so that maximum participation occurs. Mr. Stapleton could not speak to specifics about the athletic program from this or last year, except to communicate his concern that students should participate and remain engaged with sports. Any improvement in sports, games, or skill development is welcome.

In *fine and performing arts*, Mr. Stapleton said his wish list might include, for example, a dance class taught during the day by a specialist provided by the district. This would require finding and hiring a specialist. “The mistake that the agency makes is that they plan for someone to teach a group and they think that they can also take care of behavior management,” Mr. Stapleton said. “I think that they always need at least a second person to help monitor behavior.”
Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Mr. Stapleton believes teachers knew very little about CYS’s activities last year. They knew the program attempted homework, but they had little input. “I don’t think that the teachers had a clue about what was being done last year except that [CYS staffers] left a mess in the cafeteria, where most of the activities took place,” Mr. Stapleton said. He said the new coordinator might gain credibility if she were on campus during the day to meet teachers and learn from them. The coordinator asked the school Leadership Council for additional classrooms and assured members that CYS would henceforth leave rooms as clean as they found them. There has been some improvement in that area this year.

Mr. Stapleton says parents like the program because students get help that many parents feel they cannot offer. He has no complaints from them. The coordinator attended an eighth-grade parent information meeting to get to know parents, discuss ways of improving program attendance through a reduction of “no shows,” and to upgrade the program’s image.

Agency and District Support
Mr. Stapleton expects better communication this year. The agency made little effort last year to visit the program. He hopes for more support for the new coordinator, though “we have not gotten more than a verbal response yet.” The agency needs to monitor CYS and provide training. Beyond the Bell was not contacted last year for any problems. Mr. Stapleton says they also need to visit the program.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
This year the principal is asking the CYS agency for more campus observations, and site personnel to provide better student monitoring and accountability. He wants staffers to gather pertinent data from student records to determine the benefits of having the program and to find where it can help raise academic achievement. He places his hopes for a better year on a more enlightened agency and on the new coordinator.
Case Study Observations
Centinela Youth Services (CYS)
Wright Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Wright Middle School (a 6-8 school) in southwestern Los Angeles. Centinela Youth Services (CYS) is the sponsor. Ms. Kerrie Jones is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Ms. Jones was in her first two months on site during the observation period. She described the program as being in its baby steps. The ASP’s newness is also its defining characteristic. Ms. Jones said challenges facing the program include attendance, space, staffing, and relationships with the school, parents, and community.

Observers wrote that the knitting club and the global club are emerging student favorites. Although only two to four students participate in knitting, they become deeply engaged in both the activity and personal conversations with the staff members. During the global club, students point to a place on the map, and the staff member, a history major at UCLA, leads an impromptu lesson on that area. The lesson includes both lecture and discussion.

Ms. Jones wants to improve every aspect of the program and wants to set expectations and standards during her time at the site. She wants to use disguised learning and add academic activities.

Homework
Ms. Jones said homework assistance is one of the strengths of the staff. “When homework is received for checking, if a staff member doesn’t know something, he or she will ask someone else for help,” she said. However, she expressed concern that the ASP combines homework time with snack time.

Observers saw homework sessions in the cafeteria, with all students together, engaging in a variety of activities, including doing homework, walking around, listening to MP3 players, and socializing. Observers commented on the noise level and the limited staff supervision.

On a “typical” homework session, the cafeteria was full of conversation and some yelling. Those students trying to do homework would have had trouble concentrating. The observer did not see or hear staff members attempt to quiet the room down. One staff member worked with a single student the entire time. Another staff member worked intermittently with several students. The other two staff members sat at one table the whole time, without working with students. Students rushed in and out of the cafeteria, slamming the doors. Staff members did not stop them. Two students chased each other out the door. A staff member called to them, but they could not hear over the noise. She did not pursue them. Two other students chased each other around the room. The same staff member called their names and told them to sit down. They did not listen to her. No organized activities for the students were evident. They entertained themselves either individually or in small groups. Also, it was common for students not to be involved in any organized activity. Ms. Jones walked around and engaged in general conversations, but provided no direction to students or staff.

An observer asked some students what they thought about the program. They said they really enjoyed it. They said they do get their homework done, but it gets distracting.

After homework time, students went to enrichment and recreational activities, including arts, sports, and physical recreation.
Academics
Other than the global club, the site did not offer academic activities at the time of the observations. Ms. Jones said there had been a math club in the past, but it fell apart because the students did not want to participate. She wants a health and nutrition club and a literature club that supports reading comprehension through disguised learning.

Arts
Observers saw students engaged in dance, drawing, and knitting. The dance class took place with 10 students and one staff member in the school’s auditorium. Three other students sat on a bench and watched. The staff member began the session with stretches. Later, with arms extended, the students marched across the auditorium. Although there was music playing, their steps were not in time with it. The staff member did not coach or encourage the dancers.

The drawing activity consisted of eight students using pencils, markers, and rulers to draw on a large piece of construction paper. Their shared space was noisy from other students’ socializing.

The knitting club also met in the auditorium. Two students worked on their knitting and carried on a conversation with the staff member about both the knitting and personal subjects. Although the observer was sitting about four feet away from the staff member, she had trouble hearing the conversation above the volume of the room. Possibly most noteworthy in this club was a boy who proudly told the observer about learning to knit. He really seemed to enjoy it.

Sports and Games
Ms. Jones said basketball, baseball, and football are among the students’ favorite activities. The students seemed to enjoy playing a basketball game while an observer was there. Eventually, students from another ASP joined them. They split into more than one game.

The baseball game involved about 20 students and two staff members. Some students argued and called each other names. A staff member reminded an angry player, “No cussing.” Staff members played in the game, but did not lead the activity. One child left the game with an injured knee and then left the area with his mother. The observer later learned that another player had hit or kicked him. “Considering that it's a baseball game, there is not a lot of excitement,” the observer wrote.

The ACE program visited the site on a regular basis and led a variety of physical and recreational activities. Students told an observer that the activities teach them confidence skills. The activities include volleyball with a large beach ball, exercises, trivia games, and Simon Says games. The students followed directions during some of these activities. Another time, a staff member said she was disappointed with students’ behavior and threatened to stop the activity unless they improved.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Classroom management was a challenge in most of the groups observed. There were exceptions, such as knitting and dance, in which students were engaged in the activity. Also, some individuals and small groups were engaged in doing their homework. Overall, though, it was common for students to be off-task, walking, or running around, yelling, and just sitting. Observers said students did not follow directions and were disrespectful to staff.

Snack time was just as chaotic. Snacks were an apple, crackers, string cheese, and milk. A small group of students played catch with the apples, throwing them away when they fell to the floor. No staff member tried to stop this. One child yelled to another, "You just wasted milk!" as he threw a full container of milk
into the trash. The noise level increased over time. There was little interaction between staff and students. Ms. Jones walked around and gave out "incentive money" that the kids could use to buy what she called junk food. Using imitation money is a common ASP strategy to promote positive behavior. It was not evident how the students earned this money.

Staff
Ms. Jones has previous experience at other ASPs. But her responses revealed staffing challenges at this program.

Turnover from quarter to quarter is a serious problem at this site. Many staff members are students at UCLA, which sponsors to program. In addition to their changing school schedule, they have a three-hour job and a one-hour commute each way, Ms. Jones said. She believes staff members earn $11.00 per hour. She mentioned that having substitutes available would help in meeting the required 20-to-1 student/staff ratio. This site has no volunteers.

Although Ms. Jones participated in a two-day class on retaining staff, the agency has given her staff no training in the past two months. She said it might have provided classroom management training before she arrived. Currently, new staff members receive training on Beyond the Bell emergency procedures. Site coordinators can receive training from LAUSD or LACOE.

Ms. Jones said staffers might benefit from training in understanding LAUSD curricula, disguised learning, and understanding adolescent behavior. She hopes the last might promote better rapport among students. Staffers did not receive training on homework assistance.

Ms. Jones also said some staffers have had problems following through on activities and wearing closed-toe shoes. She said she sometimes deals with the issue and sometimes she lets it pass.

Material Resources
Ms. Jones reported said she has enough materials and equipment to support current activities. She is also satisfied with the appeal, quantity, and quality of snacks. Space allocation has been a problem, however.

During observations, the program had access to one classroom and the cafeteria. The school once had more unused classrooms, but a charter school filled them this school year. The program does not have access to the school’s computer lab or library. The one room the program uses is far from the cafeteria, but an assistant principal has offered another that is closer. Ms. Jones also has spoken with an assistant principal about hiring some teachers to work in the ASP.

Ms. Jones said the cafeteria should be cleaner when the ASP begins. “When the staff sweeps the floor at the end of the day, they clean up hot dogs from lunch,” she said. She also finds sticky spots on the floor. She worries that administrators will blame the ASP for the mess.

Relationship with the School
Ms. Jones has had limited contact with the principal. Her primary contacts are two assistant principals. She has had minimal contact with the one assigned to her ASP. They speak only when necessary. After she arrived, she learned he does not show up unless there is a problem. She said he has not responded to her e-mail messages or her attempts to get involved with the regular school day by joining teachers’ meetings or helping prepare students for standardized testing.

When she asked in an e-mail if she could join teachers’ meetings, he never responded and later said he did not receive the message. Later, Ms. Jones sent an e-mail to both assistant principals asking if the ASP
might help prepare students for testing. The assistant principal assigned to her program said no. The other one directed her to a website with old tests to use for prep. When her students did not have homework, she assigned them the tests.

Ms. Jones has a stronger relationship with this second assistant principal, but her ASP is not his assignment, and he has limited authority. She hopes next year to switch assistant principal assignments. Understandably, Ms. Jones said communication with administrators and teachers is a major weakness in the ASP’s relationship with the school. “Both sides could do more,” she said. At the time of data collection, Ms. Jones said ASP staffers have little contact with teachers, do not know students’ homework assignments, do not do joint planning with teachers, and do not receive test or assessment scores from the school.

Once, when the ASP had to move because a special event required use of its space, Ms. Jones did not hear about it until she arrived that day. She told an observer she found out from a custodian that students had no homework because teachers had collected the textbooks that day. She had to bring her own books so students could have their hour of academics.

In a recent meeting, Ms. Jones asked about classroom access, but she was told there had been past problems with “kids messing up the classroom.”

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Ms. Jones wants improved relationships with parents and the community. She said the staff members have good relationships with parents who come in for sign-out, because they talk face-to-face. But proper sign-out is a difficult proposition. Some parents stay in their cars; others call students on their cell phones to arrange pick-up. Ms. Jones held a parent meeting when she was new to the site, but few parents attended. “How do we reach parents who don’t come in?” she asked. She wants a mandatory orientation for parents so they can be on board next year.

Ms. Jones has no connection or familiarity with the community. She has no contact with community organizations or local businesses. “We haven’t reached out to them,” she said.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
Ms. Jones has a very good relationship with Centinela Youth Services. They meet regularly and Centinela provided tickets for her students to go to a Dodger game. When asked if this agency could help strengthen the ASP’s relationship with the school, she said the school treats the agency the same as her. She has no contact with Beyond the Bell.

Attendance
Ms. Jones said attendance is one of the biggest challenges facing the site. There is an enrollment cap of 110. She said average daily attendance is 70. There is no wait list. Observers saw approximately 50 students in attendance in May. June observations indicated a decrease. Ms. Jones said enrollment dropped by about 15 students after she started. These students signed in and then left without participating. She said kids see the ASP as an alternative to school detention.

Ms. Jones has launched special competitions to increase attendance on Fridays, the day with the lowest attendance. Recently, the program borrowed a rock-climbing wall. She said attendance increased by about 10 students that day. Observers did not see additional efforts to recruit more students to the ASP.
Safety and Security
Although this is an open campus after school, Ms. Jones reported no security concerns. Her policy is to send students to the restroom in pairs and discourage them from going to the locker area. If students must go to the locker area, they also go in pairs. The school provides no after-school security. It would help to have it at least from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Ms. Jones did not report security issues related to the ASP or school property. The program has one cabinet for its supplies. She requested a janitor’s closet from the school or a bin from the Beyond the Bell Branch, but had not received anything.

Observers said students are usually safe during the program. They tend to stay in groups and near staff. Other than safety risks related to classroom management problems, the program generally provided a safe environment for the students.

Conclusions and Comments
The ASP at Wright Middle School is very early in its development. It faces serious challenges in many areas, from improving the quality of homework time and academic offerings to better managing student behavior. The program also suffers from turnover and lack of training. The program needs more space and better relationships with administrators and teachers. Also, the school’s practice of allowing students to attend the program as an alternative to serving detention makes it seem like punishment.

The site’s average daily attendance is at less than 70 percent of its funding capacity. Ms. Jones has plans for the future. She has spoken with the principal about starting fresh next year. Areas with future growth potential are the global club, knitting, and the ACE program. Perhaps the most important aspect of the ASP’s potential development is Ms. Jones’ acknowledgement of the challenges. This can clear the way for a plan of action.
# Case Study Profile
## Champions Sports (CS)
### Holmes Middle School

### School Site Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9351 Paso Robles Ave. Northridge, CA 91325</td>
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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Gregory Vallone</th>
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**School Demographics (2007-08)**:

- **Student Enrollment**: 1129
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 64.3% Hispanic
  - 15.3% White
  - 6.8% Asian
  - 6.6% Black
  - 6.4% Filipino
  - 0.4% Pacific Islander
  - 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan

- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 14.6%
  - **English Language Learners**:
    - Total: 165
    - 139 Spanish
    - 14 Other
    - 4 Korean
    - 4 Pilipino
    - 2 Vietnamese
    - 1 Armenian
    - 1 Russian

### After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brad Lupien</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:brad@championsportsusa.org">brad@championsportsusa.org</a></td>
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- **# ASP Students**: 362
- **Average Days of Attendance**:
  - % < 36 Days: 66
  - % 36-71 Days: 40%
  - % 72-107 Days: 20%
  - % > 107 Days: 11%
  - % of Capacity: 28%
  - 116%

### Academic Performance Index Change

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</table>
Three of four administrators are new to Holmes Middle School this year, so Ms. Felicia Drew, assistant principal and fifth-year administrator, was kind enough to provide this interview. From her many interactions with Champions, Mrs. Drew has come to know the ASP as one with considerable potential held back by a young, inexperienced team of program leaders (coaches). She finds them caring and enthusiastic, but their youth and poor judgment have caused problems with CS student participants.

The ASP suffers from a lack of consistency and follow-through with initially excellent classes, and a daily battle with widespread disrespect fostered by a “hard core” group that influences others. A 45-minute break between the end of school and the start of CS activities also exacerbates the lack of structure. This ASP serves an affluent neighborhood but suffers from attendance fluctuation during sports seasons and too much unstructured socializing by students.

Components
Successful homework assistance should take place in a quiet, orderly location where students can expect help with their assignments. This is not often the case at Holmes. A 30-to-1 student-teacher ratio makes control difficult. In addition, CS allows other activities, like choir and a teen issue discussion group called Inside Out, to draw students away from homework from time to time. Students without homework go to a separate, very rowdy classroom where students fill their time playing hangman and other games. Program leaders do not communicate with teachers about homework or curriculum. Ms. Drew suggests a math-only homework class where everyone has an assignment and where older students help younger ones. Ideally, the agency should train program leaders in class management, but Ms. Drew has little confidence in the agency’s ability or resolve to do this.

“Identifiable academic enrichment is not a part of the Champions program,” says Mrs. Drew. She suggests computer and digital technology classes, discussions of current issues, journal writing, science lessons and academic games. The program published a respectable newsletter two times last year, but has not established journalism as an ongoing class.

CS focuses on sports, but Ms. Drew says students need more time for fitness activities. Girls also should get more opportunities, for example in tennis or gymnastics. Competitive flag football, soccer and basketball are very popular. Administrators often puzzle over which of their students are in Champions and which are in Youth Services. Both appear to focus on developing the same skills, which does not make the best use of either YS or CS personnel. Ms. Drew says YS coaches have far too many students to handle: the unregulated coming and going causes supervision problems.

CS offers some fine and performing arts classes. There is a cartooning class and a strong drama group that produces evening performances. The program once had an award-winning dance program, but it no longer exists. Choir and Inside Out, both groups from the day school, meet during homework time. Given the success of the drama group, Ms. Drew wonders why CS does not offer more creative arts classes or communicate with the day school about additional co-curricular support. Holmes has no daytime program for instrumental music. CS could meet this need. She would like to see art classes and the return of the dance group, which brought pride and excitement to the ASP and the campus.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers know almost nothing about the ASP. They do not even have a roster of students who are in the homework club. Teachers must share rooms, a source of friction and resentment. “Rooms suffer the usual messiness, trash and sometimes graffiti from Champions use. No number of appeals by ‘character counts’ lessons or admonitions to students and program leaders ever solves the problem; success would take diligence and monitoring, not a common talent of 20 to 22 year old program coaches,” Mrs. Drew adds.

Mrs. Drew says parents complain about coaches’ casual dress and informal demeanor. They want more training to show coaches the pitfalls of failing to establish some distance between themselves and students and say the sports program’s popularity could benefit from better organization. That way, other programs, such as the more highly structured Parks and Recreation programs, would draw fewer students away from school activities.

**Agency and District Support**

The agency met with the principal two times last year and was very helpful and responsive regarding the coaches’ behavior. Beyond the Bell also handled the coach problems smoothly. The school has not needed to involve either in any other issues. Ms. Drew said she knows representatives visit the ASP from time to time.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

CS has flashes of excellence, such as the drama group and an annual Parent Award Night that recognizes good grades and citizenship. But to truly succeed, CS requires more enrichment that is academic, better-organized, smaller homework groups and a more conventional schedule. Staffers are eager and popular, and they could be encouraged to develop a rapport with teachers regarding co-curricular support. The agency also needs to set ground rules for staff.
Case Study Observations
Champions Sports (CS)
Holmes Middle School

This program takes place at Holmes Middle School, (a 6-8 school) located in Northridge. Champion Sports (CS) is the sponsor and Julio Arroyo is the site coordinator.

Highlights
This is a robust, dynamic program with many successful elements. CS aims to develop thinking, reasoning, confidence, and skills through sports. CS is famous for its sports programs, with competitive tournaments and athletic preparation. This ASP is no exception. In addition, Holmes is a California Distinguished School in an upscale neighborhood, with an ethnically diverse student population.

However, CS at Holmes also pays appropriate attention to homework assistance and to providing numerous appealing club activities. It is an ASP tailored to the neighborhood and to the characteristics and needs of this student population. One observer said:

I remarked to one of the coaches that the kids, despite racial, ethnic, and language differences, get along well. He concurred, saying it was one of the best features of the school . . . . He had worked in programs where this was not the case.

CS supports the school’s goals of high achievement and cooperation through its Whole Student approach. After homework, the program’s activities promote athletics, games, art exercises, and school clubs. Middle school students need activity and mild stimulation, and they appreciate the chance to choose how to spend the time from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

CS has an excellent relationship with Youth Services (YS) and takes advantage of its focus of conducting tournaments and clinics, and developing sports teams.

Homework
Standardized testing, special schedules, and end-of-year distractions interfered with observations. On perhaps the final day of regular homework, one observer watched the sixth-grade homework experience:

There are about 25 students, and it takes the leader at least 10 minutes to settle them down. Most have books but a few do not, and all students are supposed to maintain an agenda for every day with homework. The leader tries to check these as she walks around the room. A period of relative quiet follows. . . . The leader has a difficult time with one girl who refuses to change her seat until the leader asks her three times. Another young man also initially refuses to move and then complies. It is a tough 45 minutes. Pupils with no homework go to another room.

Mr. Arroyo believes the staff does a good job with the sixth grade, and the student agenda helps. However, upper grades are more difficult. Smaller groups probably would help, but he said that would require more coaches and more funding.

His concern about the quality of the seventh- and eighth-grade homework exercise may be well founded. On a day when no seventh- or eighth-graders had homework, they played hangman, using words from the dictionary. An observer watched another day:
A program leader normally in charge of basketball supervises seventh and eighth grade homework. He is not happy to be here and is not particularly friendly. There are about 15 pupils here, but by the end of my observation, he has weeded out five and sent them to the "no homework" room. He does not allow them to stay here and talk. The leader tries to help one student with homework from his seat at the front of the class . . . . Neither the leader nor the students show much interest in homework at this time of year. Disruptions are frequent.

Another observer described the atmosphere in the “no homework” room as uncomfortable and somewhat tense, with more than 30 students from sixth to eighth grade. The bored children entertained themselves instead of getting direction from the leader. “It’s tough sledding,” the observer said. The leader had to stop frequently to establish order, and every few minutes, more participants wandered in. One day, an observer wrote:

The staff member supervising the group flipped a coin to see which group, boys or girls, would begin the game for the 45-minute class. They played an academic game and the boys won 11-1. Their math skills were sharp and their knowledge of historical facts exceptional. The leader said he gets the most difficult students. His no-nonsense attitude kept them in line. At times, he went next door at times to keep the other homework group in line. The boys told me later that four of them are in the Advanced Studies Program.

Sometimes, the more clever students challenge the leaders’ authority. One observer wrote:

A core of cooperative students seated on one side of the “no homework” room play a word game conducted by the leader. Unfocused eighth-graders, with two weeks to go until high school, cluster on the other side, making raunchy comments.

Mr. Arroyo said he is going to send a note to the few teachers still assigning homework asking them to make an exception for the last two weeks. He says he does not like what is happening in the homework rooms. He wants to substitute some other activity to keep the students productively engaged.

Enrichment and Supplemental Academic Activities
CS consists of organized sports, supervised/mandatory homework, a variety of games and pastimes, several fine arts activities, and a 45-minute period to open the program. There are no specific academic support sections, but Mr. Arroyo wants a computer class and perhaps a photography class. The difficulty is in scheduling it after the free time. No day school teacher wants to wait that long to conduct a computer class. Mr. Arroyo wants to try for the class next year.

At the 2:45 p.m. daily break, there are games on the athletic field, some organized by Youth Services, and basketball on the blacktop and in the gym. Observers said CS program leaders worked along with YS coaches.

A group called In and Out meets during homework help on the grassy quad. This club is a discussion/drama/teen guidance group where participants talk about their interests and perform one-act plays at events such as Open House. One observer said:

CS’s practice of sharing kids with other attractive programs gives students more choices and keeps them involved. Surely, at this time of year, working with caring adults in an informal setting, and building confidence and good-decision making are more valuable uses of the students’ time than languishing in the homework rooms.
Arts
Fine and performing arts opportunities take place following the snack break. They include arts and crafts, cartooning, theatre, and choir. Choir is a school-sponsored activity that involves students from CS and YS, as well as non-affiliated students. During one observation, a group of about 15 practiced in the covered lunch area for an evening performance.

This year, the theatre group performed portions of several plays. At year’s end, they worked on *The Lion King*. One observer noted:

> Ten pupils are rehearsing an abbreviated version of *The Lion King* adjacent to the PE field. It is hard to hear them, but the actors are motivated. They will perform during the first week of June. The coach instructs students on better delivery. He has edited the work himself to make it accessible to the students. This is their third play this year. The students are rehearsing outside because the program only has use of the game and homework rooms.

The observer watched another rehearsal and wrote:

> They are rehearsing today on the school’s outdoor stage. They have come a long way from the first time I saw the group, and everyone is having a good time. There are no costumes. Securing the outdoor stage took a special request, even though no one on campus uses it after 3 p.m.

Another observer watched activities in a large room:

> Following the snack period in the covered lunch area after homework, students assemble in a former adaptive P.E. room that is now a multi-purpose facility for the program. Leaders oversee cartooning classes, where pupils put together a book of their work for the program to use for recruiting. Other students play table games such as Monopoly, checkers, and dominoes. Still others work on puzzles, reading, and extra homework. And students in another group listen to Dance Dance Revolution, play ping-pong, and listen to iPods. This room is also the storage area for the program.

On many days, observers watched Mr. Arroyo in his “cheerleading” role, encouraging students to get involved. Their interactions with leaders were generally positive, except on shortened days. One observer wrote:

> There is a feeling of aimlessness in the game room today with a low level of energy, even for those playing board games. Everyone is conscious of the difference between a regular day and this one. If they had watches, they would be looking at them every five minutes, wondering when they can go home, or when their parents will be there to pick them up. One student is leafing lazily through a textbook. He is not reading, just glancing at pictures. Even a TV would be better than this. Obviously, no planning has gone into creating extra activities to help students survive this four-and-a half-hour day.

Sports and Games
At every moment at Holmes from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., there is a basketball game in progress: during the opening recreation period, during homework time with YS students, after snack as a choice during
enrichment, and through the rest of the afternoon. Mr. Arroyo said it is the most popular activity, and observers agree:

This is sign-in time. Kids gather in the gym. Many shoot baskets, and some play a brief game of basketball. Staff members are all around the gym, watching, and others are part of the activity. Many of the staffers blend in with the kids.

Ten girls line up on the baseline and begin doing stretches. A girl and boy standing near the free throw line lead them. No staff member is involved, and this seems like a customary practice.

This was a game of pick-up basketball on the playground. A CS leader and a YS staff member were on one team. There were eight boys. They played hard and well. The CS leader was a player-coach. He kept the game moving and called out instructions. Sign-outs had already begun and they were losing players and having to revise the team several times.

(On a Tuesday) After the break lasting about three times as long as usual, leaders herded the kids back into the gym, where some again played basketball and others went to the game room for ping-pong.

Free play basketball occurred in the gym. There were two half-court games going, with some kids and staff shooting baskets on the other courts. By 5:35 p.m., the gym was almost empty. The site coordinator asked the staff to have the kids pick up the trash and the coaches gathered the balls and put them away.

Girls’ and boys’ basketball groups share the gym. The girls’ group of about twenty practices shooting drills. They follow instructions and have a good time. There is no discord or difficulties, and everyone makes the best of the space problem until the girls are finished.

Practice for CS TEAM is more formal. Players wear basketball shorts and athletic wear, go through full stretching and drills, and cheer and clap for each other during free throw exercises. Everyone runs hard and participates.

Observers watched an exciting, well-organized, and competitive soccer game between CS and YS with colored vests, two referees, and a few spectators. “Knowledgeable coaches, good supervision, and conscientious skill development will always bring out students after school,” one of them wrote. “This program appears to do an excellent job with sports activities. Participants learn more than just athletic skills.”

In addition to soccer and basketball, there is indoor soccer, ping-pong tournaments, and in the fall, flag football. Leaders tried to interest students in baseball, but they did not succeed, mainly because there were not enough students for several teams to compete with each other.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Students engage at varying levels. The most intense interactions occur when they play competitive sports. However, other activities, like the play rehearsals, choir practice, cartooning classes, and the In and Out club, also develop self-esteem and intellectual interest.
Perhaps because of the end-of-year lethargy and the lack of meaningful homework assigned, observers saw little academic gain. A few sixth-graders appeared to concentrating for a portion of the homework time, but observers did not see the kind of connection that allowed for new learning.

Student management was sound, consistent, and appropriate for a middle school ASP. Students routinely responded well to coaches and program leaders, and they fully cooperated during enrichment classes. The one exception in this area is the behavior of some students in the “no homework” group, who talked back and used inappropriate language.

Leaders did not succeed in containing students in homework sections and providing meaningful academic assistance at the end of the year. Mr. Arroyo’s idea of smaller groups might help here. It is the weakest portion of an otherwise impressive program.

**Staff**

Mr. Arroyo is an experienced, capable leader. He has gained perspective from working in different ASPs and has empathy with young people. He keeps track of students in the program and seems to know where they are at all times.

Mr. Arroyo said he faces a promotion to a regional position next year. Because of that, he works with two assistant directors, one of whom will become site coordinator when he leaves. Five coaches work for CS at a rate of $13.00 to $14.00 per hour, and they get help from two YS coaches. Mr. Arroyo earns a salary. He said turnover is always a concern. College students move on to better-paying positions. “There are no volunteers except the son of one of the assistant principals, who likes to help out now and then,” Mr. Arroyo said.

CS provides one week of training for staff in August. This includes Impact training in group counseling and strategies for communicating with teens. They receive LAUSD training in safety procedures. If the program has a late hire, that person receives two days’ training from the agency.

Mr. Arroyo said CS training covers class management and some behavior issues, but leaves out curriculum and homework help. Mr. Arroyo cites the training he saw in a small elementary program where he worked three years ago, where ASP personnel became very familiar with what teachers taught during the day. He believes programs at large schools such as Holmes are too big to have this kind of information on courses and instruction. Mr. Arroyo believes more training would help, especially at this time of year. Also, he wants the agency to offer refresher courses for staffers as they gain experience and perspective.

Mr. Arroyo said the agency provides substitutes, and they improved as the year wore on. Sports take up 50 percent of the program for many kids. As the program evolves and becomes more academically rigorous, he said the agency should hire specialized staff.

**Material Resources**

Mr. Arroyo is happy with the three classrooms, gym, and gym classroom the program uses. However, he would like access to the library once the computer class becomes a reality.

Observers noted that rehearsing plays outdoors, combining reading and ping-pong in the same room, and having to jump bureaucratic hurdles to gain access to other facilities might reflect a less than happy relationship with school administrators. Mr. Arroyo offered the following explanation:
The only problem I had with facilities was during fire season, when the kids could not go outside and we were limited to the inside of the gym. It was extremely difficult to keep the kids busy and organized. I could have used more rooms at that point, but it wasn’t discussed. Rainy days occasionally present difficulties, but those are rare.

Mr. Arroyo said he gets more than adequate materials and equipment and is pleased with the cleanliness of the site and the custodial service.

Mr. Arroyo says the snacks provided by the district are welcome, particularly the juices, but overall they are mediocre. The kids want fruit. On the rare occasions when leaders offer fruit, it disappears by the end of the day. He has no contact with the cafeteria manager who orders the snacks. He does not believe he has any say in this area.

**Relationship with the School**

The ASP has a very strong relationship with the responsible assistant principal. They do not see each other face-to-face very often, but they successfully use a communication log. Every communication, program adjustment, or change of facilities must receive approval from school administrators. This reflects strong support for the ASP but also presents some obstacles. Mr. Arroyo said he talks to specific teachers whenever he needs to, but this is not common.

Although the school does not provide CS with standardized test scores, coaches have access to periodic report cards, from which they learn a lot about what happens in the classrooms. Teachers sometimes leave notes asking for special help for specific students. Leaders learn about homework assignments through agendas.

Few activities occur that are jointly planned with the teachers. CS students who also participate in co-curricular clubs receive permission to do that activity during homework hour, but otherwise, there is little contact.

Regarding the ASP’s relationship with the school, an observer noted:

> Mr. Arroyo appreciates the support and interest he gets from the school even though nobody visits much. Being able to refer kids to regular school deans is a plus. He thinks mutual respect between the programs is crucial to his success. He sheepishly complains about the bureaucratic approvals he has to obtain, but says he understands the school culture.

He can forgive school administrators’ anxiety about the management of the ASP. But he believes that administrators do not always see his success or understand the dynamics of the program.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

ASP leaders communicate with parents face-to-face at checkout time and send flyers home for special events. Mr. Arroyo deals with issues they bring up, like minor injuries, absences, and behavior problems. Occasionally, he calls parents at home or makes referrals to the school deans or even suspensions. His reports go to parents, the program, and school.

Relationships with parents are good. When daylight savings time began, he asked them to sign children out at the gym rather than the school entrance, and they continued to do this. There have been no significant issues with parents. They seem pleased with the program.
CS leaders know about the many sports leagues in the community, and some coaches who live nearby have watched CS kids play in them. CS sponsored a Thanksgiving fundraiser to support a food bank that is a community partner. Mr. Arroyo wants trip to the local police and fire stations next year, to familiarize students with them. He believes program ties to the community should be stronger.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Mr. Arroyo is very pleased with the support he gets from the agency. Officials visit at least once a month, communicate through email and telephone calls, and provide him with whatever he needs. He also likes that the quality of substitutes has improved.

The strong relationship with YS indicates positive ties to Beyond the Bell. This has resulted in plans to have both programs combine attendance accountability and to add a homework element to YS. Mr. Arroyo takes responsibility for safety concerns involving YS students and calls their parents when necessary. He has a radio, but YS workers do not. He said Beyond the Bell regards this ASP as one of its stronger programs, and it intends to expand it to high school next year.

**Attendance**
Students sign in daily by grade level at the gym, where they also sign out. Mr. Arroyo enters the data daily on a spreadsheet and forwards it monthly to his office and to Beyond the Bell. Leaders update rosters weekly. Mr. Arroyo wants a way to computerize the system.

Mr. Arroyo believes the best way to keep attendance up is for leaders to build relationships with kids and communicate with them. All parents have his phone number. He believes open lines to them are also important.

There was a wait list at the beginning of the year, but participation in co-curricular sports has affected attendance. There is no list now. Community sports clubs also take students away from the ASP for weeks at a time. Mr. Arroyo said attendance improves slightly when he schedules field trips.

**Safety and Security**
Security has not been a problem, but Mr. Arroyo does want a campus aide to stay until the end of the program day, to help with emergencies. He recognizes there may be budget limitations. He is happy with security arrangements for program property, but complains that it took three months to get a key to storage cabinets.

One observer commented on security on shortened days:

I have to mention that about 25 students were part of the program earlier but now engage in no activities at all. They sit around in corners of the large campus, on benches at the field, just outside the service drive gate, in the covered lunch area and in the corridors of the gym. Some are undoubtedly YS students, but not all. Teens that stay on this large campus until 6 p.m., with no set activities, worry administrators, parents, and community members.

Even exemplary ASPs have trouble combating this loitering problem. There are few tools to guarantee the safety and security of wandering students in many middle school programs. The day school should take some responsibility for this issue. Parents believe or hope their children are involved in a supervised activity. When they pick up students and ask them what they did during the day, the common response of, “Nothing,” may seem non-committal, but it could indicate the truth of their situation.
Conclusions and Comments

CS is a thriving middle school ASP with an enlightened site coordinator, enthusiastic coaches, some unique club offerings, and school administration that ensure adherence to procedures. Time and effort spent to support strong, competitive sports is not a waste here. Students gravitate to team sports with animated coaches who are strong leaders.

The ASP’s Impact training of program leaders is another strength here. Having coaches know about the unique characteristics of middle school students helps them to better support all the students they supervise. Impact training might help improve program leaders’ competencies at other ASPs.

No program is exceptional in all elements. CS needs to improve the homework element and add more facilities. However, this fine program works well with the community and provides a welcoming atmosphere for Holmes students after school.

An observer noted:

This neighborhood is quite different from and more affluent than most LAUSD neighborhoods. Students here do not stay after school because they have nowhere else to go. They stay for their friends, because their parents want them here, and because they like the coaches and the clubs. When they get tired of one activity, they stop coming for a few weeks, then join up for another one. The program’s accommodation of these attendance patterns shows flexibility and ingenuity.
## School Site Profile

### Melrose Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Melrose Elementary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>731 North Detroit St.</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90046</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Bernadette Lucas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>221</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.8% Hispanic</td>
<td>17.6% White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6% Black</td>
<td>6.8% Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2% Filipino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 30.0% |
| English Language Learners |
| Total: 64 |
| 52 Spanish |
| 7 Other |
| 2 Korean |
| 2 Russian |
| 1 Vietnamese |

### After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>Champion Sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brad Lupien</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brad@championsportsusa.org">brad@championsportsusa.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| # ASP Students | 105 |
| Average Days of Attendance |
| % < 36 Days | 11% |
| % 36-71 Days | 12% |
| %72-107 Days | 5% |
| % > 107 Days | 71% |
| % of Capacity | 89% |

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 773 |
| API – 2007 | 805 |
Ms. Lucas considers herself fortunate to have Champions Sports at her school. The ASP has excellent organization, a wide variety of academic enrichment activities, strong parent support and outstanding coordinators, one last year and a new one this year. Ms. Lucas has confidence in the new coordinator and is willing to allow him to use any facility. Although homework assistance could improve, CS is generally succeeding.

Despite the change in coordinators, Ms. Lucas had nothing but praise for both of them. “Last year’s coordinator was a wonderful lady: caring, communicative, and committed,” Ms. Lucas said. “She planned excellent activities and cared deeply about the children, sometimes using her own money for projects.”

Ms. Lucas does not know the reason for the change. Nevertheless, she is happy with the replacement. “The new coordinator is even better, with proactive managing, great ideas, boundless energy, a terrific personality -- very calm when needed,” Ms. Lucas said. “[He is]altogether an excellent resource for the school. The program was good last year, and even more so this year.”

Components
Ms. Lucas believes homework assistance is one area where CS could improve. She believes it should be the most important event of each day. Leaders should provide help and give attention to individual pupils. They should insist that students complete assignments. Ideally, homework leaders should have training in Open Court, class management, and school instructional objectives, and the agency and school should work together to provide it. Ms. Lucas admits that, because leaders are in their late teens and early twenties, such training may not be affordable or practical at this time.

However, she does believe communication should improve between homework leaders and teachers. Two paraprofessionals working at the school and for CS serve as liaisons between teachers, CS staffers and parents. A roster of CS participants would also help.

Academic enrichment is a CS strength. There is a book club, a monthly newsletter of CS activities, a field trip to an endangered species way station, occasional science workshops, and gardening projects in barrels. Ms. Lucas is very pleased with these offerings. Next year, when Melrose becomes a K-6 Magnet for math, science and technology, she wants the ASP to offer laptop-ready assignments for the upper elementary students who will each have a laptop issued by the school for their personal use.

Sports offerings feature organized activities not available during the day. CS schedules relays, soccer drills, races, blacktop bowling, and games that energize the students. Ms. Lucas believes building athletic skills should not be the province of CS, but of Youth Services. She says YS has no other obligation than to keep students busy and engaged for three hours, giving YS coaches time to develop students’ skills. This year’s CS coordinator has an excellent relationship with YS. They collaborate to schedule activities on the blacktop area so there are never too many children playing or competing at one time. Ms. Lucas also wants a drill team class.

Fine and performing arts are a successful element of the program. Last year’s coordinator developed many fine arts projects around seasonal events. Students this year also have many opportunities to paint
and draw. There is a Readers’ Theater, and a parent support group is planning a fundraiser to hire a dance teacher. A performing dance team came to campus this year and was very popular.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers believe CS has helped raise CST and API scores. “When communication is at its best, the teachers are very supportive of homework assistance,” Ms. Lucas said. “In general, all my teachers seem very happy to have such a well-organized program where their students are engaged, monitored and safe.”

Parents like the program’s quality staff and the variety of enrichment activities, commenting more often about the fine arts and enrichment elements than about their appreciation of safety. They also have a good opinion of homework assistance. Parents have no complaints about the program, only positive comments about how much their children enjoy Champions. A long waiting list results in inquiries almost every day to Mrs. Lucas about possible openings.

**Agency and District Support**

Agency representatives visit at least once a week. Mrs. Lucas found the agency very helpful during the transition between coordinators. Even the director showed up to make sure everything went smoothly. Ms. Lucas handled just a few behavior problems last year and none yet this year. “It’s all good,” she said. Ms. Lucas has not had to contact Beyond the Bell for any assistance with the ASP. However, she said Beyond the Bell worked with her closely to develop an alternative intervention program.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

Ms. Lucas is enthusiastic about CS, particularly because she has a strong, active coordinator with ideas of his own and a sense of responsibility to the children and the school. Her two aides help him with behavior monitoring and communication. With this foundation, Mrs. Lucas wants to expand the program with more enrichment staff and more room for students, to bump up enrollment from 80 to 120.
Case Study Observations
Champions Sports (CS)
Melrose Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Melrose Elementary School (a K-5 school) located in south Hollywood. Champion Sports is the sponsor and Ms. Julianna Koebl is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Two defining elements of this program are its level of organization and its site coordinator. Observers saw established routines and schedules. Each group of up to 20 children has a name (Bengal Tigers, Cheetahs, Dolphins, and Minnows), a set schedule of indoor and outdoor time, a place to put backpacks, an enrichment selection each month, and closely monitored procedures for sign-in and sign-out. Groups rotated through the lunch area, so that no more than two groups had snacks at the same time. “There is never a question about what will happen at any time,” one observer said. Even the spring dance had a posted schedule of events with times.

Ms. Koebl sets the tone and order. With more than 20 years of child-care experience, she clearly knows how to give structure to this program. During observations, she seemed involved in almost all aspects of the program. She also filled in temporarily as the kindergarten leader. While leading this group, she also handled discipline problems with other staff members’ students, conducted program business on her cell phone, coached other staff members’ groups in preparation for an upcoming performance, and chatted with parents at sign-out. She is a multi-tasker. Observers described her as very capable, knowledgeable, engaged, watchful, caring, animated, intense, and stressed. “The coordinator takes serious ownership for the success of the program,” one observer said. “She is a formidable presence at Melrose.”

Homework and Academics
Melrose had four groups, three of which regularly had homework. The kindergarten group did not have homework and instead received a session of academic enrichment planned by the site coordinator.

One day, the leader read stories to the group, using strategies to involve the children, who sat on a rug around her. For example, she introduced the story, read in an animated manner, asked discussion questions, and had the kids chant a response at appropriate times. On other days, the leader read a story on a particular subject and discussed its subject. Then she taught the children some song lyrics about teaching about its subject (ants), and the leader teaching the lyrics of a song the children would later sing.

The observer watched how leaders managed a class and helped students during a homework session:

This homework group is a pleasure to observe. All pupils are working, seated at tables with some distance between them, so they are not tempted to talk. The leader is so involved in helping the pupils that she does not even see me for several minutes. Parents stop in to sign out their children and the class just keeps on working.

This program leader is the most experienced of the four. She is careful always to get the attention of her group before launching into explanations or directions and she often thanks the class for quieting down. She moves from table to table helping any pupils who ask for assistance.

The leader is full of cautions and corrections at least half the time I am observing. She thanks the pupils for quieting down and assigns extra reading minutes if they fail to keep
quiet. It is always a pleasure to see reading made a punishment. She is friendly and the pupils like her.

This noisy, unruly, relatively uncooperative group has been with this staff member for many months now. They are not exactly rude. But they take a long time to line up and respond to directions. They banter with the leader and never raise their hands before speaking. It is a big challenge to keep order and allow some to do their homework. A few finish before the break and others do not, because they have been mostly talking instead of working.

The leader has referred three of the four fifth-graders to the coordinator for bad behavior. The rest of the class works fairly well, sitting at round tables, sometimes by themselves, sometimes with friends. It is good to see actual homework, even though it is worksheets in math and language arts.

The substitute staffer individually recognizes students for sitting quietly at the table. When one student asks for help with a homework problem, the others take the opportunity to chat and play. When the regular staff member arrives, the students hug her. She shouts at the students to get back to work. They instantly return to their seats to continue their homework.

Ms. Koebl said program leaders do not get training in homework assistance, but she does not consider that a particularly challenging element. It is easier in the lower grades. However, class management problems sometimes interfere.

**Sports and Recreation**
Physical activity is a prominent part of the afternoon. When weather permits, each group gets a rotation on the playground. Activities involve traditional playground games and adapted sports. Some comments follow:

Following the snack break, the first- and second-graders go to the blacktop with their leader. They play a kind of tag game. The leader plays along with them. I ask nearby third-graders what this game is. They do not know. Whatever this exercise is, it is popular and engages all the students. They listen, assemble, start over, resume, run around, have fun, and nobody falls down or plays rough. There is plenty of room on the yard. This leader has a strong and positive relationship with her students.

Although the fifth-grade students present problems inside the classroom, they happily play a bowling game on the blacktop during the mid-afternoon outdoor time. They are not very good at it and the leader takes a turn, knocking them all down. This gains him some respect.

The second grade group is trying to play soccer around the volleyball nets. The leader holds the ball in the air much as referees do for a basketball jump ball. The kids cluster around. As she drops the ball, they kick away, hoping to make contact.

The third grade gets its first outdoor break before the homework time. They play a relay that involves running down the blacktop, selecting a Lego piece, and running back to assemble something. They have to plan it and identify it at the end. They have a good time at this and follow the instructions. The activity promotes success through discussion and agreement among the team members.
During observations, the children consistently appeared engaged and happy. The activities often involve collaboration. Social development was part of the games:

In the later enrichment sections, exercises seem designed to promote thinking and consensus building, requiring the children to work in teams. The enrichment activities also involve mixed grade levels, and the kids decide what they attend each day.

**Arts**

Ms. Koebl said students like music and art activities. She wants to hire a dance instructor. Enrichment time includes many visual and performing arts activities. Observers watched students rehearse for upcoming performances. The highlight of the term was the spring dance.

One observer watched first-graders making masks based on characters in *Where the Wild Things Are*. During this time, the children also practiced their end-of-year dance. Later, the program leader displayed masks she made or purchased. The students picked masks to wear and pretended to be the characters they depicted. The program leader showed the children how to do a character pre-set toward their audience before donning the masks. She also taught them how to be a good audience and how to engage in pretend fights while wearing *lucha libre* masks.

A group of younger girls practiced dance steps with their staff member. They marched without music but counted their steps aloud. Each student faced a partner. Later in the afternoon, the same group practiced their dance with music. “The choreography was beautiful,” an observer said.

Some boys rehearsed a pretend karate fight. They spoke the title of the performance and gave their character names. Ms. Koebl demonstrated the karate chops. She told them to fight in center stage and to raise their voices when they called each other “big fat panda.”

Fourth and fifth graders pretended to play their clarinets and trumpets while preparing for a production. All forgot to bring their instruments. Ms. Koebl told the observer that she was very proud of the production and eager for parents to see it.

The spring dance was a big event for the students. All four groups participated. Some parents arrived early to set up food and decorations. The auditorium had enough floor space for the dancing and seats for the children to sit together and eat. A program was on the wall. Once all the groups were in the auditorium, Ms. Koebl warmed them up. When she yelled, "Are you ready for a dance party?” the children cheered and clapped. It was a very child-oriented dance party, with bright lights. They danced alone, in groups or in lines, following a leader. Almost all the children participated. Staff and parents sometimes joined them. Staff members took turns leading dance contests with upbeat music. Even if the children were just bouncing up and down, they got some good exercise.

Midway through, Ms. Koebl presented awards from a recent essay contest. Parents seemed pleased with the event and with seeing their children participate. Some served as judges for dance contests. Sign-out and pick-up continued throughout the dance. About 40 children were still there when the site coordinator called the last dance at 5:30 p.m. The remaining kids were still very active and looked like they were ready to keep dancing.

**Other Enrichment**

“The students like the enrichment offerings that change every so often and are tied to the talents of the program leaders,” Ms. Koebl said. Among these were a cooking class and a “crime stoppers” group, as
well as soccer and dance. Ms. Koebl wants to add field trips to local museums or children’s gardens. She acknowledges that funding for transportation might be a challenge.

The first set of observations occurred on the day of the spring dance. The groups largely engaged in free-time activities while parents prepared the auditorium. The older children voted to play games inside because of the heat. Some colored, cut, and glued while others wrote on the dry-erase board or played games. Among the third-graders, girls colored and boys played with robots called Bionicles. A group of girls and boys sat on the floor in the corner and played with small electronic devices. Some of the first- and second-grade students played with building blocks or made crafts from Popsicle sticks and pipe cleaners. A group of girls played store with toy food and money. The children were active and energetic.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Student engagement and classroom management varied across classrooms and activities. Ms. Koebl and another experienced staff member consistently had better engagement and classroom management than did the new and substitute staff members. Enrichment activities exhibited higher levels of student engagement than did homework and academic sessions. Because of her extra responsibilities, Ms. Koebl faced limitations in helping staff members with classroom management. An observer noted:

Classroom management was a challenge in this room. The new staff member spent most of her time going from problem to problem and giving the children instructions. Her attempts at redirection did not work for long. During free time, her role was primarily crowd control. Boys playing with blocks often got off the rug, and she kept herding them back on it. Before snack time, she had the children clean up and gather on the rug. Only some cooperated.

The substitute was talking to students about their attitude. He told them it is tough to get a replacement teacher for the rest of the year, because there are only a few days left. He wanted to review the behavior rules with the students. The students were very vocal as they expressed their frustrations. One student said they had five different substitutes in one month. He tried to identify with their distrust, but said it was no excuse for disrespect. This was supposed to be the homework session, but it was more a discipline period.

Ms. Koebl multi-tasked while she read stories to the kindergarten group. She gave directions to parents who were doing preparations for the dance, took calls on her cell phone, and watched a third-grader write something in response to a discipline problem. The kindergartners could not sit still during the second story. When Ms. Koebl could no longer keep their attention, she turned off the lights and had them go back to their desks and put their heads down. One by one, as each became quiet, she released each child for an activity. Later, she told me that the kids did not go out that day.

Before the interview, I waited in the dedicated classroom where both the coordinator and the kindergarten class meet. Five students were sent to that room for bad behavior. Two are kindergarten boys, and one has special needs. Three fifth grade boys were sent there for disturbing the class and putting sticky "kick me" notes on the backs of other pupils. Ms. Koebl talked with the little ones, and then left them alone to resolve it. Afterward, they shook hands and ran back to join their group. The fifth-grade boys showed more attitude. She won two of them, but the third persisted, and she will have to suspend him from the program – an unusual move.

Other times, leaders managed their classrooms smoothly. Observer comments follow:
An experienced staff member established a set of gestures and routines for managing the class. With them, she gained the students’ attention and quiet before beginning instruction.

While playing a version of ring-around-the-Rosie, the children listened, followed instructions, and seemed to enjoy themselves.

During a homework session for lower grades, all the children worked and the staff member actively provided assistance.

Children listened, play actively, observed safety, and had fun during a game of tag.

During a homework session for lower grades, all the children worked and the staff member actively provided assistance.

Children listened, play actively, observed safety, and had fun during a game of tag.

The older children went outside and to the lunch area for snack in an orderly manner. The staff member assigned students to carry snack items from the room to the lunch area and they fulfilled their assignments.

Children were very engaged and interested while viewing masks and playing characters when wearing the masks.

While children walked to the auditorium to wait for the dance to begin, Ms. Koebl engaged them in energetic chanting, clapping, and singing.

Staff
Other than Ms. Koebl, there is one experienced staff member and another who has been there a few months. The rest of the staffers are either brand-new or substitutes. Ms. Koebl acknowledged there are staffing issues at this ASP.

Ms. Koebl does not know the program leaders pay rate. The agency handles all hiring and compensation. She did not reveal her own compensation. She said the turnover occurs because staffers are college students who leave for better-paying jobs or because of scheduling conflicts with their classes. The only regular volunteers are former participants in the program, now in middle school, who help with playground supervision. A local temple periodically sends volunteers to help with non-English-speaking children.

Training opportunities are limited. Ms. Koebl said the district provides basic training, and the agency does not add to it. School staff developments and other training at the school have never included ASP staff. No training occurs in homework help. The agency pays for specialized training, such as art instruction, at a rate of $10.00 per hour. A program leader recently attended a training event at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Ms. Koebl wants the staff trained in child development to show them how to work with children. Right now, she is the only source of daily training, through informal counseling of staff members on specific situations. An observer noted she is determined to share her knowledge with the program leaders to make them better child-care models. This program has no specialized staff members. It relies solely on the talents of the leaders to provide enrichment.

Ms. Koebl said she wants more say in ASP hiring decisions. She wants to persuade two workers in the local park program to apply for positions in the ASP next year. She expressed dismay at the behavior of some substitutes sent by the agency, one of whom she caught helping children climb a dangerous tree to retrieve a ball, and another who threatened children by smashing her fist into her hand. Ms. Koebl’s
weeks-long stint managing the kindergarten group robbed time from her management role. She found it exhausting.

**Material Resources**
The site has a strong set of material resources. Each group has an individual classroom for homework and indoor activities. The ASP has sole use of three of these and shares another with the school’s parent center. Ms. Koebl has access to the library and often borrows books to use in the program, but does not feel a need to ask for access to the computers. She is happy with the space she has. Neither she nor the agency has tried to increase or enhance it. Because the school will have sixth-grade students next year, the ASP will lose one room.

Ms. Koebl is happy with the cleanliness of the campus. She said her custodian is helpful and responsive. In addition, program leaders and students help clean up every day.

Ms. Koebl said she is “not wild about the snacks.” She wants more nutrition. The students in the program get fruit and milk almost every day. They also get a berry juice that students do not like. On one field study day, the snack was plain soda crackers and regular or chocolate milk. A staff member was not happy because the crackers were supposed to have cheese. Few students ate the snack that day.

Both the school and the agency supply materials for the ASP. Ms. Koebl said she gets enough supplies, but later she expressed a need for more materials geared to kindergarteners.

**Relationship with the School**
CS has a positive relationship with school staff. Ms. Koebl mentioned the principal and the assistant principal as particularly helpful. They visit the program occasionally and she sees them almost every day when she arrives. Common topics include activities at the school, issues with special children, early dismissal days, and any need for the school to use the dedicated classrooms.

Ms. Koebl cited this relationship and the one with her custodian as ASP strong points in this area. However, she wants to schedule a meeting with teachers at the beginning of the year to forge better communication and familiarity between ASP staffers and teachers. She now is the primary liaison with teachers, but she does not speak to them often. She once asked a third-grade teacher to assign less homework, and she has served as mediator when teachers try to dictate ASP priorities. The ASP has not engaged in any joint planning with teachers and the school has not shared CST or assessment scores with the ASP. She did not say whether staff members speak directly to teachers.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
The program has a strong relationship with parents and gets some support from the community. Observers saw positive interaction between parents and staffers at sign-out, and many parents also volunteered during the spring dance and an annual multicultural day, and Ms. Koebl believes that improves understanding of the ASP. “She knows every parent and every child,” one observer said of Ms. Koebl. “[She] reminds the parents to complete forms and give her certain papers.” All parents have her cell phone number and regularly call her with questions.

Community businesses help the ASP in many ways. Pink’s, a famous hotdog vendor located a block from the school, has made in-kind contributions and sends employees each Wednesday to read to the children. Koreh, the charitable arm of a local synagogue, periodically sends volunteers to help with non-English-speaking pupils. A law firm whose lead partner once attended Melrose tried to fund one-on-one reading tutors through the day school, but the district declined its help. The firm then turned to CS and funded the
help for a year. Ms. Koebl wants more such relationships, but setting them up takes time and energy she sometimes does not have.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Koebl said she is mostly satisfied with the help she gets from the agency. For example, it reimburses her costs when she buys reward toys for the children. But she complains the agency is slow to fill vacancies and sends low-quality substitutes. When she tells agency officials of her concerns, they blame her.

Contact with Beyond the Bell is limited to an observer, a Youth Services (YS) staff member, who has visited several times. Ms. Koebl said she has a positive relationship with this person, and they sometimes work together during outdoor activities.

**Attendance**

Ms. Koebl said the program is full to capacity and attendance poses no problems. There is a wait list of about 10 students, only one of whom moved into the program during the school year. She has removed no children from the program. “You keep children in the program by doing the very best job you can,” Ms. Koebl said. Other than a modest YS program, the ASP has no competition. Enrollment grew slightly this year when a day-care program at the local park closed.

**Safety and Security**

Ms. Koebl is happy with security for both students and program property at the site. However, she mentioned “an uncomfortable event” a few months ago when a stranger pestered her and the staff. All staff members have radios, gates remain locked, and the sign-out procedures require parents to walk across the playground so staffers can see them.

Observers saw high levels of security and safety. The children usually were well supervised. However, the dance presented some challenges. The four staff members could not keep an eye on entrances and supervise all the children. Some children slipped out and returned.

Children seemed to push each other in line often. One girl fell and scraped her hands on the asphalt. The staff member tended to her quickly and attentively. “Nobody seemed particularly upset with the incident,” the observer said. “There were also no recriminations between the kids.”

One staffer tried to teach students about the consequences of pushing by using a personal incident as an example:

> The staff member, whose arm was in a sling, started the session by describing the injury she suffered while biking home from work the previous day. She said a woman driving a car near her must have been in a hurry, because the car pushed her over. Twice she made a good analogy about kids being in a hurry and pushing to get into the front of the line.

**Conclusions and Comments**

This ASP has accomplished much. The children eagerly participate in the activities, the games are fun and educational, the performing arts activities are diverse, the routines and procedures are clear, the supplies and material resources are plentiful, and the homework and academic elements function well most of the time. The program has strong relationships with the school and parents.

The main challenge facing the site is staffing, both in administration and in the classroom. During the observation period, three of the program’s four classrooms had less than adequate staffing. Two had
relatively new staff members who could not manage their classrooms. Because of her classroom duties, Ms. Koebl could not work with them adequately to improve in this area. At the end of the observation period, a new staff member began work in the kindergarten room. Ms. Koebl also had to work with numerous substitutes whom she considered inadequate.

This ASP has great potential but faces serious challenges. Even with adequate staffing, Ms. Koebl would have many responsibilities. She might share some with trustworthy volunteers or experienced staff members. Ms. Koebl should work with the agency to decide how to delegate responsibility.
## Site Profile

**Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC)**

**61st Street Elementary**

*Source: LAUSD*

### School Profile

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<tr>
<th>School Site Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Site</strong></td>
<td><strong>61st Street Elementary</strong></td>
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</table>
| **(location)** | **6020 S. Figueroa Street**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90003** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Jose Macias</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Student Enrollment</strong></th>
<th><strong>834</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Student Racial/Ethnicity** | **84.9% Hispanic**  
**14.7% Black**  
**0.1% Asian**  
**0.1% Filipino**  
**0.1% White** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment</strong></th>
<th><strong>54.7%</strong></th>
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</table>
| **English Language Learners** | **Total: 538**  
**538 Spanish** |

### After-School Program Profile

| After School Program Provider Agency | **Lydia Templeton**  
**Children Youth and Family Collaborative**  
**lydia@cyfcla.org**  
**323-731-2600** |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| **(central office location)** | **229**  
**Average Days of Attendance** |
| **% < 36 Days** | **80**  
**31%** |
| **% 36-71 Days** | **17%** |
| **% 72-107 Days** | **17%** |
| **% > 107 Days** | **35%** |
| **% of Capacity** | **88%** |

### Academic Performance Index Change

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<th><strong>API – 2008</strong></th>
<th><strong>712</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>API – 2007</strong></td>
<td><strong>732</strong></td>
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Administrator Interview
Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC)
61st Street Elementary School
José Macias, Principal, and Linda Griffin, Assistant Principal
November 6, 2008

In the eyes of Mr. Macias and Ms. Griffin, the Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) delivers a sub-par, barely adequate ASP at 61st Street Elementary School. The agency advertises homework assistance, academic enrichment and physical activity, as well as a previous assessment of children’s needs. Mr. Macias and Ms. Griffin see significant weaknesses in the first three elements and suspect staffers conduct no analysis of individual pupil needs.

CYFC has no wait list, unusual for elementary programs. It is difficult to see any structured, quality activities taking place following the homework assistance. Even there, staffers have ignored administrators’ suggestions. They do not see any type of enrichment or organized sports. CYFC needs standard academic, creative, and athletic activities, leadership, training, structure, supervision, agency monitoring, and better attention to individual student needs.

Components
Homework assistance staffers have ignored suggestions to take a closer look at pupil homework, find common assignments or themes, and have the children work cooperatively. According to the administrators, “they have not caught the vision.” Instead, the ASP staff work one-on-one with students, which makes supervision difficult. “They work hard, but they need to work smarter,” the administrators said.

The 30-to-2 ratio for earlier grades and 30-to-1 ratio for older students does not result in effective homework help. Homework personnel need training in cooperative learning and district standards, though it is not clear who might provide it.

No academic enrichment takes place during the ASP. Mr. Macias and Ms. Griffin suggest that the large number of Limited-English-Proficient students would benefit from more chances to learn vocabulary and work on reading comprehension. They also suggest math manipulatives and more tutoring.

The sports program consists of “some types of games” with no organized sports or skill development. Mr. Macias wants CYFC to work with Youth Services on structuring time for physical activity. He also wants instruction in nutrition and fitness, judging the need from the number of Cheetos bags that already litter the campus at 7 a.m. each day. To him, this is a missed opportunity to improve the health of these students. He wants skill development, intramural competition with other schools, basketball, volleyball, and handball. He says there are fewer problems when children learn rules and skills. Mr. Macias and Ms. Griffin see the students in the classrooms and in the cafeteria getting snacks, but never in the yard. They saw children on the playground apparatus only once, and staffers stood around talking, paying no attention to them.

Fine and performing arts do not occur at all. Mr. Macias and Ms. Griffin lament the absence of creative art and music classes and want that to change. “It would be wonderful if the ASP had art activities,” they say. “Anything structured would be good.”

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers do not identify any ASP feature that has an effect on their classrooms although Mr. Macias surmises that they like the help with homework completion. Teachers do talk about the mess the staffers
leave in classrooms. Mr. Macias puts the ASP where it will do the least damage, using track changes to shift rooms and isolating the ASP to the bungalow area.

Even though staffers supposedly have the training to work with children, when teachers remain in their rooms for in-service on Tuesdays, they report hearing the children yelling and running around, apparently unsupervised. The coordinator is earnest, but does not have the experience or skill to bring her staff along to make improvements.

Parents have said little about the ASP. “They are glad just to have adults watch their children until 6 p.m.,” Mr. Macias said. He receives complaints only when children are suspended from the program.

**Agency and District Support**
The agency came to the campus only twice last year. While it responds quickly when serious problems develop, there are no visits even once a month. “The agency could come out and monitor the program a little more, to see if it operates by their guidelines,” one administrator said. “Then, they wouldn’t have to hear about it from the administrators.”

Two years ago, there was a serious problem and Beyond the Bell showed up immediately. Mr. Macias says he has little communication with the branch. He does not know that much about Beyond the Bell’s financial support or how they might improve management.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Mr. Macias believes CYFC requires significantly more structure and higher expectations. Children need more academic support, ELLs need much more practice speaking and reading English, and others need more caring personnel. Mr. Macias reports hearing about a young girl waiting outside on a cold, windy day and CYFC personnel walked by without asking if she had a jacket. So many lapses and so many opportunities missed. CYFC leaves a great deal to be desired.
Case Study Observations
Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC)
61st Street Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at 61st Street Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Los Angeles. Children, Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) is the sponsor. Ms. Suzanne Hill is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Enrichment activities focusing on development of writing and thinking skills are a hallmark of this program. Ms. Hill said the students particularly like story days. “We get them to write things, draw pictures, and stuff like that,” she said. “They like to write journals, things that let them be creative.”

Ms. Hill wants even more enrichment activities, like music, science projects, and arts and crafts beyond coloring with pencils. She said she would need additional funding to add these components.

Homework
Observers watched several homework sessions during the field study. Some noted the staff’s attentiveness to students. “The staff member works one-on-one with four students who haven't finished their homework,” one wrote. “This staff member is very dedicated to work with students.” Another observer said she watched a staff member “working one-on-one helping a student do homework all in Spanish. She talks to him in English and he responds in Spanish. Eventually he'll pick up the English.”

Some observations occurred in the latter part of the school year, and students had little homework to do. Staffers always found ways to keep students busy with math worksheets, writing assignments and word usage exercises. Observers wrote:

Because many children in fourth and fifth grade did not have homework or already finished it, the staff member asked kids to write a page for her. She solicited topics on their personal interests, picked four that she wrote on the board, and told them to choose one. She assigned kids from the same class to work together on homework, but reminded them not to copy. She moved around the room, asked questions, and worked with individual kids.

The assignment for first-graders was to read a book and write a paragraph about the story. The students picked from a large classroom library of early reading books. Toward the end of the session, the staff member announced rewards for classroom monitors. She gave each a small box of what looked like crayons. After the rewards, they cleaned up and stood in line about ten minutes for snack time. He raised his voice to get their attention and compliance.

Several classes have more than 20 students with one paid staff member and one volunteer. Ms. Hill said homework sessions go well, but the first hour can be a challenge. “Many times, one staff [member] deals with discipline and another with homework, so that can get difficult,” she said. “It could be improved by having more bodies in each room.”

Academics
A variation of the Cinderella story called “The Golden Sandal,” set in the Middle East, was the enrichment topic for K-6 grades late one day. One staff member introduced the lesson, using a world map to point out Asia and the Middle East. Another staff member read the story. She read with animation,
showed the illustrations, answered questions, and helped with difficult words. At the beginning of the story, about half the students paid attention. That increased as the story went on. Some of the children asked questions or made comments.

During the next part of the enrichment activity, the staff member told the students to write their own story with a theme similar to the story or, alternately, about a good deed the children had performed. Some children groaned. She continued, showing the class how to fold a sheet of paper into fourths to create a book. An observer noted:

She said the front would be the title page, with the name of the book and the name of the author. She had already written on the board the directions for the other three pages, each of which were to focus on setting, plot, and resolution. She repeated the directions several times. Ms. Hill sharpened colored pencils and distributed them to the students. The other staff member sat in the front of the room and went to work on her own book as an example. More than half the students went to work on the stories. Others just drew or wandered around the room. Attention faded. Staff members left the room. Eventually, there was just one adult helper there and he was doing sign-out. At this point, there really was no classroom management. Eventually, a staff member returned and began clean up.

Arts
Field study yielded few observations of arts activities. One day, students drew pictures based on a lesson that they had received about countries around the world. They also could draw foods and dwellings of other cultures.

During another observation, younger children colored or worked on word searches. The classroom was air-conditioned and clean.

Sports and Games
Observers saw only one sports activity during the field study period. Children played on the jungle gym, slides, and monkey bars. Others ran near a grassy area. They enjoyed themselves.

Other Enrichment
There are times of inactivity at this ASP. At the beginning of one afternoon, an observer saw children wandering and standing around the playground. Staff members sat at benches under a large tree, did paperwork, and greeted children. After about 15 minutes, one staff member called for the children to line up. They went to another portion of the playground and lined up by grades (K-1, 2-3, 4-5). After about 10 minutes, they went to classrooms for homework.

Another observer wrote, “The children spent 25 minutes gathering and lining up. Staff sat at benches under a large tree and children milled around. During this waiting time, children returned from around the corner of a building. They had snacks and sodas.”

Engagement and Classroom Management
The students stay more highly engaged with the enrichment segment of the program than the academic segment. During some of the more interesting activities like story time and writing assignments, they ask questions, offer thoughts and opinions, and show enthusiasm.

Classroom management techniques are not clearly discernible. Understaffing might be to blame for this. Volunteers are in and out depending on the day and time. The chain of command and the roles of paid and unpaid staff require clarification. An observer wrote:
It is less than an hour after the end of the school day and kids are already leaving with parents. All the kids are at desks doing some type of work. There is some conversation. The staff member and the helper each sit in place and help the kids who come to them. They do not circulate. The staff member discovers one boy looking in the back of his book for the correct answers. She singles him out over the next five minutes, telling him repeatedly to stop cheating. Other classmates protest that he is not cheating.

There may be issues with staff members’ supervision of children and volunteers. During one homework session, a staff member oversaw 30 children and had help from just one volunteer. Neither adult interacted with the children. The observer wrote:

The staff member left the children alone with the volunteer twice. While she was there, the volunteer sat in a back corner, ignoring the students. She called him over, got the keys from him, and left the room for about five minutes. There was a staff member in an adjoining class, but she did not ask that person to keep an eye on her students.

One observer also commented on worrisome behavior by a staff member during clean-up. The staff member “loudly blew a whistle a number of times, trying to gain cooperation,” the observer wrote. “He singled out a few boys at one table, yelling out their last names several times and treating them harshly.”

**Staff**

Tutors work hourly, but Ms. Hill does not know their salaries. A sports coach earns $20.00 per hour. The assistant to the resource teacher earns $12.00 per hour. Ms. Hill earns $16.50 per hour. She said keeping positions filled has not been a challenge, but noted she lost two workers because of the low hours they get to work each day. One volunteer attends three days a week to help with homework and sports enrichment. Other volunteers come in only for the homework hour.

Ms. Hill said she has no access to specialized staff or substitutes. When staff members are absent, she takes over watching their sections. Ms. Hill said she would welcome specialized staffers, but they would have to be “passionate about teaching” their subjects. She said a volunteer once tried to teach drama, but the students were reluctant to participate.

New staff member training includes a video and then hands-on training. Ms. Hill said she allows new staffers to shadow her. She receives training once every six weeks, on a topic of her directors’ choice. Experienced staffers do not receive additional training.

Ms. Hill is not sure training in behavior management or classroom management occurs. She said there is no training in understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. She said the agency allows each site to develop its own activities and schedule, but she believes her staff would most benefit from training on the LAUSD curricula, as well as more general curriculum writing.

**Material Resources**

The ASP can use only three classrooms, depending on attendance, and the ASP has no access to the library or computer lab. Each classroom has more than 20 students for homework help. Even so, Ms. Hill said the space allocation is improving. ASP

Ms. Hill said administrators worry that ASP students will break or steal things from teachers’ classrooms. In October 2007, a teacher complained that something had been broken in her classroom. After a meeting involving the teacher, the assistant principal, Ms. Hill and another representative from the agency, the
school limited ASP access to outside tables. By June 2008, when the interview occurred, Ms. Hill said she had regained limited access to some classrooms.

Hill said the ASP does not get enough materials and equipment for its activities. She said staffers pay for many supplies out of their own pockets.

Ms. Hill said the ASP also has to pay for snacks out of its budget because the school does not provide them. “We haven’t been able to find out why we can’t get snacks from here,” she said. The agency provides enough snacks, but sometimes the students complain when they get only water and granola bars or crackers. An observer saw snacks that consisted of water and Cheetos, Doritos or Sun Chips – not a nutritious snack according to ASP regulations. Ms. Hill acknowledged the need for improvement in this area.

The space concern seems to be an ongoing source of friction at snack time. Ms. Hill said staffers allow the children to run around and blow off steam at that time because “they don’t get a break in between school time, so snack time is their time.” One observer noted that one staff member and a volunteer sat at a table and ignored the students during snack time. Ms. Hill said behavior management would improve if the ASP had access to indoor spaces.

Ms. Hill said she is happy with the general cleanliness of the parts of the school the ASP uses. However, custodians often come in to clean the rooms while the students are still in there, even though the plant manager promised they would wait until the program finished. As a result, staffers have to clean up again after the program ends.

**Relationship with the School**

The primary contact for the ASP is the assistant principal. Ms. Hill characterized the relationship as rocky, but improving. “It’s not horrible,” she said. “But it’s not that completely amazing, either.” They do not talk every day, but when there is a concern on either side, they communicate. Issues involve ASP use of classroom space, and the impact of day school operations on the ASP.

Ms. Hill wants more communication with classroom teachers. There is casual contact, but very little conversation. She wants to be able to talk with teachers about individual students’ performance and progress in the ASP. “That type of conversation has not been increasing as much as I would like it to be,” she said.

ASP staffers learn about homework from the students and have to take their word at face value. Most are honest, Ms. Hill said. But staff members have confronted some when classmates’ stories differed from theirs.

No joint planning occurs with classroom teachers to coordinate ASP activities with the classroom curriculum. However, Ms. Hill said the administrators share students’ CST and assessment scores with the ASP at the beginning of the year. The ASP uses this information to evaluate students’ improvement year-to-year. The agency also uses these data to report to funders.

Ms. Hill said school administrators are “not necessarily excited that the ASP is here.” She said ASP staffers have seen some improvement in homework over time. Some teachers appreciate this, and others do not.
**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Ms. Hill said parent support for the ASP is spotty. Some parents see the strong points, and others choose to see the weak points.

Ms. Hill and other staffers try to talk with as many parents as possible during sign-out. Topics are homework progress, behavior issues, and performance in the ASP. Phone conversations are rare and occur only when “something really big” happens or when parents do not show up to pick up children.

There has been no formal parent meeting this year, but Ms. Hill hopes to have one next year. The program has no formal way to integrate new students and their parents.

Ms. Hill has been at this position a year. She does not live in the community and is only now becoming familiar with it. However, others staffers do, and one lives down the street. The ASP has no relationship with local businesses and community groups and receives no support from them.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
The ASP does not appear to have a particularly strong relationship with the agency. “We try to stay in communication as much as possible,” Ms. Hill said. “It takes a long time to get supplies and get a response from them.”

Ms. Hill attended many meetings with Beyond the Bell, especially regarding attendance issues. She has received some e-mail from the organization, but outside of that, there is little communication. She does not know how much communication her director has with Beyond the Bell.

**Attendance**
Staff members take attendance on a roll sheet. The information is transferred to a grid, which Ms. Hill photocopies and takes to a data entry staff member at the agency. She said the process takes a long time and could improve. The ASP’s room allocation changes every week and that initially affected attendance records. So now, staff and students meet outside for roll call. However, the process still takes too long.

Ms. Hill said she is generally happy with attendance, though students drift away for various reasons, including parents’ tendency to pick up students early. New students usually join the ASP through word-of-mouth. Staffers also try to encourage parents to enroll students. The ASP has no wait list.

Ms. Hill said track changes and holidays affect attendance. Youth Services is another ASP on the campus. She said she initially lost 10 students to it. However, five returned.

**Safety and Security**
Ms. Hill said she is happy with both student and ASP property security. She has no suggestions for improvement. However, one observer noted a security and a safety concern. He saw a volunteer release a child to a teenager who appeared younger than the required minimum age. Also, the volunteer both handled sign-out and managed students, and the students got rowdier as time went on. Some chased each other around tables, a safety problem.

**Conclusions and Comments**
Ms. Hill indicated that she made many changes to the ASP since she arrived. She also appears open to suggestions and hopes “next year we learn from this year and certain things won’t happen.” She did not clarify what this meant.
Ms. Hill prides herself on her enrichment ideas. She said CYFC notified her it will use enrichment activities she developed in other ASPs. She also believes the staff is good at developing close relationships with students and staying abreast of what is going on in their lives. It is clear her attitude toward the ASP is positive, and she does her best with the resources she has.

However, it is also clear her agency has been slow to respond to staffing problems, requests for supplies and concerns over space allocations. Ms. Hill could also use more support from CYFC in her dealings with the school administration. This relationship, between Ms. Hill and school administrators, also requires significant attention.
# Site Profile

**City of San Fernando (SF)**

**O’Melveny Elementary School**

*Source: LAUSD School Profile*

## School Site Profile

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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Mary Campbell</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 579
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 95.2% Hispanic
  - 1.4% Black
  - 1.4% White
  - 1.0% American Indian/Alaskan
  - .7% Filipino
  - .3% Asian

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## After-School Program Profile

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<td></td>
<td>Patty Garcia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgarcia@ci.san-fernando.ca.us">pgarcia@ci.san-fernando.ca.us</a></td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 750 |
| API – 2007 | 719 |
Ms. Campbell considers the City of San Fernando ASP at O’Melveny almost totally inadequate. She sees many serious flaws and has taken steps to correct them, including monitoring activities, contacting the agency and Beyond the Bell, and aggressively compelling program staffers to upgrade their training and offerings. In an uncommon and dramatic move, she closed admission to the ASP for kindergarten and first-grade pupils because she believed the program setting is not safe and does not have enough supervision. She also reports that program staffers have taken children on unauthorized field trips.

In addition to Ms. Campbell’s concerns about program leaders’ ability to monitor student conduct and supervise indoor and outdoor exercises, teachers frequently complain of messy classrooms. Ms. Campbell describes a program with little structure, no training, and no leadership. Staffers every day miss the chance to reinforce participants’ academic growth and socialization. Ms. Campbell’s only positive remark is that parents support the program.

Components
Ms. Campbell has no confidence that the young, untrained program leaders productively use homework assistance time. They do not plan alternative activities for students with no assigned homework. She says leaders “ought to have at least a high school education” and be able “to handle questions up to a fifth-grade grade curriculum,” implying they do not now have those capabilities. She believes staff should be trained in fluency and literacy strategies, using this time to tutor pupils in a structured environment with sound class management.

Academic enrichment consists of lessons and packets of worksheets evidently provided by the agency. Ms. Campbell says the worksheets are uninteresting and “don’t teach much.” The program should offer hands-on, engaging projects and activities, like Junior Great Books and the reptile man.

Ms. Campbell is no more pleased with sports exercises. At the very least, she wants to see skill development and activities similar to those of Youth Services. She also sees no coordination between the ASP and YS. Program leaders teach too few games and physical skills and hold too few team competitions. Worst of all, Ms. Campbell says supervision of outdoor free play does not meet safety and supervision standards.

There are few fine and performing arts offerings. The program puts on a holiday culminating event with other ASPs that features group singing, but other than that, Ms. Campbell cannot discern a plan or structure within which worthwhile creative activities take place. She would like to see more organized music and drama events where pupils increase language arts skills by reading literature.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers see nothing that goes on from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. that relates to what they teach from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and staffers do not communicate with them regarding homework or academic issues. Certainly they would like to see more and better homework help. Teachers have little else to say about the ASP beyond mentioning the ongoing battle over missing items and messy rooms, Ms. Campbell said.

Parents want the program extended beyond 6 p.m. They like the sign-in and sign-out practices and consider it a safe place for their children. They are not happy with Ms. Campbell’s decision to abandon
K-1 enrollment. As a result, the City of San Fernando ASP for grades 2-5 is NOT full and has no waiting list. That happens in almost no other elementary program.

Agency and District Support
Not surprisingly, Ms. Campbell finds the agency hard to reach, unresponsive, and unwilling to explore training programs. Both the agency and the site coordinator have shown poor follow-through on her suggestions. There is also little monitoring. Ms. Campbell wants the agency to see and evaluate homework assistance in person and then hire and train program leaders that understand District practices and the basics of elementary behavior management. She also requests custodial overtime. Apparently, she receives none and the lunch area after snacks needs daily attention.

Ms. Campbell reports excellent cooperation from Beyond the Bell every time she has asked for help. She suggests Beyond the Bell should consider requiring agencies to submit written plans that outline the structure and purpose of their programs.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
The City of San Fernando is active in local parks and recreation facilities and may see after school programs as extensions of children’s interaction in centers and playgrounds. Ms. Campbell believes academic assistance is not a priority with this ASP. She is concerned and discouraged by program leaders’ lack of determination and the agency’s indifference to delivering quality learning activities or even adequate supervision.
Case Study Observations  
City of San Fernando (SF)  
O’Melveny Elementary School

**Introduction**

This program takes place at O’Melveny Elementary School (a K-5 school) in San Fernando. The sponsor is the City of San Fernando (SF). Ms. Erica Romero-Alonso is the site coordinator.

**Highlights**

Several staff members in this ASP are noteworthy for their caring, enthusiastic, and eager manner. Their example encouraged students to work hard, improve, complete assignments, and care about their work.

**Homework and Academics**

The school’s intervention program, a twice-weekly tutoring session with credentialed teachers, negatively affected student attendance of homework help classes. Moreover, the effectiveness of these sessions varied with the group and the staff member leading it.

An observer noted a kindergarten and first-grade group whose students appeared to enjoy showing off how loud they could be with a guest in the room. The staff member appeared comfortable with the behavior, the noise, and the lack of real focus on homework. The students colored picture books and worksheets. The staff member only settled the group long enough for them to go out for snacks. One boy read quietly by himself, then for 10 minutes to the observer. He was very proficient. He was one of the few students who followed the staff member’s instructions.

In the third-grade homework room, all students either did worksheets or completed homework. They worked relatively quietly, with two staff members present. When a child finished, he or she could lie down on the rug and take a nap. The chemistry and friendliness between staff and students was evident on entering the room.

An observer of a fourth- and fifth-grade homework session saw all students working quietly, together or individually. The staff member showed confidence and kept the group under control. He circulated, asked questions and made suggestions.

An observer watched fourth- and fifth-grade students. Nearly everyone was involved with a book, or a worksheet, or a card game, or some quiet activity. The staff member had good rapport with the students. They respected him. There was a small skirmish involving a chair claimed by two students and he handled it smoothly. The staff member commented that testing and end-of-the-year anticipation challenged staff members to create activities that kept the students occupied and cooperative. This staff member was comfortable, but also definitely in charge.

Another observer watched a session on a Friday, when there was no homework. The students sat on the rug with their books. The staff member sat in a chair in the middle of the group and read stories to one child in Spanish and English. There were many interruptions as students read their books out loud, and talked to each other and the staff.

**Arts**

An observer watched kindergarteners and first-graders making construction paper cards for Memorial Day. The leader said these cards would go to Iraq. About half the students worked in the noisy class. No discussion of the significance of Memorial Day occurred during the observation.
During another observation, third-graders came to the fifth- and sixth-grade room to rehearse songs for a culmination presentation the following week. During a song about different smells, students held up cardboard pictures at the appropriate times. A few students sang on key, but many others, in their exuberance, made the tune indiscernible. There was no staff member expert in music to assist the kids.

**Sports and Games**
Ms. Romero-Alonso said the students liked all the outdoor sports: basketball, softball, and soccer. She said they particularly loved it when they had a mini-softball tournament and served hot dogs. Observers also watched games of catch and handball, as well as free play.

During one observation, a staff led a group to the blacktop for informal games of their choice. It was about 4:45 p.m. and several students had already left. The leader watched his group choose their games. He helped the boys set up a soccer games. Others went to the handball courts for a game of dodge ball. The students behaved well and the staff member was fully in charge of the group.

During another observation, the fourth- and fifth-grade group moved outside for the final hour. The staff member suffered from a sore throat but organized students into games of kickball, soccer, and handball suicide. They were happy to run around outside. He was a good organizer. The pupils listened and followed directions. He had good judgment and was not timid about moving in when a problem needed his attention.

During yet another observation, the second- and third-graders returned to the classroom for board games. Some played a game with glass disks across a board. Others stacked wooden shapes, trying to keep them from falling. Still others had Legos. They took the games from the storage area carefully. This was a stress-free and pleasant way to finish the day. The leader was caring and attentive. Parents came to the room and signed out their children.

**Other Enrichment**
An observer attended the last day of the ASP. Ms. Romero-Alonso and the staff set up the scenery for an outdoor luau. The weather was very hot. The students wore leis they had made earlier in the week. One parent helped. Others dropped off food. Ms. Romero-Alonso cut watermelon slices. The staff brought buckets of water outside. The students sat in three circles. Each had a bucket of water and a sponge. One person wet everyone’s head with the sponge. The person who got wet the most chased the person who wet them. The students enjoyed themselves. Hawaiian music played on a CD player.

Ms. Romero-Alonso wants to offer cheerleading, music groups, and a science club. She said a funding is major challenge.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**
Students generally stayed engaged and staff members had strong class management skills, with a few exceptions. During one interaction, a bully in the group shoved another student, who hit his head on the concrete wall and began to cry. The bully was about to punch this student again when an observer alerted the staff member the situation. The staff member pulled the aggressor aside and spoke to him. The victim's friend comforted him. When the father of the bullying student arrived to pick up his son, the staff member failed to address the incident with him.

Many students were courteous and followed directions. Others were more willful and did not listen. Two boys could not sit still one day. They walked around, and peered under desks and in the cupboard, looking for playing cards. The staff member told them to sit down, that reading time was not over. Nevertheless, he gave them the cards.
Staff
Ms. Romero-Alonso said she needs more staff, perhaps two more program leaders. She said supervision would improve if the student/staff ration were to drop.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said staff members earn between $9.50 and $10.75 per hour. However, one staff member indicated she earns $8.75 per hour. Ms. Romero-Alonso said it is difficult to fill positions because of a long hiring process. She said most individuals find other jobs by the time the background processing is finished. Observers saw four parent volunteers.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said no specialized staff came to the site this year.

New staff members get two training sessions before starting work. The topics include program procedures and responding to various situations. Experienced staff members meet with the agency every year. They also meet with groups from other schools to discuss discipline methods, relationship building among students, and how to provide effective homework help. Ms. Romero-Alonso said she meets with the staff once a month to review activities.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said there is training in student behavior management and classroom management at the agency office. She said she conducts training in the Open Court Reading program. The staff might benefit from training in homework help and behavior management.

Material Resources
Ms. Romero-Alonso said lack of space is a constant irritant. This year they had four homework groups and three classrooms. Rain or shine—even in great heat—the students sat in the outdoor cafeteria area. They had no access to the library or computer lab.

Ms. Romero-Alonso and the agency supervisor met with the administration about this several years ago. The principal said she has no rooms. A year later, the ASP received the room allocation it has now. There have been no discussions about increasing it since October 2007.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said the quality of food served for snacks is good. However, the students do not want milk on hot days. She wants juice and more fresh fruit. An observer saw students throwing away milk at snack time. They drank water from the faucets.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP has enough supplies for the student population. The parent center shared with this ASP has some excellent books with illustrations. She is happy with the cleanliness of the parts of the school the ASP uses and with the janitorial services. She said she asked custodians for trash bags for the luau, and they brought them.

Relationship with the School
Ms. Romero-Alonso’s primary contact is the principal. She does not find her very helpful to the ASP. They talk when they see each other in the hallway, and she leaves notes in the principal’s mailbox, but the principal has not responded. She keeps the principal informed about coming events, but the principal has never attended one.

Ms. Romero-Alonso noted that the ASP no longer has access to the auditorium because YS once left it in disarray.
There is no joint planning between the ASP and the school administration to coordinate program activities with the classroom teachers. The school does not share students’ CST and assessment scores with the ASP.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP’s relationship with parents is strong. Staffers talk every day with parents at sign-out time, and the parents bring in items to help support activities. There are no group meetings, but staffers talk individually with parents about their children’s accomplishments and problems.

Some parents can present a challenge. A parent once told her son to do his homework in the ASP because she did not want to hear any "bullshit" excuses. All of the other students heard the parent make this remark.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said some staffers live in the neighborhood. Last year, stores donated t-shirts for the “Walk of Life” in which this ASP participated. When the agency director asks local businesses or community groups for contributions, they cooperate.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP has a good working relationship and good communication with the agency. She said it responds to supply requests “immediately.” Sometimes, there are breakdowns, however. Staffers often get last-minute notice about weekend events they need to work.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said the relationship with Beyond the Bell is strong, and she appreciates them for their ability to negotiate with the principal. However, the organization has little visibility on campus.

**Attendance**
The school’s intervention program had a strong impact on this ASP’s attendance. This individual tutoring program with credentialed teachers occurs two to three days a week. On those days, Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP loses as many as 15 students for homework time.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said each coach takes roll call at the beginning of the class. Each child had a folder to record attendance. The staff signs students in and the parents sign them out in this folder. She takes folders to the agency once a month.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said intervention and after-school stays also wreak havoc on attendance, because it is hard to keep track of students that attend after roll call. She has spoken to teachers about the issue, but there appears to be no resolution yet. This could result in the ASP serving more students than are in its records and could affect reimbursement.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP encourages better attendance by distributing tickets for perfect attendance. At the end of the month, students can use them to buy ice cream. Staffers also encourage parents to notify them in advance of absences. The program also has Fun Fridays. To attract new students, staffers give applications to parents after school and make a presentation at Back-to-School night. The ASP’s Halloween booth also attracted new students. This ASP has no wait list.

Ms. Romero-Alonso said YS is the only other ASP at the site. Some students have switched to it, but others have come to her from YS. She believes parents prefer the sign-out procedure YS uses and the fact that YS spends 20 fewer minutes on homework help.
Safety and Security
Ms. Romero-Alonso, her staff, and the agency are satisfied with student security at the school. They are not satisfied with the security of ASP property. They do not have a designated area for equipment and supplies. Ms. Romero-Alonso said she has had to leave some equipment at the agency office “They just need to give us one certain area,” she said. “Right now the principal wants us to take everything out of these closets, and I don’t know where to put all this stuff.”

Conclusions and Comments
The students behave well. Ms. Romero-Alonso said the ASP focuses on academics and physical activities, and exposes students to new experiences. Parents are friendly and helpful.

A discussion of the ASP’s space allotment should take place. Often, there are too many students in too few homework rooms at the beginning of the afternoon. The principal has not responded to the problem, and Ms. Romero-Alonso has tried but failed to develop a relationship.

Frequent learning opportunities are lost. Staff members’ inexperience is part of the problem, and so is the confusion over their roles. Given the low pay, it is not surprising that staffers do not show creativity or initiative. One option might be to work out a deal with local colleges to require ASP experience for education majors.

One observer noted stark contrasts between the SF and YS ASPs. At this site, the large contingent of YS students seemed to dominate outdoor areas but had little supervision. They loitered everywhere, some waiting for activities to start. In contrast, even the limited offerings of SF here offered some structure and order that students seemed to crave. The YS coordinator complained that his program sometimes has as many as 116 children to manage with only one other playground worker. It appears there are too many children to manage successfully, and the YS staffers are simply overwhelmed.

The contrast is evident in the following observer comment:

There are still many SF children and many more YS students. The SF participants are under the staff member’s supervision at a ratio of 10-to-1. The YS students are all over the field. There are maybe 60, with only three YS workers, and that is an improvement. They recently hired an additional staff member.

A YS staffer’s experience with the death of a friend from a gunshot wound is a reminder of the dangers in the neighborhood, one reason students stay at the school as long as they can.
## Site Profile
### Enrichment Educational Experiences (EEE)
#### Kester Elementary School

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<td>Susan Goldberg</td>
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| **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment** | 27.7% |
| **English Language Learners** |
| 104 Spanish |
| 17 Other |
| 10 Armenian |
| 10 Russian |
| 2 Korean |
| 2 Farsi |
| 2 Pilipino |
| 2 Vietnamese |

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<table>
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<th><strong>Academic Performance Index Change</strong></th>
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<td><strong>API – 2008</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>API – 2007</strong></td>
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In her interview, Ms. Goldberg describes an after-school program with engaging activities, excellent communication, inventive enrichment and the potential to create an even more effective ASP. EEE would significantly improve its value if it connected more directly with District initiatives and Kester instructional practices and goals. Ms. Goldberg provided several insightful suggestions about leader training and shared her ideas to integrate the ASP’s specialized enrichment with the regular day program.

Even though EEE provides appealing activities, Ms. Goldberg regards it as an independent adjunct, not an integral part, of Kester. In her view, program leaders do not directly support teachers nor communicate with them regarding academic issues. Even so, she is generally positive about most EEE elements, except homework, and praises the ASP leaders for their eagerness to provide a balanced program despite obstacles such as a lack of space. “We have terrific programs at Kester, but where can we put them all?” she says.

**Components**

*Homework assistance* is one area Ms. Goldberg considers weak. She says leaders should communicate with teachers in person or by e-mail to learn more about the nature and purpose of specific homework assignments. Understanding pupils’ use of journals or agendas would let EEE staff follow up. They should receive training in district standards and academic vocabulary and know current initiatives in language arts, math and ELD. Their own education should be advanced enough to allow them to answer students’ questions. Merely seeing that students complete their homework is not enough.

*Academic Enrichment* should be a hands-on, interactive experience. EEE does provide such activities. Ms. Goldberg is pleased with the “reptile man” and other experts brought in by the ASP. Children have access to chess, science lessons and conservation/recycling practices. Ms. Goldberg wants to see more experts brought in, more cultural explorations and increased use of technology.

*Sports* should revolve around teaching skills and games that children play during lunch and recess. Ms. Goldberg is not interested in competitions, organized team sports or intramural tournaments. She wants her students exposed to instruction that develops coordination and fitness.

EEE’s *fine and performing arts* component is a strength in Ms. Goldberg’s opinion, delivering drama, an excellent filmmaking class, extended sessions in art appreciation, and many hands-on activities. Ms. Goldberg found the students’ I-films excellent and says the many creative art offerings are very popular with all grade levels.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Kester teachers like the homework assistance and some of the special interest academic enrichment, particularly when it parallels what they are teaching, as with the live reptile class. Ms. Goldberg wants to support her teachers and wishes EEE enrichment were better tailored to curricular units. Sharing classroom space is an ongoing problem. Ms. Goldberg says teachers resent being pressed to give up time after school and to share their territory. In three words, she summed up Kester teachers’ opinions on sharing classrooms, even with well-regarded ASP staff: “They hate it.”
Parents enjoy the free, supervised childcare provided by EEE. They also like the homework assistance, enrichment classes, and the sign-in and sign-out procedures. Their only complaint is that there are too few spaces. Ms. Goldberg believes the ASP should start a totally new lottery system next year to give all families an equal chance to enroll.

Agency and District Support
Ms. Goldberg says the agency communicates well and is interactive and responsive. Officials use phone calls and e-mail and visit at least once a month. The agency keeps school officials uptodate on planned changes. Ms. Goldberg thinks highly of the coordinator and has not had to refer any problems up the chain of command. Little communication has taken place with Beyond the Bell because there has been no need for their services. Ms. Goldberg feels BTB should be monitoring poor programs and give her portable bungalows to add space.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Ms. Goldberg clearly wants the finest program available for her pupils, many of whom are enrolled in the gifted and high-achieving magnet program. She wants more training for the staff, perhaps in organizing groups, to ease the chaotic transition between the end of regular school and the beginning of ASP time. She is generally pleased with EEE, which has a long waiting list.
Case Study Observations
Enrichment Educational Experiences (EEE)
Kester Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Kester Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Van Nuys. Enrichment Educational Services (EEE) is the sponsor. The site coordinator is Ms. Julia Sandugey.

Highlights
This program is unique in that it does not appear to waste any of the time with the children. They are engaged at all times, not intensely or unreasonably, but always in a planned activity.

There was a noticeable lack of tension here with all grades, and the noise level was admirably low, except, perhaps, during the opening nutrition time which gave kids the chance to run around a little to burn off pent-up energy from their day at school.

Even transitions are quality time between students and staff. As a group of third-grade students waited for the drama teacher to arrive for a rehearsal of Alice in Wonderland, a program leader and Ms. Sandugey asked them questions from a set of cards, like "What has been the best day of your life?," "What do you like least about your chores at home?," and "What is a funny thing you remember?". The children raised their hands politely and answered the questions, sparking discussions.

The staff is uniformly caring and protective. The children, in turn, behave well, listen to instructions, quickly follow directions and seem relaxed during observations.

The academic enrichment and arts segments of this program provide a variety of activities that make for fun learning opportunities for children.

Homework
Kester EEE schedules homework and enrichment somewhat differently from other ASPs. During observations, the older grades (fourth and fifth) did their homework immediately after the snack period scheduled at the beginning of the program. The primary grades (first, second, and third) moved to enrichment first, which was a variety of art, science, music, and math activities designed by the agency. Their homework came later in the afternoon. The rationale is that the older students were in classroom work mode right after school while the younger ones were ready for fun.

The field study period resulted in many observations of homework. Students were focused, well-practiced in their routines, collegial, and extremely cooperative. There was a high degree of mutual respect between students and staff members. One parent mentioned that the students were always calm and focused even though they had a long day at school. Homework lasted about 45 minutes. If they completed their homework early, students moved on to worksheets and games to stay occupied.

One observation occurred at the parent center, which resembled a library. Fourth- and fifth-graders quietly worked on their homework with help from staff members. Everyone spoke in whispers. Another observation of second- and third-graders doing homework showed similar behaviors.

Another observation of fourth- and fifth-grade homework revealed a bright and verbal group of young people. Several did not have homework because of standardized testing that week. They had books, usually fiction, that they were supposed to be reading, but a few did not do so. The pupils were cooperative, conversational, and happy to tell you anything you wanted to know about their classes, their
favorite subjects, pastimes, etc. They said they liked the after-school program. Others said that often they had too much homework to do with just one hour and spent another hour or two at night finishing.

An observer of first-grade homework noted that not every child had homework, but the program provided school worksheets to prepare children for the standardized testing taking place that week. There wasn’t a single child who had nothing to do. None was disruptive or distracted from his/her task. If the students finished the worksheets early, there was coloring or a large collection of early reading books available. One little girl read quietly. When asked what her assignment was, she said that she was always to read for half an hour, and after that, "I can continue to read if I like."

Another group worked quietly on math and English worksheets given to them by their classroom teachers. Each worksheet had fun activities, but also established a concept. The students were asked to raise their hands if they needed help. The leader helped them while also supervising the kindergarteners and first-graders in the adjoining room. Three students who did not have homework were encouraged to read a book.

During an observation of second-and third-grade homework, a staff member moved from student to student. He asked about the homework and how they were doing. Pupils who needed help raised their hands. Everyone was amiable with each other and comfortable with the activity.

The site coordinator said providing high-quality homework assistance was “not a challenge at this site.” She noted that the program has both college graduates and undergraduates working at this site, and all are competent in academic areas.

Academics
Observers watched several academic enrichment activities during the field study period. In one, student answered questions about amphibians. They incorporated artwork, cutting and pasting a template of a frog on construction paper.

One observation revealed a unique way of taking attendance that led to a lesson about the human body. When a student called the name of each child in the room, that student responded with the word of the day, “stomach,” rather than saying “here” or “present.” A discussion of the digestive tract and of teeth followed. A staff member asked, "Why is this tooth called the incisor?" One student responded, "Because it is pointy and looks like a cane." Great learning was taking place.

Another day, the word of the day was “octopus ears.” After attendance, students cut out starfish from construction paper. A few youngsters complained about the difficulty of using tiny scissors on such hard paper. As they cut, they sang along with the Beatles song Octopus Garden. They could hear the sound of waves splashing between songs.

A kindergarten group learned about ocean animals. The program leader was a young, enthusiastic woman who tried hard to keep the interest of these very young children, talking about the color of the ink octopi squirted, and about the creatures’ ability to grow new tentacles. She read from a book on marine animals, but the language was above the reading level of her class. She explained as best she could. She obviously had little formal training with these young people, but she did a good job. After her short explanation of the activities and behavior of octopi, the class made their own from paper plates cut in half. They drew eyes, colored the plate, and then added tentacles from colored yarn. The children wore green, red, and blue "bib smocks" that fit over their clothes so they could be easily and quickly identified on campus and on the field. This practice was not seen at any other site with kindergarten children.
During another observation, two students worked on their Apache Indian presentation. Two other students researched the Chumash Indians. The remainder of the group either read from the Open Court reading book or reviewed spelling skills worksheets. Most of these students attended the magnet program at their school. They looked like they were preparing for the cooperative learning groups that they would encounter on college campuses.

One observer saw a rare activity: first-, second-, and third-graders playing chess. It was on a Friday, a day most ASPs fill with standard board games and outdoor events. At Kester, 20 young children listened to their chess teacher for ten minutes as he talked about an upcoming tournament, and then paired up for games. Their teacher was a personable and confident young man who was an excellent role model. “It was, hands down, the most refreshing Friday afternoon activity I have seen this spring,” one observer said. Also impressive was the condition of the dedicated room used by the ASP. It was colorful, tidy, and festooned with recent student work and outstanding items from all grade levels. It was a room that showed pride in the student work and dedication by the leaders, who obviously wanted, or were encouraged, to keep the ASP surroundings fresh and clean.

**Arts**

Numerous observations of arts and crafts activities took place during the field study period. Activities included singing, drawing, coloring, and rehearsals for Alice in Wonderland.

One observer watched a kindergarten class finishing an impressive portfolio of various art genres: they had their own versions of Monet, Kandinsky, and others. This work had been displayed in their dedicated classroom for the past week as part of a two-month enrichment theme developed by the agency. They began a new two-month program about global art the week in which this observation occurred.

During one observation, first-graders made "puffy animals" supposedly in a Central American genre. They each drew a rabbit on typing paper, colored it, stapled it to another and stuffed it with crumpled paper. The leader of the group was friendly, young, and energetic but not adept at giving clear instructions. Many of the pupils drew tiny rabbits that took up only a portion of the page and would not take stuffing. She should have moved around the room early, checking students work and helping them understand her instructions.

During another observation, students drew windmills using techniques from Delft art. One student explained to the observer that the reason why everyone was drawing a tulip on each corner of their page and the windmill in the middle was because "this artist used tulips in his paintings.”

Another observation of global art consisted of second-and third-graders constructing an “elephant box” from a paper diagram. They colored the outside and tried to draw an elephant for the cover. This was a fun, not-too-demanding experience for lower grade students that taught them how art is made in other parts of the world. The leader was helpful but not too familiar with how the box would come out when folded. It was a good exercise to help pupils visualize how something that starts out flat can look in three dimensions.

A fourth and fifth-grade class, like the second-and third-graders, made an elephant box out of a diagram on a piece of white typing paper. They cut along the solid lines, and folded along dotted lines. The program leader, who was very enthusiastic and well-liked, struggled and puzzled over what to cut and what to fold. Because they were learning along with the leader, students appeared to be engaged and eager to see the finished product.

This project might have been better handled with both student groups if the program leaders had tried it out ahead of time. The biggest issue with the fourth- and fifth-graders seemed to be who could draw a
good elephant. Nobody wanted to put one on the board. Sometimes, the pre-fab lessons provided did not reach their potential as learning activities because the leaders didn’t take time to read the instructions or try the project ahead of time.

A group of kindergarteners performed a song about three artistic styles for another observer, who said it was “very inventive and beyond cute.”

One observer watched a rehearsal of Alice in Wonderland from 3:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. It featured cast members from the first through fifth grade. A large group of children gathered backstage as others rehearsed in the orchestra pit. They had to be quieted down from time to time. The drama coach spoke loudly and with an edge to her voice as though she was speaking with high school students.

In the aisle was a young man in a caterpillar costume made out of a sleeping bag. He did his best to keep still while a staffer altered the costume, which a parent had made. Underneath, he also wore wings so he could emerge as a butterfly at the dramatic moment. The lead, the Mad Hatter, was a fifth-grade girl who had a very strong voice and knew her lines well. She sat at a small prop table with a large teapot without a bottom. A hand with a furry woodchuck poked through periodically and a first-grader spoke the lines of the field mouse from under the table. It was very cute but could be lost if there was a big audience. The drama coach had little patience with the student and threatened to give her part away to another child if she didn’t do her part with more enthusiasm.

One of the staff members asked the students to color a picture of a seahorse as part of the Oceans Alive Science Curriculum featured on this day. They sang and danced a seahorse song to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.

Finally, an observer watched students who were about to leave for the playground. Once the observer entered the room, the staff member asked students to share the "peace time" with her. They sat on the floor in a circle with their hands on each others shoulder and rocked back and forth as they sang the song Peace Time, that played from a CD. The staff member reinforced what a great job they had all done in the afternoon activity and told them that they could all now go to the yard.

**Sports and Games**

Observers watched some sports activities during the field study period. This does not appear to be a dominant part of the program. Many of the sports observations occurred late in the day, 5 p.m. or after. They did not have the same richness that other parts of the program showed.

Observers of these activities made the following comments:

- This is the concluding playground activity for kids left until after 5 p.m. There are still about 35 children of various ages under the supervision of four playground aides, two from the program and two from Youth Services (YS). They play in small groups with the little ones, the older boys play basketball with the coach, older girls sit together, and a few who do not enjoy the playground may stay in the first bungalow (where sign-out takes place) and do homework or read. This is a well-organized and well-supervised event.

- Outdoor games do not begin until 5 p.m. At that time, children who wish to can go out and play organized games such as kickball, basketball, and also calisthenics. All groups walk with a program leader and a few children are permitted to stay in the main bungalow with the coordinator. There does not appear to be very much co-mingling with remaining children of other programs. There is a second ASP here and also Youth
Services. Adults help with the activities as parents come and sign out at the main bungalow, where program leaders send their children. All kindergarteners keep their "smocks" on so they can easily be recognized when daylight wanes on the field.

Two students were hitting a ball against the wall. The name of the game was two-touch ball. The substitute said she was not sure what the object of the game was. Four students were sitting in the dirt doodling; they seemed bored. The sub broke up a squabble among them.

It is late in the day. The kindergarten and first-grade students are playing in their own area away from the older children. They are playing at the water table, running through plastic tunnels and playing in the sandbox. The mother of one of the first-graders walks to the playground with the group. She talks with the leader. The playground reminds me of a neat, enchanted storybook playground. Every piece of equipment is colorful and well-maintained. The ground around the slide area has soft, safe padding. The child of the mother who was talking with the leader runs to the concrete, falls and scrapes an elbow. While his mother consoles him, the leader radios for a bandage.

The majority of the students were sitting on a long bench with a tired, bored look on their faces. Only the two students playing seemed to be having fun.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

The level of engagement by students was high throughout the entire program during observations, with the possible exception of sports. The children were attentive, listened to each other and the staff members, were good communicators, and were on-task in just about every activity.

The staff was highly engaged with the students and had good classroom management skills. A few staff members would have benefited from reading through or trying their activities before they did them with the children. However, even if the staff member learned along with the child, they all had a good time.

There was an active enrichment program at this site. The site coordinator told an observer that every two months they begin another enrichment program which can continue. She said they have included art projects, science activities, math games, or lessons planned around holiday themes.

Students appeared very comfortable with staff members and with the coordinator, who spent part of each hour with the students to give the coach a break. The site coordinator truly appeared to enjoy her interactions with the students.

**Staff**

Staff salaries vary based on their experience, from $10.00 to $16.00 per hour. The site coordinator said there is no specific range for supervisors. They are not allowed to talk with each other about salaries. She said it is not difficult to recruit specialized staff like drama teachers, chess coaches or the reptile man. All program leaders appeared to be very committed to their groups during the observations.

The site coordinator said it is harder to fill non-specialized positions. “The job is not as easy as people think,” she said. “There is a lot of responsibility and it is a job where you have to keep your energy up.”

Sometimes, college students volunteer to help with homework or curriculum support. Some parents also volunteer in the program. The site coordinator wants more parental support. However, it wasn’t clear if she voiced this request to parents or to her agency.
One observer commented:

This is the first class I have seen in over 75 observations that has a parent volunteer. She is the PTA president and her daughter is in the program. She loves this agency and cannot say enough about the program leaders, the activities—the whole feel of the afternoon. She helps out in the second- and third-grade class but wanders in and out of others, assisting where she sees a need.

New staff members get in-depth training in procedures, expectations, schedules, and daily routines. Behavior and classroom management is also discussed. However, there are no discussions of the LAUSD curricula that the observer could see, though they do talk about the EEE curriculum. The site coordinator does not believe that the Beyond the Bell branch is aware that EEE has a specific curriculum.

An observer noted that one program leader admitted that he was not able to help the older students in all academic subjects, particularly math. Even so, “there is a structured, focused curriculum and a prepared team of instructors that simulates a familiar learning comfort zone among students.”

Another observer commented:

A great deal is expected out of 18- and 19-year old young people earning $15.00 per hour who may have an interest in working with elementary pupils—or not. One hopes they are able to control the class, motivate the pupils to learn, answer their homework questions, keep them busy, encourage their efforts, give well-planned and clear lessons, and otherwise behave like a credentialed teacher. Some were quite good and had great potential as teachers. Others were not as skilled, but all could benefit from uniform training in handling young elementary students.

The site coordinator said that more training in classroom and behavior management, as well as the EEE curriculum, would help. She added that parent management would be a very useful topic for training. “They act like children,” she said. “I just have to ignore them at times.”

Beyond the Bell provides annual training and there is bi-monthly in-service training for all staff members. Training focuses on keeping students safe and “what if . . .” situations. The site coordinator said this kind of training is sometimes a waste of time.

**Material Resources**

One of the strengths of this program was having four classrooms at program leaders’ disposal. Two were dedicated to the program, one belonged to the parent center, and one was a school classroom. The rooms were adjacent to one another, close to restrooms but far enough away from the center of campus to have a special, unified feel to them. Students were allowed also to have their snacks here, rather than at a large, open and noisy lunch area. Festooned around the stairs of each of four bungalows were 3’ x 3’ canvases with acrylic paintings in the style of Monet done by students.

The program got access to this space after many discussions between the site coordinator and administrators, and they got the rooms in part because teachers were reluctant to let the program use their rooms. This ASP did not have access to the library. Computers were available because they belonged to the program and were kept in a kindergarten room.

The site coordinator said janitors “do a good job” keeping the program space clean, “but they only sweep every other day.” Staffers, however, clean every day. “The teachers have gotten so spoiled that they leave their classrooms dirty for us to clean up,” the site coordinator said. “We clean up after the teacher.”
The site coordinator said her program provides all the necessary equipment to support its activities.

**Relationship with the School**
The site coordinator said a strong, positive, and supportive relationship exists between the site coordinator and the magnet school coordinator, who acts as her primary contact. Most of their interactions are verbal and face-to-face. These interactions occur “a couple times a week” and revolve around students and the use of facilities.

The site coordinator said the teachers occasionally chat with ASP staff if they are in their classrooms when the ASP staff arrive. ASP staff know what homework children have through an agenda they keep.

No joint planning occurs to coordinate program activities with day-school curricula. Additionally, neither CST nor assessment scores are shared between the school administration/teachers and this after-school program.

When asked about the strengths of the program’s relationship with the school, the site coordinator said, “Our program helps keep every area clean. We do trash pickups to beautify the school.” She said classroom use is a weakness in the relationship.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Communication with parents occur on a daily basis, verbally and one-on-one. When asked about the strengths of this relationship, the site coordinator pointed to the bond between the parents and the ASP teachers.

When asked about weaknesses, she said, “[Some] parents are crazy. They never think that their child could do anything wrong.” She says parent behavior is sometimes a challenge. “Two mothers had a physical fight,” she said. “Some spouses have restraining orders against each other. We have to constantly keep a close eye on parent interactions.”

One observer witnessed one of these challenges. A student had an accident in his pants. A staff member took the student to the bathroom to change his clothes. When they came back from the bathroom, the staff member apologized to the observer and expressed frustration because this student’s mother had not provided underwear with his emergency change of clothing. She also refused to leave her job to come pick him up. The site coordinator was called in to speak with the mother on the phone. She arrived a bit later in the day and complained to a supervisor that she would not have been asked to leave her job if she were a doctor. She also complained that a female staff member helped the boy change clothes rather than a male. The staff member handled the situation well.

The site coordinator said she and her staff know the streets and the stores in the community, but they do no community outreach. Local businesses or community groups do not support the program and have never been asked to do so.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
The site coordinator said the relationship between her program site and her agency is strong. There is a lot of support. She could think of no weak points regarding this relationship.

When asked about the strengths of the program’s relationship with Beyond the Bell, the site coordinator said the fact that observers keep monthly tabs on the program is very positive. She could not think of any weak points regarding this relationship.
**Attendance**
Attendance is taken via sign-in sheets. Program leaders record the sign-in time next to each student’s name, and each reconciles his/her own sign-in sheet. The site coordinator then prepares a monthly roll sheet to tabulating absences. This is faxed to the agency. The site coordinator could think of no improvements.

The engaging activities and motivated staff are what draw new students and keep them coming, the site coordinator said. Policy dictates that three consecutive absences without a phone call warrant dismissal. Students get one chance to improve if they don’t meet the criterion.

This program has a long wait list for each grade. Some grades have as many as 20-30 students on the wait list. As students leave the program, other take their place. This ASP has a small student-teacher ratio, 75 students to five staffers and a parent volunteer.

When asked about any events that might have affected average daily attendance, the site coordinator said the *Wizard of Oz* performance during the year took students away during the first half of the program. After rehearsals, students still had to attend a homework club with a classroom teacher. This substituted for the EEE homework session. The site coordinator said no programs compete now with this ASP.

**Safety and Security**
The site coordinator said student security is her number one priority. She said it could improve with more security personnel on campus during the program. Making sure that someone knows the whereabouts of every single child can also help.

The site coordinator is satisfied with the security of property belonging to the school and the ASP.

**Conclusions and Comments**
The students seem to love all activities. They delight especially in the drama productions and the reptile classes. The special teacher for the reptile program came in once a week for two months. The site coordinator wants more field trips. But she acknowledged that obtaining transportation for 80 students would be a major problem.

Parents consider themselves lucky to have a safe, colorful, and stimulating place to camp their children for four hours every day after school. One of the differences between this ASP and others is that all intervals, all activities, even all transition time, was considered a learning opportunity. There were chances for outdoor exercise, but they were limited, and there was no free Friday atmosphere here. This ASP always had a plan; students were always involved in some activity.

Kester Elementary is a California Distinguished School and this after-school program serves many highly capable, verbal, and energized young people. Working with magnet and regular children requires a program that is challenging, well-organized, and staffed by leaders who are able to engage with high achievers. Kester does a good job in this respect, planning activities, rehearsing plays and including many art projects. Program leaders do not rely on long stretches of outdoor games.

It was surprising to learn from the site coordinator that conflicts among parents are a major problem. One could not tell by observing the high quality of the curriculum and the interaction between the students. The site coordinator said parents use a significant level of profanity in talking with each other in the presence of the students. With such a stellar program and the very long wait list, this type of conduct should not be tolerated. The program might benefit from setting expectations of parental behavior up front, perhaps in the form of a parental agreement, with consequences, signed at the beginning of the year.
EEE does an excellent job as an ASP. The site coordinator knows this and believes in the program. “We are the strongest after school program around today,” she said. “The curriculum is very enriching and extremely different from other programs. We offer many different classes and our staff is exceptional in every area.” Our observers concurred that this is a program that can be proud of its achievements and that others can emulate.
## School Site Profile

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| Principal              | Sydnia Mcmillan           |

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | .1% |

| English Language Learners | Total: 5 Spanish |

### After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 715 |
| API – 2007 | 715 |
In her interview, Ms. Willis provided many insightful, inventive suggestions for designing an after-school program to meet the needs of active children, dedicated teachers and interested parents. Whether all, some, or any of these excellent ideas and activities are actually taking place at Annalee is difficult to determine: Ms. Willis is new this year and has roughly two months’ acquaintance with the school’s ASP, the Gang Alternatives Program (GAP).

Teacher comments provide a more detailed picture of what Ms. Willis considers to be a sufficiently organized, popular and diversified program. Annalee staffers have shared with Ms. Willis their concerns about several issues. They see a lack of communication regarding academic connections, inadequate supervision and questionable program management. Remarks by Ms. Willis relative to improvements parents might wish to see echo her teachers’ points of view. “There is a need for collaboration between teachers and the after-school staff,” she said. In a review of program components, GAP shows various strengths and weakness. The program improved over last year, but it is still struggling to shape offerings and train staff to provide both appealing, challenging academic enrichment and effective assistance with homework.

**Components**

Ms. Willis would like to see homework assistance move from the independent, ask-questions-get-help mode to a comprehensive design that each quarter supports a different set of grade level standards aligned with the core curriculum. To implement such a concept, program leaders should be trained and money should be found to hire teachers to work with ASP staff after school.

The focus of training, which Ms. Willis says also should be a product of both the school and the agency, should be on reading and math, K-5 district standards, and use of manipulatives. An attractive academic enrichment component should have science projects, basic experiments, and hands on activities. Oral and written reports, book talks, and book-of-the-month discussions would build skills in language arts. The academic enrichment that may be currently taking place is not part of Ms. Willis’ commentary. As a hope for the future, she says she would like to find a way to make the school’s computer lab available.

**Sports** in the ASP should focus on teaching the rules of different games so students can compete with other schools in basketball, soccer, and football. They should also be exposed to a variety of athletic activities such as volleyball, track and field, softball, drill team and cheerleading. What GAP offers now is not discussed, but by extrapolation, it is not the above. She does not mention how Youth Services might cooperate or coordinate with GAP students during playground time, except obliquely, in the statement: “It is hard to hold people who work the Youth Services program accountable.” Perhaps there are some weaknesses with Youth Services as well.

An activity last year with Performing Arts seems to have met with great success. Ms. Willis mentions a play in which all students participated. Parents were pleased to see their children perform. Ms. Willis suggests a culminating event or project two times a year in drama, music and art.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

From discussions with the teaching staff, Ms. Willis has learned that GAP has nothing of an academic nature that teachers value, but they do recognize the importance of the program as a safe and structured place for students. They regard the ASP as an adjunct, rather than an integral part, of Annalee. “Teachers would value training of after-school staff on classroom management, reading fluency, alignment of after-school activities to the regular program,” she said. “[We] will consider inviting the after-school staff to teacher trainings.”
Distress over the use of teacher classrooms led to the program’s move this year to four empty rooms. Parents like the free after-school care and homework help, though some have complained homework is not completed or that their child has not received assistance. There is a long waiting list for participation, particularly for kindergarten and first grade. Ms. Willis says that her students’ parents are interested in all GAP activities.

**Agency and District Support Additional Comments**
Agency personnel are accessible and the site coordinator meets with school administrators once or twice each month. The coordinator also meets with the ASP staff on a regular basis. Group leaders resolve any behavior problems and, in Ms. Willis’ eyes, do not need training in behavior management. The principal feels there is good communication, and no problems have been referred beyond the school. She has confidence that any suggestions she might make would be heeded. Beyond The Bell has also been very supportive.

**Observations and Recommendations**
Ms. Willis’ vision and concepts for an effective ASP have promise. This year will be her opportunity to view and gauge Gap’s progress. She recommends Beyond the Bell ask for more than one hour of custodial time per month. Also, information about Beyond the Bell programs and ASP expectations should be routinely disseminated at regularly scheduled principal or organization meetings.
Case Study Observations
Gang Alternatives Program (GAP)
Annalee Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Annalee Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Carson. The sponsor is the Gang Alternatives Program (GAP). Ms. Connie Jackson is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Ms. Jackson is a very experienced leader who has a firm grasp of the program. She has set clear expectations for her staff.

GAP money is used as an incentive. Students receive GAP money when they complete their work and behave properly. Students who misbehave can lose their GAP money. This currency buys toys at a special GAP store.

An observer was onsite one day during GAP store hours. It appears the store opens once or twice a semester. The GAP Store opened at 4 p.m. and closed at 4:25 p.m. on this day. Displays grouped toys by price, ranging from $10.00 to $65.00. Items for sale included Daredevil Speedway, Barbie, Kelly, Hot Wheels, Crunch Art, Superman, Batman, Alpha Magnetic Board, James Bond (007), and stuffed animals. As this activity was about to begin, the site coordinator told the children to know how much money they had before lining up at the store table. Students came to the store by grade level.

Homework
A homework observation occurred in the auditorium. Most students sat at long tables at the front of the room. A few students sat in the auditorium seats. Initially, there was lots of talking. It was difficult to see how much of it was about homework. As time went by, it got quieter, and students appeared to work alone. Overall, they did not get active help from staffers, though they did check the homework.

The site coordinator said better organization by teachers would help homework support. Additionally, she said the quality of handouts is sometimes so poor that they are difficult to work with.

Academics
A staff member instructed each student to take out a piece of paper and write a paragraph about a movie that they had just seen. She told them to write “a full paragraph, not just two or three lines.” The staff member walked around the room looking at the papers and talking with the students and giving them feedback. She told one student, “You have a lot of run-on sentences. This should be a capital letter. Go back and fix it. Penmanship is important.” The student tried to fix his work, but the staff member told him his corrections didn’t make sense. She then went through the paper sentence by sentence.

An observation was also made of students doing spelling exercises at a lunch table with staff guidance. On another observation day, students played addition Bingo.

Arts
During one observation, students drew, colored and cut paper at outdoor lunch tables. The noise level was fairly high. Initially, the staff member did not tell the students to quiet down. Then she told a student that his voice was like a volume control and said, “Let’s turn it down.” She used her hand to demonstrate what that looked like. The staff member told the students that if they finished and turned in their drawings, they would get GAP money.
Observers also watched students make Mother’s Day cards. Students used stencils, pencils, scissors, colored paper, doilies, and a glue stick. This activity occurred in the lunch area. There were also other activities occurring at other tables and on the blacktop area.

During another observation, students colored and cut paper. It was 5 p.m. and many students had left the site. This group was conversing with each other, but their voices were low and calm. A few energetic students did cartwheels.

**Sports and Games**
A variety of sports activities occurred during the observations. They included jump-rope, relay racing, basketball, kickball, and drill practice.

Staff got actively involved in some sports and watched others. When staff members did get involved, they guided and encouraged students. During a relay race with younger students, a staff member was high-fiving them.

The site coordinator said the students liked all types of ball games. They played volleyball and handball. One observer noted that students practiced for an upcoming event called Summer Relay Fun and Games.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**
Staff were highly engaged with students and showed them respect in their interactions. They exerted gentle disciplinary control, as appropriate.

**Staff**
In terms of staffing, the title used by GAP is after-school advisor. The typical pay rate for this position is $10.00 per hour. The site coordinator said that it is difficult to keep good workers at this rate. “This is the reason that I have so many in and outs,” she said. The site coordinator said she has good workers and does not understand why they aren’t paid more.

The site coordinator said some volunteers work with the program. They help with drill and dance, as well as food and snacks. They do not show up every day.

Training occurs via a lead advisor meeting. Meetings with workers occur every two months depending on the site coordinator’s priorities. The site coordinator also consults individually with staff.

The after-school advisors receive training in multiplication. “Everyone works together,” the coordinator said. “But if no one understands the homework, then that can be a challenge.” She said they could benefit from conflict resolution training.

At the waiting table, a staff member played Simon Says and 7-Up with the students. They enjoyed it.

The site coordinator said she needs substitutes. “With the amount of kids that we have, it’s very challenging,” she said. “There is chaos and it puts pressure on the workers and it makes them want to leave the program.” She also wants more staff. During the interview, the she had to get up at almost every question to help manage students because she was short-staffed, the observer said.

**Material Resources**
The site coordinator is pleased with the amount of space and classroom access at the site. She said they now have classrooms downstairs and across from each other. However, there is no access to the school’s library or computer lab. Typically, a few classrooms are available for homework. Other than that, the
students and staff remain in a covered, outdoor lunch area for much of their time. Some days it gets quite cold there.

One teacher had trouble with GAP using her classroom, but the principal still gave it to the program. The site coordinator, the counselor, and the secretary used a camera to take a picture of the room in order to show how the classroom looked before they went into it. They showed the principal this picture on the next day. The site coordinator also spoke with her supervisor about the issue.

When asked about cleanliness and janitorial services, the site coordinator said the restrooms were unlocked and dirty when the after-school staff got there. She said they should be clean. “We don’t want to be blamed for something we didn’t do,” she said. “[Youth Services] sometimes messes things up and they blame it on us.” She said her staff has daily sweeping duties.

The site coordinator said that she is sometimes not satisfied with the snacks that are served and the students say “yuck.” She suggested that snack period might improve with a different menu.

One observation of snack time yielded an example of using GAP money as incentive. Students were seated by grades. One staff member told them not to make a mess. She gave out GAP money to those who finished their snack and left the table neat and clean.

Relationship with the School
The site coordinator said she has a strong relationship with the principal. They have known each other since 1999, before this individual was the principal. The principal is the first person that the site coordinator contacts when she needs something. The principal also initials all letters that go to parents from GAP at this site. The site coordinator talks with the principal to ensure events won’t interfere with day school activities.

When the principal needs to talk in person, she leaves a note in her mailbox. When they meet, her first question is, “Do you need me for something?” She said most communication relates to middle school students that come to the site from other schools. “I have voiced my opinion about that,” the site coordinator said. She did not give more details. The principal has made herself available to the site coordinator.

Some teachers escort their students to the after-school program, particularly the kindergarteners. Sometimes, teachers give program leaders their students’ homework. This is an effort to keep students from losing homework papers. The teachers tell the after-school staff how the students behaved during the day. “They have each others’ backs,” the site coordinator said.

The site coordinator said that she only knows that students have homework Monday through Thursday and that the bulletin board in the office has information about test days.

Staffers apparently don’t meet with teachers to coordinate ASP activities with what students learn in the day school. The school’s administrators and teachers do not share students’ CST and assessment scores with this after-school program.

The site coordinator said she believes the ASP helps children and teaches them discipline. But she said it needs to be better organized.

The site coordinator said the school’s intervention program has negatively affected GAP this year. It consists mostly of third-, fourth- and fifth-graders that need to improve their academic success. However, it sounds as if the focus of the program was on subjects such as study tips, and homework is not actually
completed. These students join GAP at snack time, after the regularly scheduled homework period and still have their homework to do. They then have to sit at outdoor lunch tables to complete homework while other students play around them. The site coordinator said the intervention program worked well last year. It appeared as if there was no coordination between the intervention program and this after-school program.

The staff appeared to be conscious of student safety and of securing property. Several activities occurred at outdoor lunch tables, including coloring, drawing, addition bingo, etc. Everyone did the best that they could, but this wasn’t an ideal environment. It got colder and colder as time went by. There was nowhere else for these groups to go, so they stayed outside in the cold.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
The site coordinator considered communication with parents pretty good. Generally, it concerns student fighting and sometimes involves the principal. “A few parents are in denial about their children,” she said. Parents are very supportive of the program and always ask the site coordinator what she needs. They compliment the staff in discipline and other benefits. They bring food to the program.

However, “they always had something to say when their child was out of order.” The site coordinator said she has handled discipline problems with a detailed letter about the infraction that she first shows the student so they can talk about it.

The site coordinator has lived in the area for 29 years and knows the neighborhood. She said the staff may not be as familiar with members of the community.

In regard to the program’s relationship with community organizations and the local business community, the site coordinator said one group did a job fair in which GAP participated. The challenge was that some after-school programs were paying more than GAP, and so they didn’t get many applicants.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The site coordinator said the strong point of the site’s relationship with the agency is that personnel pays attention to planned events. A weakness is a lag in the time it takes to address needs. “For example, I have asked for my phone back and I don’t have it back yet,” she said. “I am using my own minutes.”

The site coordinator said the program has the materials and equipment that it needs, but some of it, like the hoola hoops and jump ropes, is poor quality. The program also needs lightweight rackets and board games. She said the principal gave a ball to the program, but there is no pump to keep it inflated. “I ask for some equipment and don’t get it for over a month,” she said. “I don’t know what to tell the children.”

The site coordinator also complained about unannounced visits by Beyond the Bell staff.

Attendance
The site coordinator said attendance is taken by staff members by grade level each day in the lunch table area. One challenge is lack of information to the staff about student participation in other after-school events immediately upon the close of the school day. She noted that a student could potentially be marked as absent when he/she was actually present, but arriving late because of the other program. Enhanced communication between these alternative after-school programs and GAP would be very helpful. Activities that keep students interested are key to keeping attendance up and attracting new students to the program. Some of these include talent shows, science fairs, and book distributions. The fourth- and fifth-graders are now learning a persuasive technique.
There is a wait list for GAP. It used to have about 30 names, but now it only has ten.

There are other programs that also use the Annalee site for after-school activities. There is some collaboration with the SYS program on events. However, there have been some problems with fighting between students from both programs.

**Safety and Security**
The site coordinator said program security could be better. She complained of too many open gates. “What if there is a drive-by [shooting] and all the office people are gone and all the gates are open?” she said.

The staff appeared to be aware of safety hazards. During kickball, one student was told to put a toy he bought at the GAP store away because it was dangerous on the field.

The site coordinator said her program does not use the school’s physical property for their program and the materials of the GAP program are safe at the site.

**Conclusions and Comments**
This appears to be a well developed program. The site coordinator has a firm grasp over the program and the staff appear to manage students well. The staffers know each of the students and interact well with them. Overall, they show a deep commitment to the students and treat them kindly.

The program offers a wide variety of sports and other activities. Arts and crafts are more limited. Not enough homework/academic enrichment activities were observed to draw any conclusions about their effectiveness.

The use of GAP money as an incentive is effective. Students earn the money only for positive activities. They like it and hate to have to “pay” for their misbehavior.

It is unclear how much involvement there is with the community or if businesses provide any type of financial support for the program.

Though the site coordinator appears satisfied with the site facilities, observers indicate that more dedicated, small-group space would help some activities. Being banished to the outdoor lunch area also is difficult on the students when the weather turns cold.

The agency should respond more quickly to program needs, and some attention should be paid to student safety during program hours. “I just try to do the best that I can do,” the site coordinator said. “I know I have a very creative mind and let the kids have fun. I like to see the kids be happy.”
## School Site Profile

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<tr>
<th>School Site Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Site</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
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<tr>
<td>52nd Street Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>816 W. 51st St.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90037</td>
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**Principal**: Beverly Crosby

### School Demographics (2007-08) *

- **Student Enrollment**: 785
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 82.4% Hispanic
  - 17.2% Black
  - .3% American Indian/Alaskan
  - .1% Asian

- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 58.7%
- **English Language Learners**: Total: 461

### After-School Program Profile

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<thead>
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<th>After-School Program Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>After School Program Provider Agency</strong> (central office location)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Beginnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zola Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:z_jones@gbbb.org">z_jones@gbbb.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323-789-7955</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **# ASP Students**: 224
- **Average Days of Attendance**:
  - % < 36 Days: 47%
  - % 36-71 Days: 8%
  - %72-107 Days: 7%
  - % > 107 Days: 38%
  - % of Capacity: 66%

### Academic Performance Index Change

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<th>Academic Performance Index Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>API – 2008: 671</td>
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<td>API – 2007: 613</td>
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</table>
Ms. Crosby believes Great Beginnings (GB) at 52nd Street Elementary needs much improvement. She says GB staff needs considerable training in behavior and class management and her teachers are constantly reporting their dismay at messy rooms used by the program where disorder and missing items are common; they also comment to her that student behavior is rowdy and loud.

Program staffers are pleasant, but parents and teachers regard Great Beginnings more as a day care program than a comprehensive three-hour experience with well-planned academic assistance, enrichment, arts, and athletics. Great Beginnings functions as an independent adjunct, not integrated with instructional strategies and curriculum at the school. Ms. Crosby says parents used to bring special snacks and organize “picnics” for all participants that could last as long as an hour and took away from the activity time. Ms. Crosby finally banned the practice. This illustrates the informal, daycare atmosphere of GB.

Because the ASP fails to insist on minimum time requirements for participants, parents often pick up children as early as a half hour into the program, undermining consistency and coherence. A review of components will serve further to define the elements of Great Beginnings needing better structure and substance so children can receive a quality after school experience.

Components

Homework assistance is not a strength at GB and is assigned to the least qualified employees. Program leaders need training in working with elementary children. Homework help time should coordinate with school curriculum and use district materials--- staffers need training as well on 52nd Street instructional practices and systems. During the homework sessions, leaders should stress good study skills, too. Ms. Crosby points out that the school itself could help ASP homework assistance if they instituted a uniform homework policy.

Academic enrichment consists of worksheets that waste time and bore the students. Ms. Crosby says activities should support what the children learn during the day. A circulating library program or activities in Core Literature are examples that would do this, but they require training not currently available through GB. Ms. Crosby would welcome chess and laptops, and wants differentiated activities. “One size does not fit all,” she says.

Sports activities need tighter coordinate with Youth Services. There is no articulation between these two programs and the rather loose management of YS creates a discipline problem for both programs. Ms. Cosby wants aerobic exercises and tournaments with other schools that would be fun and motivating for the students.

Fine and Performing Arts is another weak area. Ms. Crosby believes dramatic presentations, arts and crafts should be within the scope of GB. She would also like to see added, activities planned for special needs pupils. Her one positive comment: the program put on a good Halloween and Winter Holiday program for children and parents.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

Teachers do not believe GB affects school test scores in any way. Regrettably, most teachers are too upset by the daily damage done to their white boards and classroom furniture to notice anything else about the
program, though they, too, want relevant academic enrichment and art activities. The program also leaves
a mess in the outdoor lunch area.

Parents seem content with GB and like what they see as a safe environment for their children. They
mentioned nothing to Ms. Crosby about the quality of activities. They do complain that kindergarten
children cannot attend. Conflict between YS and another kindergarten program prevents the agency from
offering space for them. Interest in a kindergarten and first-grade component is high across all agency-
managed ASPs. Even without kindergarten pupils, the program remains popular, requires little recruiting
and maintains a waiting list. The principal would also like to see kindergarten pupils served who are not
enrolled in the other program.

**Agency and District Support**
Ms. Crosby has contacted the agency several times. The agency has responded promptly and helped
address daily issues, in part because it has few sites to manage. But it has shown no commitment to
wholesale changes or upgrades. Lax sign-out procedures are also a problem. Ms. Crosby has not
interacted with Beyond the Bell and has forwarded no problems to the branch.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Ms. Crosby wants a high quality, caring, organized program with a variety of arts and enrichment
activities delivered in an orderly setting to respectful children. Whether GB can meet her expectations
remains to be seen.
Case Study Observations
Great Beginnings (GB)
52nd Street Elementary School

Introduction
This program occurred at 52nd Street Elementary (a K-5 school) in South Central Los Angeles. Great Beginnings was the sponsor. Mr. Manuel Estrada led the ASP at this site.

Homework and Academics
Accomplishing high quality homework assistance was a challenge in this program. All grades sometimes sat together working on their homework. It was very loud. Homework may have been more effective if the students were broken into smaller groups and homework assistance occurred by subject or assignment within the small teams.

The level of student interest, courtesy, and attentiveness varied depending upon the group of students observed for homework. The quality of staff-student interaction also varied greatly depending upon the group under observation.

Observer comments included the following:

Students here are doing their homework inside a classroom. The staff member here is very patient with the students and is very interested in their progress.

First- and second-graders are in a class doing their homework, reading, drawing, coloring, and doing crossword puzzles. Students are up and down. This is a group of really active, busy kids.

This group of third-graders is well behaved, focused, and very quiet. The teacher is helpful and keeps the class in order at all times. Watching this third-grade class was a treat. They were very different in behavior from the first- and second-grade class.

Fourth-graders are part of Mr. Estrada’s class. He is the site coordinator for ‘Great Beginnings.’ His class is very alive, focused, happy, and the time is well used. Kids are doing their homework. When they finish, Mr. Estrada has them read and work on projects.

Students are in a classroom and are writing out sentences for a handout. The site coordinator is managing this class. He motivates and encourages students, but they are being very disrespectful to him. He does his best to discipline them.

Students were being disrespectful with the site coordinator. They answered back and were not very nice.

Students here are in a large group and there are two staff members. It is very hard to handle all the students.

It is too loud and students here are very rowdy.

The teacher ate the whole time I was in the class. She never got up until snack time. Kids were getting up and down and the other teacher was keeping order.
The ASP may have seemed like an extension of regular school to some children. One observer commented that one class listened to a math lecture and worked on a handout.

An observer watched one period of academic enrichment during field study. This person noted students read a story from a handout and answered questions. The staff member told the observer that this exercise was preparation for statewide testing.

**Arts**
Only one observation of arts activities occurred during field study. This part of the program may warrant a closer look. The site coordinator said arts & crafts was one of the favorite activities of the students. The observer’s one comment of this activity perhaps revealed more about the staff member in charge than about the students:

> Students here are doing some coloring from a handout. A staff member who expressed frustration to me earlier in the day is also in here with another staff member. She still seems frustrated because she yells at the students.

The observer did not see that this arts session was particularly effective. “Coloring is nothing new with these students,” the observer said. “They are not being challenged with the coloring. Students work alone without offering or accepting help.”

**Sports and Games**
Sports activities observed during field study included basketball, baseball, handball, soccer, jumping jacks, jump rope, and general exercise. At times, staff members got quite involved in the activities. At other times, the students played independently with little or no staff involvement. On one occasion, an observer said a group of students did not appear to have a staff member watching them play baseball and basketball. “They are doing well on their own,” the observer said.

Comments from some observations of sports activities included:

> It is exercise time. The kids line up by grade to do exercise. The teacher does the exercise and kids follow, counting aloud. They were doing jumping jacks, stretching, and running. They are counting to ten when doing their jumping jacks.

> All grades and kids were on the yard playing basketball, handball, jump rope, and soccer. The kids played well and stayed on the yard until parents picked them up.

> Students are outside in the P.E. field doing jumping jacks, exercise, etc. Students listen to instructions and know the drill by heart. Two staffers here are disciplining these students very strictly. This group is large and hard to manage.

The sports activities offered at this program may not be as varied and challenging as they could be. One observer noted that kids appeared bored and seemed to know the exercise routine by heart. “They are not learning much from this activity,” the observer said.

The site coordinator said he wants to expand sports and have “real games with other schools.” However, that may be more than he can handle now. He says he is already short-handed and “this is a scary neighborhood.”
Other Enrichment
An observer watched the site coordinator going through emergency drill procedures with fifth-graders. He shared anecdotes with the students about his personal experiences during an earthquake. They were very interested. He truly grabbed their attention.

An observer also witnessed a party on the last day of the after-school program. The students made custom hats with their names on them. They received a backpack and a t-shirt as end-of-year presents. The students were in a cool room on a hot day sharing goodies, chatting with each other, and playing games. They truly seemed to enjoy the companionship.

Engagement and Classroom Management
The level of engagement of the students seemed generally low. It is understood that some activities might energize and engage students more than others. However, this lack of engagement appeared to run deeper and into most activities.

Student behavior was completely unacceptable at times. They were rude, did not listen and talked back to staff. How staff dealt with this was unclear, as was why the students should display such conduct so often.

Staffers did not seem to have much experience in confidently managing their classes, and there was little mutual respect between them and students.

On a positive note, some students shared with an observer why they liked the Great Beginnings program. They said they like that some teachers “are really nice, helpful, play, and every Friday is free time.” They also said that this is “where we get to watch movies, play games, and do arts [and] crafts.”

Staff
Staff members earned $10.00 per hour and leaders earned $15.00 per hour. The site coordinator said it previously had been a challenge to keep positions filled, but it was not difficult at this time. She said the problem was corrected, but did not explain further.

Staff members received Impact training, as well as training in classroom management, building partnerships with the community, mandatory policies & procedures, team building, and CPR. The site coordinator said more training in classroom management would help.

One observer said the site coordinator seemed burnt out. It appeared that many problems had existed in the past with school administration and with program elements like student behavior, material resources, and agency support. Dealing with all of these issues may have taken a toll on him.

Material Resources
This after-school program suffered a loss of rooms due to teacher complaints about missing items. Teacher conferences also interfered. The program has no access to the library or computers. Program staff discussed this problem a week before the coordinator interview.

The site coordinator said the program does not have enough materials and equipment to support current activities. The areas of greatest need are arts and crafts and audio-visual equipment.

The site coordinator was satisfied with school cleanliness and the quality of janitorial services. He said this area could improve if students help more with cleaning up, but he did not elaborate further.
The site coordinator was satisfied with the appeal, quality, and quantity of snacks provided, but said more variety, including fruit, would improve the snack period.

**Relationship with the School**

The primary school administration contact for the site coordinator is the principal. He said the relationship between them is good now, but there has been tension in the past. Communication between these two individuals is not very frequent. The site coordinator said the two talk face-to-face when necessary, usually about program events and use of rooms.

Communication with classroom teachers also occurred on a face-to-face basis. However, the site coordinator gave no details. ASP staffers learn about homework by asking students.

There is no joint planning or coordination of program activities with classroom teachers. School administrators also did not share students’ CST and assessment scores with ASP staff.

The site coordinator cited staff cooperation as a program strength, but said staffers do not believe administrators give them enough support.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

The site coordinator and his staff communicate with parents daily, personally and through notes. The typical topics discussed include events, student behavior and participation, and the need for parents to support the program. The site coordinator called this relationship a strength. However, he said parents often work overtime and then pick up children late or have to ask someone else to come get them.

The site coordinator and the staff are very comfortable with the community. Most staffers live nearby or grew up around the school. Local businesses or community groups do not support the ASP. In the past, restaurants gave the ASP incentives for perfect attendance by students.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The site coordinator said the agency supports the program, but he said he sometimes has trouble reaching agency personnel. He said the relationship between the program and Beyond the Bell is “strong and helpful” and there are no weaknesses.

**Attendance**

Attendance consists of a roster for signing in and out that is collected and sent to the agency. The site coordinator does not believe this procedure requires improvement.

The site coordinator said he and his staff try to minimize student absences, encourage students to attend more days each week, and attract new students to the program through the activities provided. He said that the staff regularly lets parents know of the importance of daily attendance.

There was a wait list for the program for second-, third- and fourth-graders. Vacancies are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

The site coordinator believes chaos and mix-ups with classroom assignments upset the kids and discourage their attendance. No other events have interfered with student attendance at this ASP. There is no competition from other ASPs at this site.
Safety and Security
The site coordinator seems comfortable with the level of student safety and security. He said grass on the schoolyard would improve student safety, but did not make clear how it might help. The site coordinator is satisfied with the security of both the day and the after-school programs’ property.

Conclusions and Comments
The site coordinator likes his staff and considers them “really open and helpful.” He noted many are from the neighborhood.

The site coordinator said dealing with the principal is one of his biggest challenges. “She doesn’t support the program and does not help with getting the kids [into] classrooms,” he said. “Classrooms get taken away.”

This site coordinator is committed, but he could use more support from the agency. Staffers also need more training. In addition, the agency should initiate a conversation with school administrators about the program’s needs. To excel, students need an environment that models the kinds of operating styles, behaviors, and teamwork that program leaders want them to develop.
## Case Study

**International Center for Education & Sports (ICES)**

**Dodson Middle School**

*Source: LAUSD*

### School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28014 Montereina Dr.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275</td>
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### Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Elmore Collier</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.6% Pacific Islander</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.3% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 13.9% |
| English Language Learners | 202 Total |
| Total: 202 | 200 Spanish |
| 1 Pilipino | 1 Other |

### After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@iceseducation.org">info@iceseducation.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>562-434-5313</td>
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<table>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 783 |
| API – 2007 | 753 |
Mr. Collier said International Center for Sports and Education (ICES) is a relatively successful ASP at Dodson MS that has improved this year with better monitoring and stronger communication with administrators. Many classes are full, especially during athletic seasons that draw students to popular sports like flag football, basketball, and soccer. The program’s site coordinator is a teacher at Dodson, and that helps to make ICES an integral part of the school, Mr. Collier said.

Even so, Mr. Collier says ICES needs to establish better links to the school’s curriculum, bolster supervision, and improve academic enrichment offerings. Mr. Collier believes Youth Services workers and parents employed by ICES should get better training in class management. The coordinator provides informal guidance, but that is not enough, Mr. Collier believes. Program leaders should know discipline strategies with age-appropriate consequences.

Components
Students complete “what they can” during homework assistance, comments Mr. Collier, but leaders lack expertise to help students with specific subjects. They need training in basic instructional strategies for math and English and could use professional development help in district policies on child safety and campus law enforcement. Mr. Collier believes the homework assistance atmosphere is too lax.

It is not clear if ICES offers any academic enrichment classes; Mr. Collier mentions none. He feels this time should be used to help students review and build basic skills that they lack. “Kids don’t know their times tables,” Mr. Collier said. He would like to see a class in robotics, chess, and perhaps a foreign language.

ICES sports opportunities include rugby, track and field, basketball, soccer, and flag football. Students also compete in Kids Run L.A. Mr. Collier supports these activities, and he wants more emphasis on preparing students to participate in high school athletics. Intramural competition would help with skill development, but ICES is a Long Beach-based agency and has yet to schedule contests with LAUSD’s schools in the area. Mr. Collier wants classes that build self-discipline, like karate, Tae Kwon Do and other martial arts.

In the fine and performing arts, ICES offers dance, drama, cheer, and guitar classes. Mr. Collier wants field trips to museums and other venues. He believes students should see orchestras and works of art and learn to play instruments.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Mr. Collier says teachers value ICES for its activities in art, music, and athletics, but want improved communication as well as cleaner shared facilities. They believe ICES program leaders do not know how to make relevant connections between class work and homework. That makes it difficult to align homework with curriculum and district initiatives. Teachers also want ICES staff to get more training in class management.

Parents value the extra activities that keep students from sitting home alone, Mr. Collier said. They want more technology offerings. Mr. Collier wants to see parents involved in the program as teaching assistants.
Agency and District Support
Mr. Collier believes the agency is relatively passive in its engagement with Dodson, but that is improving. He says he has considerable influence and knows ICES has tried to implement his suggestions. He wants agency representatives to visit more often so they can provide updates on personnel, hours, and activities. Mr. Collier also wants the agency to work harder to promote the program.

Beyond the Bell has not been contacted for any serious difficulties. Mr. Collier said he made the initial contact to bring ICES to his campus. Now he is unclear on the budgetary relationship between ICES and Beyond the Bell. He wants the agency to hire more Dodson teachers as ASP employees to improve supervision and upgrade offerings. He also wants more agency money for custodial overtime.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
This year, ICES staffers worked to improve the condition of the classrooms at the end of the program day, an ongoing source of friction between teachers and ICES staff. Mr. Collier brokered a compromise that allows program leaders to use the multipurpose room, library, gym and some regular classrooms.

ICES staffers also need to take ownership for all Dodson students after school, Mr. Collier said. Having both YS and ICES creates a daily supervision problem when students wander around the campus after school; “unattached” students start at the library and then move to other locations. ICES could help with this issue.
Case Study Observations
International Center for Education & Sports (ICES)
Dodson Middle School

Introduction
This program occurs at Dodson Middle School (a 6-8 school) in Rancho Palos Verdes. The International Center for Education & Sports (ICES) is the sponsor and Ms. Terry Liegey is the site coordinator.

Highlights
The athletics and arts components of this program are its hallmarks. In sports, the printed schedule shows offerings of rugby, cheer, dance, running, basketball, soccer, softball, and use of the weight room. In the arts, drama is a significant component of this program. Offerings also include vocals and jewelry making. Another interesting feature is Million-Dollar Mondays, when students learn about personal finances.

Homework and Academics
Homework assistance does not occur at a specific, structured, time in this program. Individual staff members decide when to fit it in during the program session. Ms. Liegey said staff members are deeply committed to get the training they need on their own to help students with homework. Though a printed program schedule only showed homework assistance on Mondays and Wednesdays, Ms. Liegey said it occurs every day.

Arts
An observer noted a variety of offerings in arts, including ballet, watercolor painting, cooking, and rehearsals of the play “My Fair Lady.”

The students seemed engaged and interested during the play rehearsals “The kids were really getting into their characters,” the observer said. “They were practicing different accents and the teacher was helping them.”

The instructor who put the show together and helped the students learn their parts was very dedicated. Ms. Liegey said this instructor used to volunteer her services, but Ms. Liegey found some funding to pay her. She showed real commitment to enrich the lives of the students. Play performances occurred over a weekend. Ms. Liegey said not one student in the production missed school the following Monday.

Another observer watched ballet classes. Thirty girls practiced the same steps repeatedly on a stage. They learned turns. The ballet instructor was very knowledgeable. Some students took this class very seriously and others did not. The teacher kept the students on-task by asking them to clap.

Cooking appeared to be one of the students’ favorite classes. However, one staff member said the program only offers it twice a month, and the budget is only $20. Staffers want to increase funding and expand the program.

Sports and Games
Sports activities observed during the field study period were basketball and use of the weight room. The equipment in the weight room looked a bit old, but was in working condition. Students flexed their muscles and showed off to each other and the staff.
During the basketball game, students cheered and chided each other as they played. “Stay in school,” one student said to another. “The Lakers will not be needing you.” Other students waited on the sidelines to play the next game. During another observation, students casually shot hoops.

Students also played table and arcade games near the physical education area and in the weight room. The music was a bit loud in the weight room. Some students used gym equipment or jumped rope during this time.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Students clearly liked the acting and stage work as they prepared to present the play. They did what the teacher asked of them. They listened, asked questions and showed respect for the staff member and for other students. They also like cooking, soccer, basketball, baseball, and arts and crafts (including jewelry making).

**Staff**

Ms. Liegey is a physical education teacher at Dodson during the day. One-half of the ASP staff also teaches at Dodson. Ms. Liegey has no difficulty finding staffers to hire. School administrators network with local universities to find potential staffers among the college students.

Instructors for drama, voice, and dance earn $12.00 per hour. Ms. Liegey said that sometimes she has to encourage them to interact intensively with students and to stay enthusiastic.

Beyond the Bell trained staffers in CPR, and Ms. Liegey provided other training herself. She wants more training next year in communication, listening, mentoring, and respect. She also said the staff would benefit from more safety and first-aid training.

**Material Resources**

The program has enough materials and equipment to support its offerings. More playground equipment, basketballs, and cooking supplies would help.

This ASP has access to classrooms but sometimes has to rotate locations. Students have access to the computer lab but not the library. Ms. Liegey had no complaints about space allowances.

Ms. Liegey is happy with the appeal, quality, and quantity of snacks provided and with the administration of the snack period. She said the level of cleanliness of the facilities the ASP uses is “okay,” but she wants more janitorial help in the morning and before school lets out.

**Relationship with the School**

The main school contacts for Ms. Liegey are the principal and the assistant principal. She said she has a very good relationship with them and talks to them daily in person, by e-mail and through notes. Common issues are scheduling and events. She communicates with teachers via notes and e-mail. Staffers check calendar notebooks to learn the daily homework for students.

The ASP staff conducts joint planning with the teachers through faculty meetings, calendars, and sign-off sheets for homework. The planning also includes science projects like building rockets.

In joint meetings, administrators and teachers share students’ CST and assessment scores with ASP staff, and the information serves to target low-scoring students for more academic support.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Communication with parents regarding car pools, events, meetings, and activities occurs via memo, e-mail, bulletins, and flyers. Because of her dual positions, Ms. Liegey has more access and knows more about the students than might someone who only runs the ASP. However, parents know that this is not a closed campus.

Ms. Liegey and the ASP staff know the surrounding community well and stay in contact through outreach programs and fundraisers. Local business and community groups sponsor and support the ASP. For example, restaurants have donated food and helped pay for some program costs. Ms. Liegey said one weakness of this relationship is that the students served are not from the community. They are bused in.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Ms. Liegey said the agency gives her considerable leeway with management of ICES. However, she said agency personnel sometimes lag in returning her phone calls, and there have been some mix-ups over meeting schedules. She said nothing about the relationship with Beyond the Bell.

**Attendance**
Leaders keep track of daily attendance through sign-in and sign-out sheets that Ms. Liegey sends to her agency by computer. She said strong program offerings encourage students to attend more days and attract new students. She wants to add a skate park and a rock-climbing wall.

During the regular academic year, about 100 students participated in sports and other outdoor activities. Another 160 took drama elsewhere in the campus.

When late busing stopped, it affected ASP attendance. During most of the academic year, buses left as late as 5 p.m. But after testing ended, school administrators, without explanation, ordered these buses stopped. Ms. Liegey offered to oversee the late buses, something she can do because she is a credentialed teacher, but administrators resisted, and the principal did not want to challenge the status quo. She said late busing only occurred two days a week, but it was not clear if she was referring to the period before or after testing ended. She said she lost many students after testing because they had no alternative way to get home. If late busing does not return, Ms. Liegey said it would be difficult to launch new activities to attract and retain students.

Youth Services (YS) sponsors a program at the school, but Ms. Liegey does not believe it competes with ICES.

Responding to concerns about early closing times, Ms. Liegey told an observer a staff member remains on-site until the last student leaves the premises, though she might let staffers leave early as the student population drops. It appeared to the observer this might be an effort to cut program costs.

Ms. Liegey said low attendance on Fridays might be due to busing of the students to other sites for competitions that are part of the program. Two site visits were on early release days, and Ms. Liegey explained that most students had left the campus by the time observers arrived.

**Safety and Security**
Ms. Liegey is not happy with the security at this site. She said it is an open campus, so anyone can enter. She also worries about the traffic in the bus lanes and the potential danger to students. She wants administrators to close the campus and install locked gates. She wants the principal to support this initiative.

**Conclusions and Comments**
Ms. Liegey is committed and enthusiastic about this program and cares deeply about the students. She showed some frustration that observers might not see the program’s full potential.

Students at Dodson are bused in from Wilmington and lower San Pedro. Problems with this busing affect program attendance.

During the observation period, Ms. Liegey had to take an unexpected three-week medical leave beginning May 9. The second-in-command is good with students, but she does not have the skills to lead an after-school program. Now, Ms. Liegey wants to focus on staff development to ensure the situation does not repeat itself. This program warrants another look during the early 2009 field study.
## School Site Profile

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**Principal**
Sondra Reynolds

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<td>.1% Pacific Islander</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 34.1% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 544 |
|                           | 522 Spanish |
|                           | 7 Pilipino |
|                           | 7 Other |
|                           | 5 Armenian |
|                           | 2 Vietnamese |
|                           | 1 Korean |

### After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leesa Puleo</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lpuleo@kydsinc.org">lpuleo@kydsinc.org</a></td>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 679 |
| API – 2007 | 651 |
Mr. Alan Scher, retired Assistant Principal at Byrd Middle School, agreed to be interviewed for this evaluation. Not only did Mr. Scher demonstrate a comprehensive and direct familiarity with the ASP, but he shared details about his significant influence on the KYDS program. He helped the KYDS agency and site staffers refine program features around a philosophy that an ASP can develop good citizens, support school efforts, and hold high expectations for pupils. His hands-on involvement is uncommon for a site coordinator working with ASPs in middle or elementary settings.

Mr. Scher views KYDS as an integral part of Byrd Middle School. This fully combined program daily brings together both KYDS and Youth Services (YS) participants to, in the words of Mr. Scher, “get the best efforts from seven coaches on the same page, rather than two plus five.” Also, KYDS/YS leaders are expected to support and promote the same behavior and character qualities that the day teachers value. Finally, cross-program staffing puts YS/KYDS leaders in campus aide positions, improving discipline and helping students, teachers and parents more easily recognize ASP staff. Scher characterized KYDS staff as caring, responsive, and eager to improve, if somewhat inexperienced.

**Components**

Mr. Scher believes the homework assistance element is adequate, but leaders with varying levels of capability need more training in class management and working with teens. Any training program should also contain information on how to help students with study skills and time management.

Academic enrichment includes a computer science class, a small journalism group, and a leadership class, unusual among ASPs. In this class, students get extra time to complete projects, 8th grade members tutor 6th graders ones, while other members learn, through devoting their time to service projects, the responsibility of elected student officers to serve others through the sacrifice of time and energy.

Fine and performing arts classes are not a strength and include only a popular dance group. Mr. Scher supports additional classes but faces, with the Agency, the common difficulties of finding, hiring and funding trained experts.

The sports and athletics program is generally satisfactory. Mr. Scher believes any ASP through their athletic activities ought to promote teamwork and good sportsmanship, as well as offer lifetime sports besides soccer, football, and basketball. That said, the highlight of this component was a city soccer championship organized by the Byrd Youth Services team. Mr. Scher felt his efforts with the ASP were in part responsible for this championship through his insistence on monitoring homework, his combination format, and excellent organization. Kids Run LA might also benefit the program.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Mr. Scher said teachers are not enthusiastic about the benefits of homework help, but did have positive remarks about the socialization value of the KYDS experience. They also believe the program provides a well-supervised, safe, and engaging venue for the children. They reported the soccer championship had a ripple effect across campus, increasing school and ASP pride. Teachers also liked the leadership class and the hiring of campus aides from the program. Parents provided little feedback, but liked KYDS for the safe and monitored locale it provided and for the homework assistance.
Agency and District Support
Mr. Scher said KYDS staffers have given him 100 percent support. He knows agency staff, believes they heed his requests, and finds the site coordinator an excellent employee. Mr. Scher said neither he nor the principal was unduly burdened by any problems with the ASP. The only issue has been the routine room-sharing complaints, which Mr. Scher handled immediately. Mr. Scher does not believe he has any direct influence on Beyond the Bell policies, but he views the entity as supportive and has no complaints.

Additional Comments and Recommendations
Mr. Scher suggested Beyond the Bell might consider investing more money in campus aides, particularly for ASPs in dangerous neighborhoods in the late afternoon. More fiscal support to hire Byrd staff would also improve both the strength and diversity of offerings. He wants YS field trips to include museums and fine arts performances, not just professional sports games. Such programs as KYDS at Byrd should be enhanced where possible and definitely continued as an important service to parents and as an extension of the work of the school.
Case Study Observations
Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS)
Byrd Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Byrd Middle School (a 6-8 school) located in Sun Valley. Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS) is the sponsor. Mr. Bijan Gharib is the site coordinator.

Highlights
This is a program on its way up. It has experienced challenges this year, but made substantial improvements thanks to a rebuilding plan. Mr. Gharib said new hires have helped improve student participation in activities, established a homework hour, built the program’s structure, and put in place a better sign-in process.

Data collection took place in May and June. Three of the four observation days were atypical. Students left early because of testing, a banked-time Tuesday, and a Friday, resulting in limited activities. Although observers could not see the normal range of activities, they did watch effective and engaging sports activities. The boys and girls soccer teams, in collaboration with Youth Services (YS), progressed to the finals in the Beyond the Bell tournament. They worked hard on the soccer field and in the classroom, doing drills and maintaining their grades up to stay on the team. The coaches encouraged the players and they participated actively. Observers also watched many energetic and cooperative games of basketball in the gym.

Homework & Academics
Although it was late in the school year and the students had limited access to textbooks, observers saw some homework assistance sessions. There was had one homework session for each grade. However, specific activities varied somewhat from session to session.

Among the sixth-graders, some had puzzles, some leafed through books, and a few did homework. About 22 students worked quietly on the assignment the staff member gave them. She had separated some students because they talked and disrupted others.

The seventh-grade homework room had 14-15 students. One day, Mr. Gharib covered for an absent staff member. The students apparently had no homework. Mr. Gharib worked hard to keep them engaged. He had them write a brief essay on one of three topics and then read a story aloud. With one exception, all the students cooperated. They read aloud when asked, and all handed in an essay as they left for snack time. Another day, some did homework and others read, but all stayed quietly busy.

Most participants in the eighth-grade homework group were on the YS soccer teams. During both observations, this group had around 30 students. On the first, they stayed busy with reading or doing homework. Two YS coaches and one from KYDS supervised. The students cooperated with staff members. Each player needed to maintain a C average to stay on the team and continue playing in the finals. Another day, an observer saw the final 15 minutes of the session. Four students read. Others put their heads down or talked. The staff member told them twice to quiet down, but did not seem too concerned about the talking.

A major challenge to effective homework assistance was the school’s impending move to a new campus. Textbooks were packed away. There were classroom sets of books, but the students could not use them for the ASP Teachers lent them alternative textbooks or outdated copies of their texts. Staff members used
the books in their classrooms, but these could not cover all subjects. Homework time seemed most successful when the students did written assignments or worksheets.

Mr. Gharib said staffers could handle homework assistance. The challenges are focusing student concentration and coming up with viable alternative activities for those who do not have homework. At the time of the observations, the staff members had students read. He believes students would make progress with homework if they could bring their books with them.

Mr. Gharib wants to improve academic enrichment with fun, science-related classes. The challenge would be hiring qualified personnel, keeping sustained attendance, and maintaining an interesting agenda, he said.

**Sports & Recreation**

Mr. Gharib said YS basketball and soccer were students’ favorite activities. During the May/June observations, soccer was the most important sport at the ASP. Observers also watched informal basketball games and a weightlifting class.

Observers saw boys and girls in the school’s soccer teams practicing and playing recreationally. The teams combined participants from KYDS and YS. The boys’ team actively participated in skill-building drills and scrimmages. An observer was impressed with the coach’s ability to motivate the teenagers to practice and drill in a sport they have played for many years. She said he was “congenial and conscientious.” The girls’ team drilled on an adjacent field. Their coach encouraged them and kept them moving. The girls demonstrated their skills and a strong interest in the game.

On another day, girls scrimmaged with the boys’ team. An observer wrote that their focus was strong. They ran, played defense, kicked, and maneuvered the ball. The coaches did not play favorites among the girls and boys, encouraging and coaching them equally. Up to 40 students and two coaches also participated in recreational soccer games. They were cooperative and highly engaged in their play.

There were informal games of basketball in the gym. Up to 30 boys and girls participated, from both KYDS and YS. Observers described their play as friendly, competitive, very active, energized, and cooperative. Two coaches supervised the students, who were highly engaged in full- and half-court games. A few students watched from the sidelines.

One day, about eight boys worked out in the weight room. A credentialed P.E. teacher from the regular school day supervised their use of the equipment. One boy moved through the room, using four different machines. Five other boys left during the session. The teacher said testing time and the end of the school year affected attendance for this group.

**Arts**

Mr. Gharib said dance is one of the students’ favorite activities. Observers saw an active dance program, as well as groups making collages and learning DJ skills.

The dancers practiced routines for an upcoming dance performance. They do hip-hop moves to music from a boom box. The dancers knew their routines well and enjoyed the activity. The staff member, a specialist, worked out remaining problems. He also danced with the group while they practiced one of their routines. There were usually more than 20 participants in this class. One day, there were 15. Another day, when many other classes were cancelled, there were only six. Some students heard this group had also been cancelled.
Two students on one day and four on another worked on collages. The activity embedded language arts into visual arts. They chose pictures and wrote phrases as captions. They glued the pictures onto construction paper and added borders. A staff member worked alongside them and helped them.

In the same room as the collage group, students worked with a DJ turntable. A DJ guided them while they learned about the equipment in pairs. They paid close attention and stayed engaged in the activity.

**Other Enrichment**
There were other enrichment activities: computer class, leadership class, and electronic games.

The computer class had up to 20 students. They worked on laptop computers, developing slide shows of their favorite activities. Observers wrote that the slide shows were not of particularly high quality and all had spelling errors. The students worked together and often learned from each other.

The role of the staff member changed with the days. On one day, during testing, she did personal work at her desk, not helping any students. On two other days, she engaged the students and had more for them to do. The activities included interactive math games such as a probability game. The students enjoyed the class and one day even stayed 10 minutes into their break time.

One of the school’s teachers taught a leadership class for both ASP and non-ASP students. As A students, they could skip homework assistance. The teacher was enthusiastic and caring. On this day, they cut out flowers from construction paper to decorate the hall for the annual eighth-grade graduation luau/dance.

One of the most popular aspects of the ASP was the game room, which had a Wii system and a Guitar Hero game, along with a 10-foot screen. Some students played and others only watched. Actual participation was limited to the two game systems. Staffers said the ASP has additional equipment and a safe place to keep it, but the agency has not delivered it.

Thirteen students gathered in the auditorium around a Dance Dance Revolution game. Only two could play at a time, but others watched. Some chose only to watch. Staff members supervised and called on students to participate.

These additional enrichment activities are important to the site. Mr. Gharib wants a video production class in the future where students can shoot and edit their own video.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Observers generally saw staff members involved with the students and students engaged in their activities. Homework was sometimes less engaging for students because they did not have homework to complete and/or textbooks to use. Still, for the most part, they used their time productively and quietly.

Groups of students participated actively in soccer, basketball, and dance. They stayed engaged and showed skills they learned. In activities other than homework, the students seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The staff members were largely effective in managing their classrooms and groups. In activities other than homework, high levels of student engagement eased management. Even during homework time, staff members maintained discipline. An observer wrote that staff members showed that they had the cooperation and respect of the students. They had them follow a seating chart, complete an essay, and line up for snack. Overall, the students seemed to like and respect their activity leaders.
Staff

Staffing seems solid, but there is room for growth. Program leaders earn $10.00-$12.00 per hour. Security guards earn $11.00 per hour, and Mr. Gharib earns $14.00 per hour. Mr. Gharib said, on a scale from 1 to 10, his ability to keep positions filled rates a 4. Many of the staff members are college students and “see this job as a side job until they graduate.” He said the ASP has no problems securing substitutes and specialized staff. Even so, he said one of the challenges to offering fun science-related classes and a video production class is finding qualified staff. An observer said an asset of the ASP is that several teachers from the day school stay and offer after-school activities.

Both new and experienced staff members get training. Mr. Gharib said new staff shadow veteran staffers and go to Beyond the Bell seminars that address policies and procedures, conflict management, and CPR. Experienced staff members attend Beyond the Bell seminars every six months. They cover student behavior management, classroom management, and LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. He is happy with the training, but he wants it to occur more often.

Mr. Gharib is the ASP’s third for the 2007-08 school year and has been here only a few months. The first left because of conflicts with the supervising assistant principal. The second was a teacher from the campus who had no time for the ASP. Attendance and morale deteriorated during that coordinator’s time in charge. The third coordinator came to the site in March and, with support from the KYDS office, is working to rebuild The ASP. He said the biggest challenges for the ASP have to do with staff practices. He said there is a lack of consistency in how staff members apply discipline and other procedures:

For example, students are not allowed to just hang out after school. The security person does not say anything to the students. Instead, he is conversing with ASP staff members. Increasing frequency of training and performance evaluations will help to make things better.

Material Resources

Mr. Gharib has enough materials and equipment to support ASP activities, but has some concerns about space. He reported that space is adequate, but can improve. The ASP has three classrooms, but if a classroom has more than 20 students, more than one staff member has to be in the room. He said the ASP has access to the school’s library, but not to the computer lab. Observers said ASP staffers held computer classes in a computer classroom at the school.

Mr. Gharib is happy with the quantity of the snacks, but not the quality. “Besides the fruit, only junk food is served,” he said. “Snacks could be improved if more nutritious snacks were provided and more variation from the food groups, instead of relying on cookies.” He is satisfied with the cleanliness of the school, but said custodians might pick up more trash and clean up graffiti tags.

Relationship with the School

The ASP’s primary contact person with the school is an assistant principal. Mr. Gharib described their relationship as “constructive and team-oriented.” He considers it strength of the relationship. They communicate in person, by phone, or in weekly private meetings. Common topics include discipline, special events, and scheduling.

Mr. Gharib said he has met with school officials to discuss space issues. “Teachers are resistant to lend their classrooms because of possible destructive behavior toward property,” he said.

Staff members communicated with teachers through Mr. Gharib and through face-to-face conversations. The ASP staffers do not plan jointly with the teachers or receive students’ test or assessment scores. Staff
learns of student homework through students’ notes and what students tell them. Staffers also check with teachers.

Factors in the relationship with the school provided challenges to the functioning of the site during the year. The ASP had its third site coordinator of the school year by the time of data collection (May and June).

The school was scheduled to close at the end of June and be converted to a high school for the 2009-10 school year. Byrd Middle School was to re-open at a new campus for the 2008-09 school year. By mid-May, teachers had begun packing up their classrooms and books.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Mr. Gharib reported regular contact with parents, but no relationship with local businesses or community organizations. Staffers talk with parents when they come to pick up their students. Parents also get phone calls and flyers every few months and have Mr. Gharib’s phone number.

He is new to the area and the school, and not familiar with the community. But other staff members grew up in the community and live nearby. He said there is no contact with businesses or community groups.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Mr. Gharib had little to say about the ASP’s relationship with the agency and Beyond the Bell. He said the strong point in the relationship with the agency is the variety of activities. He is frustrated with how to motivate staff. His supervisor joined a meeting with school officials regarding access to classrooms.

Observations indicated that an agency staff member had been very involved with rebuilding the site. On the other hand, the agency’s failure to deliver extra equipment has hurt student participation. The strong and weak points for the ASP’s relationship with Beyond the Bell are “activities and recruitment to their sports” and “communication with other agencies.”

**Attendance**

The ASP promotes ongoing activities and programs, and checks in with parents. To attract new students, the ASP advertises, sends flyers, and provides activities calendars to teachers every month. Also, staff members work in the school, so their word-of-mouth promotes the ASP. The soccer also motivates many students to stay for the ASP. The site has no wait list. However, Mr. Gharib said attendance improves when students have to sign in by grade level in their classroom.

The ASP collaborates and competes with the YS program at Byrd. “Students tend to go to YS although they should register with KYDS,” Mr. Gharib said.

Attendance was notably low on two of the four days of observation. One was a testing day and the students were released early. Also, some classes led by day teachers were cancelled on that day. The other day was a Friday, which can be a low-attendance day.

**Safety & Security**

Mr. Gharib said he is satisfied with security for students and property at the site. His suggested improvements are having guards cover more of the school grounds and using more secure locks to avoid easy access. He noted that the security guard often spends his time conversing with ASP staff.

An observer wrote:
This is one middle school program that tries to account for students like elementary programs do. In others, when the kids get tired of the activities, they simply leave. I assume many parents want their students to be under supervision and off the streets. At an earlier visit, the coordinator spoke about the problem of non-participant students lurking and hanging out across the street. Also, as I entered campus on both visits, I saw school security from the ASP clearing kids from the general campus.

**Conclusions and Comments**

This program has structured homework sessions, even when the school does not assign homework, active dance and soccer programs, recreational basketball, computer classes, and electronic games. Students stay engaged and enjoy themselves in most activities. Staff members engage with students and have their respect and cooperation. Teachers from the day school strengthen the ASP by providing after-school activities.

Although The ASP experienced important improvements during the final months of the year, areas for growth remain. Primary among them are acquiring more classroom space and stabilizing staff. The challenge and opportunity facing the ASP during the coming year will be to continue building on recent improvements and make the most of its new location.
## Site Profile

**Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS)**

**Purche Elementary School**

*Source: LAUSD*

### School Site Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Purche Elementary School</th>
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<td></td>
<td>13210 Purche Ave.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Gardena, CA 90249</td>
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| Principal              | Thaddus Jackson          |

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<th>School Demographics (2007-08)*:</th>
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<tr>
<td>78.0% Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>.4% White</td>
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<td>.2% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 13.0% |
| English Language Learners                  | Total: 62 |
|                                             | 59 Spanish |
|                                             | 2 Pilipino |
|                                             | 1 Vietnamese |

### After-School Program Profile

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leesa Puleo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:lpuleo@kydsinc.org">lpuleo@kydsinc.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>818-908-2029</td>
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</table>

| # ASP Students | 199          |
| Average Days of Attendance | 93           |
| % < 36 Days | 18%          |
| % 36-71 Days | 24%          |
| %72-107 Days | 16%          |
| % > 107 Days  | 44%          |
| % of Capacity | 100%         |

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 742          |
| API – 2007 | 710          |
KYDS at Purche resembles any of a number of unremarkable elementary ASPs, but it is a hopeful work in progress. Staffers are willing and interested in helping the program grow, evolve, and reflect Mr. Jackson’s imaginative and resourceful ideas.

Mr. Jackson expresses the routine concerns about the need for more training, more appealing enrichment, and better supervision, but he also suggests a higher level of ASP improvement. He fundamentally believes all activities during this three-hour block should form part of a larger strategy to enrich the lives of participants, to build talents and capabilities, and to master skills. There is no time to waste. Even games should promote thinking. Leaders should introduce the scientific method, use athletics to teach dexterity and muscle strength, and use art and music to train pupils for culminating events. Program leaders should capitalize on every opportunity to move children to higher levels of competence. “It is a long day for the children, yet the quality of the programs rests in the skills and efficiency of the workers,” Mr. Jackson says.

Components

Mr. Jackson says homework assistance is an extension of the school day. Leaders should support assignments and work with children to complete them. They should at least have the skills of a high school graduate to check and correct assignments. They should guide students’ pride in their work, ensuring assignments are neat, clean, and legible.

Academic enrichment should encourage exploration and support development of divergent thinking skills. Offerings should include chess, use of manipulatives, fun challenges with Legos, card games, dominoes, math and reading. “With structured guidance in a nurturing environment, students can learn,” Mr. Jackson says. He also makes an additional plea for activities that teach the scientific method, encouraging pupils to think through the process from hypothesis to conclusion. He was pleased last year to see an animal study class started, but says KYDS needs many more appealing and varied enrichment offerings.

Sports should be another opportunity to enhance student growth. The program needs a variety of fun and appealing non-traditional games that build skills and muscles at the same time, like Frisbee, running, throwing, catching, rhythmic activities, hula hoops and jump-rope. Mr. Jackson likes the rock wall activity. There is no evidence of coordination with Youth Services (YS), which Mr. Jackson considers “a more permissive program.” One problem last year involved a conflict with students, parents, and YS. Better articulation might prevent such difficulties.

Fine and performing arts at KYDS last year was sporadic and inconsistent. Mr. Jackson wants music taught together with dance. He expects creative efforts to build skills as the year progresses, leading to culminating events in art, music, dance and drama.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

Purche teachers all are aware of KYDS and have told Mr. Jackson they appreciate the chance for students to complete homework after school. Like the principal, they want more and better academic enrichment. They also believe KYDS supervision is weak. Mr. Jackson says the 20-to-1 ratio is too high for an elementary ASP that serves regular, ELL, gifted and special-needs pupils.
Parents are happy to have a program that takes care of their children. They find KYDS generally safe, but it is common for children to walk away, fight, and suffer injuries. Parents also express a need for expanded enrichment with a variety of classes.

Agency and District Support
Mr. Jackson works with the agency area supervisor and site coordinator, both of whom he finds cooperative and receptive. He believes he has enough opportunity to give input that improves KYDS. He wants more training in all areas, especially behavior management and group supervision. At the minimum, all staffers should be capable of keeping excessive noise and disruption under control. He has asked co-administrators to help with behavior management training. Beyond the Bell has not intervened to fix occasional ASP problems and, thus far, has not been contacted to assist with Mr. Jackson’s program to improve the ASP.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Mr. Jackson believes Beyond the Bell should consider funding two coordinators: one to work with parents, and one to work with and supervise leaders. Though KYDS has improved with more staff and better organization this year, it requires better monitoring and district money for training programs. Regarding room sharing, Mr. Jackson tells his staff “teachers must understand that everyone must make accommodations for students.” Asking for a new KYDS staff this year, his efforts will continue: “More enrichment, more supervision,” he says
Case Study Observations  
Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS)  
Purche Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Purche Elementary School (a K-5 school) located in Gardena. The sponsor is Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS). Ms. Karen McFadden is the site coordinator. The area supervisor is Ms. Janelle Girard.

Highlights
The highlight is a dance program in which children learned a series of routines for a parent performance in the school auditoriums.
Also, staff members created a safer adaptation of dodge ball, which children enjoy playing. Children and staff also played an active game of kickball. Also, another staff member devised a baseball-like game played with a football.

Homework
Homework sessions occur at a set of outdoor lunch tables. The area is not conducive to effective homework help. It is crowded, and nearby activities distract the children. The noise level is very high. Although some children did their homework, observers saw mostly distracted children. Homework help is often understaffed, and staff members do not properly attend to the children. The observers wrote:

Students here are doing homework. A staff member supervises. This is not a dedicated space. The noise level is too loud. Students are scattered all over. This is a very disorderly situation.

Kids are doing whatever they want. They talk to each other and pass the time. They talk on their cell phones and exchange pictures. I found the staff members not very invested in the kids. They are understaffed and not paying attention.

Too many kids, not enough space. Some kids did their homework. Others ran around and did not listen. Staff members looked frustrated. Kids were disrespectful to the staffers and used profanity.

These students still need to complete their homework. A staffer said to a student, "You'd better be quiet, or I'm going to rip your homework." I did not see or hear the student misbehaving.

The ASP has one classroom for its own use, next to the lunch tables and the playground. It serves as Ms. McFadden’s office, discipline room, and supplemental space for homework assistance. An observer wrote:

About eight students here are finishing their homework. There are three staff members, including Ms. McFadden, but they do not mind the students. They chat instead. Students have materials in front of them, but they are talking, not working.

There were seven kids and Ms. McFadden. One staff member came and sat for a while, but did not interact with the kids. Some kids did homework, some talked, and some just...
sat. A few girls were engaged with schoolwork. One boy looked distressed and sweating. Ms. McFadden sent him to the office. Only Ms. McFadden was present during most of the observation. She sat looking out the door and doing paperwork. She rarely paid attention to the children and did not help them with their work.

Ms. McFadden said things will change with homework help. She said her major problem is staffing and keeping students engaged in a crowded space. On a day when the school assigned no homework, she made a point of saying the children had nothing to do. Alternative activities did not seem to be an option.

**Academics**

Observers saw one academic enrichment activity to promote literacy. Students worked on their own, writing a dedication letter to their mother or their parents.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said Magic Boxes are among the children’s favorite activities. Each box contains a book and activities related to its subject. Examples are Michelangelo, the solar system, and the Earth. The content varies with the grade level. Staff members conduct Magic Box activities on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said they want more enrichment that is academic and intend to plan science and reading activities with teachers.

**Sports & Recreation**

When not at snack or homework time, the children usually go to the playground. This large area can comprise many activities, some unsupervised.

Observers noted groups of nine or ten girls playing jump rope on several occasions. They only had one rope and took turns jumping. The girls also sang a jump rope song. Once, they had no supervisor.

During one observation, a mixed-age group of about 12 children played a safer version of dodge ball. Some stood with their backs to a handball wall. Three other children stood at a line about ten feet away, with a playground ball. They took turns rolling or bouncing the ball toward the children at the wall. If the ball touched a child at the wall, she or he was out. There was very little chance for injury. The staff member listed rules to the game, but did not enforce them consistently. She told children what they should do after they made a mistake, but did not structure the activity to help them do it right. She repeatedly told a small girl to roll the ball, but the girl kept throwing it. Children tended to drift away from the area once they were out. Another group played a similar activity with a different staff member. In this case, the staff member, rather than children, tossed the ball. An observer wrote that children seemed to like this staff member and enjoyed the game.

Basketball was another common activity. An observer watched a game with six players on a team and said they played well together. Other children sat on the sidelines and cheered.

Two staff members organized a group of 12 to 15 children into a kickball game on the playground. They played actively and had a good game. A few smaller children played jump rope behind the backstop.

After a dance program, about 25 children returned to the playground. Three staff members and a Youth Services coach were present. Three staffers played basketball with some children, and the lone remaining staffer was responsible for overseeing children spread across the rest of the playground. Many children had no staff member within 50 feet of them. Later, a staff member organized a baseball-like game with a
football. Seven to ten boys played and seemed to enjoy themselves. “It was a pretty innovative game and the staff member was positively involved,” the observer wrote.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said sports are very important to the children. They want to offer more organized sports and games.

**Arts**
Arts enrichment opportunities are limited. There is a dance program. An observer watched a rehearsal and a performance in the school’s auditorium. About 25 children participated.

One staff member led the activity, while another watched from the back of the auditorium. The dance coach led student through their routines. The children stayed in step with each other and looked like they had practiced. They were energetic. Smaller children offstage imitated the dancers. There were problems with the audio. The principal replaced it with a boom box. While the staff member worked on the audio problem with the principal, three girls kept practicing on the stage.

The performance took place later in the afternoon. The audience included 30 to 40 children from the program, staff members, school administrators, and some parents and siblings. Before the last number, the dance instructor spoke about the hard work the children had put in. She had no microphone and it was very hard to hear what she was saying. The children danced short routines, some with simple steps/moves. There were five or six routines of two or three minutes each, with long breaks in between. The program ran almost 30 minutes. The parents seemed very pleased and proud. At the end, the dance coach presented each dancer with a certificate. The observer thought the dance program appropriate.

Another observer watched a short arts activity on the playground. Students sat in a circle at the P.E. fields with a staff member, doing nothing other than working on discipline. The staff member then gave them crafts materials.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard want cultural dance, arts and crafts, and moviemaking activities.

**Other Enrichment**
The academic, sports, and arts activities described were the only enrichment activities offered during observations. Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard did not describe others in the interview. They mentioned many activities to offer in the future, including self-esteem classes, bike safety, and Legos.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**
Ms. McFadden said class management is the biggest challenge facing the ASP. Observers agreed. Engagement and classroom management were minimal during homework time. Most children were off-task and disruptive. Staff members provided little attention or direction to the children, who largely did as they pleased.

An observer witnessed an extreme situation:

Right after snack time, the children really misbehaved, pushing and shoving each other, running loose, and trashing the place with leftover snacks. This happened right outside Ms. McFadden’s room, and she ignored it. She gave orders with her walkie-talkie, but never once rose from her seat.
Despite recurring management problems, the ASP has an explicit focus on discipline. One day, a group of staff members had the children in “the square,” a painted area on the blacktop used for lining up. They spent 50 minutes lining up in a manner that satisfied the staff. An observer wrote:

There were 50 to 60 kids and at least three staff members, though some did not wear staff shirts. The focus was to get the kids to line up properly, but I did not see any serious problems with how they lined up. Staff members were not satisfied. They yelled, threatened, and punished the children with standing longer in the 90-degree weather. Ms. McFadden joined in the yelling and then returned to her office. There was no attempt at an activity. According to Ms. McFadden, the children were supposed to play sports until snack time, but someone had stolen the equipment.

One staff member borrowed equipment from YS, but never set it up and continued yelling at the children. Eventually, he released them in small groups. The staffers’ general approach to dealing with kids was to yell, threaten, and punish.

A similar situation occurred later in the day. About 15 children played kickball before lining up to go to the performance. A staffer spent a few minutes yelling military-style commands to get the students to line up properly. Then she released them.

The program also has what amounts to a discipline room – Ms. McFadden’s office. There are lists on the chalkboard with the names of students who evidently misbehaved and had privileges taken away. There is also a note that misbehaving children have to copy and take to their parents. Staff members send misbehaving children to this room, but staffers there pay little attention to the children, except for yelling at them to sit and quiet down. Ms. Girard described the children at this site as “very disrespectful.”

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said staffers look after special needs children and treat them well.

Staff
Staffing is a major concern for the Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard. They said finding stronger, hard-working staff members is one of their biggest challenges of the ASP. An observer wrote that Ms. Girard “seems to be very frustrated with staff turnover.” Another heard that some staffers have simply stopped showing up. Not surprisingly, they said it is very difficult to keep the positions filled, especially at the end of the school year. Securing substitutes and specialized staff is also a problem. Finding adequate staff to provide quality homework assistance is also a problem. They want more volunteers next year. Ms. McFadden earns $13.15 per hour. Staff members earn $10.00 per hour.

New and experienced staff members receive training in CPR. They receive on-site training in math, science, reading and spelling. There are also staff meetings, Beyond the Bell training sessions and one-on-one training, but Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard did not specify what they involve. They said the staff would most benefit from classroom management training.

Staffers do not seem to have a consistent uniform or other identifying apparel. LAUSD after-school staffers normally wear gray shirts. But staffers here wear staff shirts in other colors, and none is gray. Some, including Ms. McFadden, do not wear staff shirts. She wears a tag on a lanyard.

On one observation session, Ms. McFadden seemed to have many excuses for the program not having its “normal” activities, including that the school assigned no homework, that there was a dance program instead of activities, and that the kids had a sugar high from a party. The observer asked her what a typical Wednesday would look like. She said the ASP normally starts with homework and then goes to snack time. Afterward, the children do Magic Box activities, and then at 5:15 p.m. they clean up and prepare to
go home. When the observer asked for more information about the Magic Boxes, she had some problems finding someone to explain them. This staffer gave a knowledgeable explanation, but said children do the activity on Tuesdays and Fridays, not Wednesdays.

Observers’ descriptions of the staff’s interaction with children fluctuated between two extremes: inattention and punishment, and genuine engagement with the children. Some staffers treated students kindly and used creative games to engage them and teach them skills. Others focused on military discipline, which taught the children nothing and they did not enjoy. An observer noted some staffers who wanted to work with the children lacked necessary knowledge and skills.

**Material Resources**
Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said the ASP has enough materials and equipment, but lacks adequate space. Other than the discipline room that doubles as Ms. McFadden’s office, there is no access to classrooms, the computer lab, or the library. They said teachers do not trust staff members to clean up or watch kids in class, so there is little expectation that this situation will change. There is some evidence that staffers had to borrow equipment from YS because their own was missing.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard are happy with the snacks and janitorial services provided by the school. They suggested asking children what they might prefer to improve the snack offerings.

**Relationship with the School**
The Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said the ASP has a good relationship with the school. Their primary contacts are the principal and assistant principal. They communicate face-to-face, about once a week, and talk about daily operations and needed improvements.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said staff members rely on the children’s word regarding their daily homework requirements. The school does not share assessment scores with the ASP, and staffers do not plan activities jointly with teachers. However, they will begin joint planning on academic subjects next year.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said the ASP has a good relationship with parents. They said they talk daily with them, mainly about behavior problems and late pick-up.

Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said the ASP has no relationship with community organizations and local businesses. Staff members know the community and some have worked at the local park.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**
Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard said they have good communication with the agency, but agency officials need to visit the site more. They said they have no communication with Beyond the Bell.

**Attendance**
The program has no waiting list. Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard reported using enrollment flyers, Fun Fridays, sports, food, and field trips to encourage attendance and attract new students. They said staff turnover affected attendance this year. There is no competition from other ASPs.

**Safety & Security**
Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard’s statements conflicted with observers’ notes regarding security. They said they are satisfied with the security of students and ASP property. Observers saw many security and safety problems for the children. Among them was the lack of consistent uniforms for staffers, which might
make it hard to find them in an emergency and might make them indistinguishable from visitors, allowing strangers to slip into campus unnoticed. Other individual incidents include:

Three children were playing with a hanger and using it to poke other children. Staff members seemed unaware, but this behavior was in clear view.

During a game similar to dodge ball, children tended to drift away once they were out. Two boys went near an open gate. The staff member finally retrieved one boy when he started rolling the gate closed.

Later in the game, the staff member wandered off for few minutes. Two older boys started talking trash. One put his finger in the other's face. They stayed angry at each other for the rest of the time the observer was there.

Children were unsupervised during many playground activities. The playground had two gates open to the street.

On a sunny afternoon with a temperature of about 90 degrees, staff members kept children on the blacktop for up to 50 minutes because of minor infractions during the lineup. Staff members explicitly kept the children out in the heat as a form of punishment. They even threatened the children with more time in the sun.

Conclusions and Comments
Observers saw many systemic and specific problems at this ASP, including a general lack of organization, a staff that has little training and little understanding of children, and supervisors that behave inconsistently. This program fails the children at almost every level.

Homework time is chaotic and occurs in a crowded and busy, outdoor space that interferes with student engagement and attention. There is a dearth of enrichment activities. Staff members often ignore children in favor of chatting with each other or treat their interactions with children as a power struggle.

Ms. McFadden’s seems to focus exclusively on administrative tasks rather than on children or enrichment activities. She and Ms. Girard have strongly negative impressions of the activity leaders, and there is a serious problem here with lack of staff and turnover. The interactions of at least one staff member with the children border on abuse. Even so, observers did not see Ms. McFadden intervene when staff members acted inappropriately in her presence.

The ASP has no classroom space and no contact with teachers. Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard reported that KYDS officials do not spend enough time on campus.

Even with all these problems, there are some positive aspects of this ASP. Ms. McFadden and Ms. Girard acknowledged the need for improvement. School administrators show interest in the ASP. Many parents have a positive opinion of the program. Magic Boxes can provide a foundation for thematic activities with literacy enrichment. And some staff members show creativity and concern for the children.
**Site Profile**

**Kids Protectors of the Environment (KPE)**

**Playa Del Rey Elementary School**

*Source: LAUSD*

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**School Demographics (2007-08)**:

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**After-School Program Profile**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(central office location)</td>
<td>Kathy Cirillo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kathy@plazatravel.com">Kathy@plazatravel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>310-785-9021</td>
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<table>
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<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
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**Academic Performance Index Change**

| API – 2008 | 771 |
| API – 2007 | 797 |
Ms. Pierce is dissatisfied with Kids Protecting the Environment (KPE) at Playa del Rey Elementary. She sees a badly organized K-1 element, limited enrichment, careless class management and pupil control, grudging assistance from the agency, poor homework guidance, lax safety procedures at checkout, and messy rooms after the program leaders leave. The ASP is an adjunct to the school, not an integral partner. Although the program has improved somewhat this year, the problems are so pervasive and the quality is so low that Ms. Pierce is seriously considering requesting a replacement program.

Components
Ms. Pierce notes several problems with homework assistance. The program should provide a quiet, safe atmosphere with program leaders who can answer questions and help students understand their assignments. Instead, untrained staffers feed homework answers to students. KPE also does not accommodate its schedule to the needs of K-1 pupils. Coordinators schedule these students for a homework hour at the end of the afternoon, which teachers say is too long for what they assign and taxes student concentration. The move also goes against Board policy. Ms. Pierce believes this is one example of KPE’s design failures.

Ms. Pierce did not describe academic enrichment offerings, except to mention a mobile computer lab, which either is in operation now, or expected soon. She wants hands-on activities and projects that combine academic enrichment with music and drama.

KPE does not offer skill development during sports and athletics, nor do staffers teach the rules and strategies of games children play at recess. Ms. Pierce wants the ASP to focus on these recess games as well as standard sports. She also wants intramural competition, which she believes would motivate students through appropriate physical education instruction.

In fine and performing arts, the program offers hip-hop dance, but Ms. Pierce believes this is inappropriate for early elementary children. She wants drama and culminating productions that draw in parents. She also wants to expose children to cultural experiences with an international orientation, such as Japanese brush art.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers have not said whether KPE participation has helped their students, but they are not happy with the homework assistance. Students need academic support in the afternoon, but do not get it now. Teachers do not work with KPE and there is no articulation.

Ms. Pierce said the school API dropped 24 points last year. She attributes this, in part, to the ASP’s deficiencies and to a period of instability when the school had several interim principals. KPE could help if it were to improve homework practices, provide training on behavior management, and encourage leaders to keep rooms tidy.

The only positive comment from teachers concerns the role of the ASP in keeping enrollment up. The school is losing families to other schools, and the promise of a good ASP can keep enrollment steady.
Parents value having a program at the school but have voiced complaints to teachers about incomplete homework, disorder and a lack of student security: KPE staffers have a poor system for controlling access and ensuring accountability at checkout time.

**Agency and District Support**
Ms. Pierce said both she and the parents are dissatisfied with the agency. She has contacted it to ask for changes, but she believes officials often begrudge her assistance. She said teachers have no voice in program management. They are willing to take an active role in selecting a new one. Ms. Pierce has had limited contact with Beyond the Bell personnel. She believes it needs closer ties with principals and schools.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
KPE needs to begin a wholesale overhaul of services at Playa del Rey. Besides the needs mentioned previously in training, staffers need to learn to align their activities with the day program. Only a concerted effort will overcome the negative impression this program has made on school administrators and faculty.
Case Study Observations  
**Kids Protectors of the Environment (KPE)**  
**Playa del Rey Elementary**

**Introduction**
This program takes place at Playa del Rey Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Culver City. Kids Protectors of the Environment (KPE) is the sponsor. The site coordinator is Ms. Gloria Montoya.

**Highlights**
The school’s outward appearance is very clean, neat, and organized. Ms. Montoya welcomes everyone and eagerly listens to positive and negative feedback from parents. She is always aware of her responsibilities to the entire ASP and to the children in it. She sets an example for everyone at her site.

Keeping a close relationship with staff and maintaining security for the children are among the highest priorities. The level of harmony and cooperation among staff members is evident.

The ASP is well organized. A written schedule describes activities and flyers give information about events. A typical day at this site begins with homework assistance, followed by indoor enrichment, and a snack period. The day finishes with sports activities.

**Homework and Academics**
Observers watched two homework sessions. In one, homework lasted 50 minutes and included students in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. Those who did not have homework completed work sheets, read, drew, and colored. Two students negotiated on how to pick books to read. They settled on each one going to a book box and selecting one. Every student in the room was busy. The children were friendly. Some children got upset because others did not want to share. The staff member interceded, teaching the youngsters what sharing means.

Ms. Montoya said the major challenge that this site faces is too much homework. She said the children need more time to complete it. Ms. Montoya also wants to extend staff members’ hours.

An observer watched seven fourth- and fifth-grade students using a computer lab and games to learn. These games kept the students animated and engaged. They covered various academic topics. “This is amazing!” one student said. Younger students joined the spectators.

Another game involved using bingo cards to play a rhyming game. The cards contained images such as a pail, an egg, and a truck. The students called out words that rhymed with the pictures. Students stayed engaged the entire time. They cooperated and waited their turn. Staff members disciplined them somewhat, but the atmosphere remained serene. Nothing disrupted the game.

**Arts**
Observers watched students making Mother’s Day cards. Some students used colored paper. Other students made flowerpots for their mothers. This activity took place in a classroom that Ms. Montoya also uses as an office. The weather was rainy, but the students were warm and cozy. During one session, a girl kept competing with a boy for the teacher’s attention, clearly frustrating him. He said the teacher taught him to walk away when “she starts making trouble.”

As students worked on their creations, one mother came into the room and praised the children. They were happy to receive the recognition and positive reinforcement.
During another session, the students made collages. They looked through magazines and cut out photos that represented their lives and their hopes for the future. They called it a vision board. One girl said she wants a new bike, a new dollhouse, and an iPod. She said she was going to vision it, and it would come true.

During another observation, an observer noted students’ rowdiness. Several students appeared unfocused, frustrated, and ready to move to a different activity. “Some students were walking all over the place and are not concentrating on what they are doing,” the observer wrote. Once the staff member gathered the children to go outside for a drink of water and fresh air, they re-energized.

One observer watched students play “rock, paper, scissors” to decide who got items like pencils and crayons for a drawing activity. It was interesting to watch them solve their own problems without adult intervention. When asked who had taught them how to do this, they all eagerly said, “The teacher!”

**Sports and Games**

Observers watched a number of sports activities. They included handball, kickball, running, and water games. The students ran on a small, grassy field and played Toss the Balloon, Over and Under, Balloon Relay Race, all water games. Students enjoyed themselves and stayed cool in hot weather. Ms. Montoya said that was the last week of the program, so students would play most of the time. A group of first-through fifth-graders also played kickball. They yelled and chased each other and the ball.

An observer also watched students playing games on laptop computers in the library for an hour. The observer said the atmosphere was “nice and warm.” The students knew their way around the game and the computers. Each student got a container of CD games from which to choose. Students stayed engaged in part because they could switch games. Staff members continuously helped individually, pointing, explaining, and showing students how to play a game. The games were mostly academic in nature.

**Other Enrichment**

An observer watched older students outside with a staff member, helping to tidy up a messy area. After they finished, they talked about their work.

Ms. Montoya briefly talked about other enrichment activities she wants. These include more science activities like biology and more arts and crafts.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Students remained moderately engaged in activities. They seemed least engaged during homework assistance. They got more involved with sports activities.

During the observations, an atmosphere of camaraderie, excitement, learning, and teamwork abounded. The students seemed more involved with their tasks. Students generally stayed more engaged during the enrichment section than during the academic part of the program. It was difficult to assess whether this reflected a need to improve homework assistance or whether the approaching end of the school year was playing a role. There were times during which the students looked bored and did not stretch their mental abilities.

Success with classroom management was difficult to assess. There was little homework to observe. The staff seemed to engage with the students during enrichment activities. However, they may have benefited from additional training or interesting activities.
Discipline was minimal. Students were well mannered and showed respect for the staff. There was never a need to scold a student for disobeying. Staff members never had to raise their voices. The overall atmosphere was one of tranquility and organization.

Staff members cooperated with each other and worked well in teams. Students mirrored the staff. Every staff member knew the procedures and the expectations. Staffers seldom had to ask Ms. Montoya for direction.

**Staff**
The typical pay range for program leaders is $15.00 per hour. The security guard earns $12.00 per hour. Ms. Montoya said it is difficult to keep these positions filled. However, she later mentioned she has no recruiting challenges.

New staff members receive training on-site. They also attend a CPR class. Staffers also received some training in class management. But it appears Ms. Montoya delivers most training on the job.

**Material Resources**
The ASP has enough materials and equipment, except that Ms. Montoya wants more supplies for arts and crafts.

The availability of classroom space varied over the time of the observations. Sometimes, the ASP had enough classrooms. Others, it had only two. Ms. Montoya said the ASP has use of both the library and the computer lab.

Ms. Montoya said she talked about space issues with a director only two days before her interview, and this person complained that the students “were messy and it wasn’t being cleaned up after school.”

Ms. Montoya is satisfied with the appeal, quality, and quantity of the snacks provided. But she is only “50 percent satisfied” with the janitorial services. She wants the cleaning staff to do their jobs.

**Relationship with the School**
Ms. Montoya’s primary contact with the school is a director at the school. She said the relationship is good. They communicate daily via e-mail, phone, or in person. Typical concerns are security and space for the ASP. The ASP staff members talk with the teachers and leave them notes, and teachers reciprocate.

Staffers and teachers do not plan activities together. On occasion, they talk about special events. Teachers do not share CST and assessment scores with staffers. Ms. Montoya believes this is one reason why some students do not get the academic help they need.

Ms. Montoya noted the school changed some of the terms in its relationship with the ASP. This led to some disagreements, but she did not go into detail.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Parents and ASP staffers talk daily in person, via e-mail and by phone. Common concerns are scheduling and student progress. Ms. Montoya said the communication is strong, but could always improve. She said some parents have problems with some decisions and want everything in writing.

Ms. Montoya said the ASP has no relationship with community organizations or local businesses. Neither she nor her staff are familiar with the community.
Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The most significant aspect of the ASP’s relationship with its agency, as well as with Beyond the Bell, is the good communication. Ms. Montoya could not think of any weak points.

Attendance
Program leaders take attendance through a roster that students sign each day. When parents pick students up at the end of the day, they sign the same roster. Ms. Montoya is satisfied with the current method.

Ms. Montoya tries to keep the activities fun and interesting to minimize absences, increase attendance and recruit new students. She also ensures the snacks are healthy. The ASP has a long wait list with more than 100 students. When one student moves away, the next one on the list joins the program. The ASP has no competition from other programs at the school, and no events took place this year that interfered with attendance.

Safety and Security
Ms. Montoya is satisfied with student security and the security of ASP property at the school. She does not believe there is any need for improvements.

Conclusions and Comments
Ms. Montoya has worked at the ASP for a year. She is proud of the staff and the well-organized program. She has some ideas for changes, but did not elaborate. She said the relationship with the principal is “new,” but did not make clear when the principal arrived at the school.

This ASP’s enrichment component was of much higher quality than the homework and academic components. Ms. Montoya said students’ favorite activities are sports, arts and crafts, and computer games. She wants to add fitness, cooking, and drama classes. However, getting permission and support from the principal will pose a major challenge. Ms. Montoya does not see any significant problems with the ASP, and neither the staff nor the agency suggest any changes.
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<td>11133 Charnock Rd.</td>
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| Principal | Germaine England |

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<td>144 Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:djoseph@americascores.org">djoseph@americascores.org</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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| # ASP Students | 151 |
| Average Days of Attendance | 107 |
| % < 36 Days | 19% |
| % 36-71 Days | 9% |
| %72-107 Days | 15% |
| % > 107 Days | 58% |
| % of Capacity | 108% |

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<td>763</td>
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<tr>
<td>API – 2007</td>
<td>752</td>
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Ms. England is enthusiastic about L.A. Scores (LAS) at Charnock Road Elementary. “This is the one of the best ASPs I have ever worked with,” she said. “That includes L.A.’s Best and STAR in the past.” She is pleased with every element. Fully one-half of students at the school are either in the program or on the waiting list. She only wishes there were more technology and room for more students. She also believes a stronger connection with a neighboring elementary school might allow both to share coaches and build sports competitions. Dual pleas for “more technology and more capacity” appear several times during the interview.

The agency and the principal share a philosophy about ASPs: they should provide nutrition, supervision, assistance with homework and a place for students to exercise. She believes ASPs should not tax pupils, even during testing periods. When asked last spring about support for test preparation, she answered in the negative. “No test preparation activities were provided,” she said. “This was by design, [because] we didn’t want to stress students more. I believe this had a positive effect on scores.”

Components

Homework assistance is running well, says Ms. England, because LAS employs program leaders with positive rapport who communicate regularly with teachers. The program has been at Charnock Road for six years and has two employees who split their time between the ASP and the day school. LAS coaches meet frequently with the teaching staff and work in the Literacy program. They also attend occasional site training sessions. Ms. England said homework help could improve with more technology. The school has few computers, and only one is available to students in the program.

Academic enrichment could improve with more poetry activities. Poetry is the focus of all enrichment at LAS. Ms. England wants to integrate sports with academic skills, but gave no examples.

LAS sports and athletics program promotes soccer exclusively, with daily drills, games, and both girls and boys teams. More excitement for the activities could be created in two ways, comments the principal: if the coaches could take the students to the park, “because teachers no longer have time to do this,” and if soccer personnel could be combined between Charnock Road and nearby Palms Elementary. Both schools have the same Agency. More competition and skill development would result. LAS and Youth Services work well with each other. The LAS coordinator watches over students from both programs. Ms. England wants to add badminton, tennis, and carry-over sports for variety.

Ms. England likes the fine and performing arts program, which consists of arts and crafts, and she would make no changes. Sometimes a visiting art teacher comes in with special projects. Ms. England wants to develop a community service dimension if possible. LAS is active in community recycling and beautification programs. This year, it received donations from Albertson’s, Vons, and Coffee Bean.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions

“Teachers and ASP staff have extensive contact with each other through meetings and written communications,” says Ms. England. The teachers value the program and say they believe it is more likely that students in LAS will complete their homework. They suggest two changes: more computers and increased enrollment.
Parents are happy with everything about the program except for its enormous waiting list. In special cases, Ms. England puts a student in the program to meet unusual family or child needs. The coordinator is a special education classroom assistant at a nearby school and attends SST meetings. Parents are very comfortable with the coordinator who is familiar with many parents and the surrounding community.

Agency and District Support
Ms. England reports an excellent relationship with the agency. “Any time I sneeze, the program directors are there,” she said. She recommends no changes except for more money to increase capacity. She has not contacted Beyond the Bell in years, she adds. Her only request is that they leave La Scores on her campus and not change Agencies.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
LA Scores, in the view of the principal, operates as an integral part of Charnock Road. She feels program leaders do a fine job and require no additional training either in class or behavior management. The program also serves another critical need in this District Westside area: “If it were not for the program, we would lose enrollment,” she says.
Case Study Observations
L.A. Scores (LAS)
Charnock Road Elementary School

Introduction
The ASP takes place at Charnock Road Elementary School (a K-5 school) located in west Los Angeles. L.A. Scores is the sponsor. Mr. Oscar Gonzales is the site coordinator.

Highlights
On the first visit, the observer sat at a table during snack time. Three girls asked him about his job, the other ASPs and activities other children do. After a few questions, one girl said, “This is a soccer program.”

Soccer is the defining component of the ASP. Children in second through fifth grades spend the first 75-90 minutes of each day in soccer drills or scrimmages. The younger children engage in free play in a well-equipped playground, to help prepare them for soccer. There is more staff for soccer than any other activity, and the focus on the sports results in grouping of students by gender, even for other activities.

In addition to soccer, activities related to writing (especially poetry) provide a secondary focus for the ASP.

Homework
The non-soccer part of the ASP is classroom time. It runs 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Field study occurred late in the school year, during and after standardized testing. On observation days, it was typical for few or none of the children to have homework. Mr. Gonzales said it is difficult to find something for students to do during classroom time after testing.

Activities comprise three groups: younger children (kindergarten and first grade), older girls (second through fifth grades), and older boys (second through fifth grades). Each group loses a coach when classroom time begins.

Homework time for the younger children is a combination of homework and academics, coloring, games, and videos. The kindergartners mainly color. Some put their heads down and nap. Kindergartners receive little to no academic enrichment during classroom time. Some first-graders do worksheets. Children often play with Sneak a Peek, a math game created by a local teacher. During an observation, Mr. Gonzales circulated and helped the children with this activity. He asked questions to jog their critical thinking and offered ways to work out the math problems. Meanwhile, some boys played Uno and some girls worked on crafts.

One day, the staff member told the children she would show cartoons for the last 45 minutes of the day if they quieted down. Another day, a staff member planned 7-Up, Hangman and other low-key games or a video during the final part of the day. When attendance dwindled, the staff moved the children out to the yard or near the gate.

The older girls have writing activities or reading when they have no homework. Observers saw very little homework. The girls sat by grade level and worked or chatted. A staff member circulated to help them with writing. There were some games of Hangman and making as many words as possible out of larger words. These games did not always work well in a group spanning four grade levels.

Classroom time for the older boys is similar to that for the girls. During observation sessions, there was little homework to do. One day, the boys took their time finding seats and opening their backpacks, but
then got into the routine. Staff members encouraged them, walked around checking on their activities, and frequently cautioned them about the noise. Another day, classroom time began early because some misbehaved in soccer. Two groups of eight boys competed in a teambuilding game, where they earned points by answering questions. When one team celebrated too much after a correct answer, a coach told them not to showboat. When homework time came, the boys at first ignored the coach when he told them to take out their materials. She had them put their heads down on their desks until she counted to 10. She did not try to help the boys with homework, but did say one boy had no homework and could help. Many boys sought his help. The coach stayed in the back of the room and organized materials. Boys without homework colored.

Two times when attendance was low, staffers mixed classroom time for girls and boys. On one of these occasions, the activity was board games and watching the soccer movie *Bend It Like Beckham*. An observer wrote:

> The movie has authenticity on a number of levels for these kids. The nuances of the game are not lost on the audience. The star is an Indian girl living in England and finding her way through soccer. Some of these children can relate to the immigrant experience. There are also social conflicts and growing pains, issues these kids will soon face.

**Academics**

The ASP also emphasizes writing. During a low attendance day, Mr. Gonzales led a group poetry-composing activity. He evidently enjoys poetry, and he encouraged the participants to talk about objects, activities, and feelings in descriptive language that helped them understand what poetry is.

In another poetry activity, a staff member asked the students to write five sentences about an animal. The boys talked among themselves about what they should write. One of the boys wrote, "A dog runs fast. A dog has legs. A dog is smart. A dog has a tail. A dog has eyes. A dog has teeth." The staff member read what he wrote and told the student that it was good. Another student wrote, "A dog, a dog, a dog, a dog, a dog." He showed it to the staff member, who told him he should write more. The student responded, "Ugh, you don't understand my poetry!" The group laughed. The staff did well keeping the boys on-task.

Mr. Gonzales said he wants to increase the relationship between classroom time and the daytime curriculum, such as Open Court. He does not know exactly how to put such an element in place. It would require a lot of familiarity with courses, teaching strategies, and classroom objectives.

**Sports and Recreation**

The centerpiece of each program day is the time between 3 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. This is soccer time for the older boys and girls. This is the most popular time of the day for the children. The site does not offer the older children any sports or physical activity other than soccer.

Observers viewed soccer drills and many scrimmages. For drills on one day, the girls were in two groups. One group worked on footwork, the other on passing the ball to each other. The staff member worked with both groups, giving them pointers and showing them how to pass or kick the ball. Another day, groups of girls participated in a series of relay races that developed their ball-handling skills. The coach told them to support their side and they cheered their teammates. The boys did drills in two competing teams. These drills involved running, dribbling, and passing. The boys’ coaches did much organizing between drills. There seemed to be as much waiting as drilling. They did not do much cheering for their teammates.

Scrimmages occurred on a regular basis, with separate groups for boys and girls. A blacktop area bounded by orange cones served as the field. Typically, the children were highly engaged. One or two staff
members played and coached. When the ball went out of bounds on the large playground, there could be a long wait while someone retrieved it. Observers wrote:

The instructor plays with them and reminds them to use the skills they were just practicing. He encourages the girls and high-fives them when they make a goal. The group is very engaged.

Everyone looks out for each other and the game is like a slow motion version of the boys’ game. One of the blacktop goals is broken, and the goalie, a fifth-grade girl, has to hold it up by placing her shoulders underneath the frame. It looks uncomfortable but she seems okay with it. It gives her something to do. The two coaches are also playing. A lot of time is used recovering the ball when it goes outside the field. As the 45-50-minute period ends, several girls have quit and sit on their book bags on the blacktop, close to the bungalow where homework will take place.

Despite the steady diet of this sport, no boy is hanging out uninvolved on the sidelines or choosing to sit and watch others. Two coaches are playing, and two older boys, fifth-graders are learning to be referees.

As the other girls were returning from the shade to the blacktop, one sat at a lunch table, crying and rummaging through her backpack. Mr. Gonzales came over to talk with her and she said another girl told her that she could not be captain tomorrow. He told her that she would be captain. She stopped crying and went out with the other girls.

While the older children played soccer, the younger ones played in the school’s kindergarten playground. The area has a cushioned, rubber surface under a large and modern jungle gym. Many children climbed on this apparatus, while others jumped rope, made up games, and/or played with balls. Some sat around the edges of the playground. Most of the children were energetic. The area was filled with the sounds of active play and happy children.

Even within the playground activities, soccer was a part of the children’s experience. For example, children threw a soccer ball around and a coach told them, “Throw it over your head, like in soccer.” A coach at the jump rope told one of the children that “jumping strengthens your ankles and that will help when you play soccer tomorrow.”

**Other Enrichment**

During the observation period, the ASP offered no enrichment activities other than soccer for the older children and recreational play for the younger children. A possible exception might be the poetry activities during classroom time. Observers only viewed one other activity. There was a snow cone party for the children on the last day of school. Mr. Gonzales offered this event as something special for children who stayed after school while the rest went home early.

Mr. Gonzales said art and music teachers have done short-term residencies at the ASP in the past. Last year, a music teacher came for several weeks and, together, she and the children made songs with lyrics taken from their poetry.

Mr. Gonzales wants more learning field trips and to have a bus at his disposal to take the kids around Los Angeles. He said there is a lot to see and they need more exposure to art and cultural events.
Engagement and Classroom Management

Children’s engagement in the ASP varied during observations. There was a high level of engagement during soccer games and physical recreation. Engagement was not as high during soccer drills. Classroom time exhibited a moderate level of engagement. The children often did things other than homework, reading, or writing. Although there were few children with homework, the alternative activities did not seem that engaging to the children.

The first 30 minutes of the ASP are for snack time at covered lunch tables. The noise level is usually high. During observations, children also played, ran, and yelled, spreading across the campus. Staff members had to yell and repeat themselves. An observer wrote:

   Lots of running around, considerable disorder, lack of regard for the supervisors and a disturbing potential for minor disasters such as scuffles and accidents. This is possibly [one of] the noisiest and least organized snack periods I have observed.

Classroom management techniques are common, especially at times when the children are not involved in physical activity. Staff members often instill order by stating a desired outcome and how long the children have to comply, then counting down to zero. This seems to work well.

The leader for the younger children effectively uses a rhyme of “one, two, three, quiet as can be” to gain the children’s attention and quiet. Other techniques, such as having the children put their heads down or telling the children to quiet down every few minutes, seem less positive.

Observers saw the extremes of staff members’ success in engaging students with the younger children. A jump rope activity was a model after-school activity. With one coach or two directly engaged, the children had physical activity, practiced counting and letters of the alphabet, and sang together. Even the children who waited their turn were deeply engaged in a positive way.

On another day, an observer wrote:

   Between the end of snack and the beginning of the first activity, a staff member led a K-1 group of about 30 students to the concrete area beneath an overhead arcade. She told them to sit and then gave them a nearly 10-minute lecture about playing with toys or bringing food and drinks as they stand in line. She goes on and on about the evils of the activities. Of course, the attention level is extremely low.

Staff

The staff at this site consists of Mr. Gonzales and seven coaches. The coaches start each day at 3 p.m. On any day, about half the staff work until 6 p.m. and the other half works until 4:30 p.m. Snack time starts at 2:30 p.m., leaving Mr. Gonzales responsible for the children until 3 p.m. Mr. Gonzales does not know the coaches’ pay rate. He describes himself only as “salaried.”

Formal training is limited. The agency provides a two-day training in late summer, one day focused on writing and the other day on soccer and coaching. Staffers also attend the safety training provided by Beyond the Bell. They receive no formal training on classroom and behavior management, or on LAUSD curricula and homework. He said staffers would most benefit from classroom management, behavior management, and identifying children with special needs. Mr. Gonzales also receives a few hours of additional training at infrequent meetings.
The principal source of training has been Mr. Gonzales. Drawing on his experience as a classroom aide and site coordinator at other ASPs, he has worked with staff on how to interact with elementary children.

Mr. Gonzales is happy with homework assistance. The kids are in a routine and very cooperative about doing their homework. Also, one coach is a teaching assistant and another, a classroom aide. Both are familiar with homework help.

Mr. Gonzales is happy with the ASP’s access to substitutes, which the agency provides. Because of the limited scope of programming, there has been little need for specialized staff members.

**Material Resources**

The ASP has three classrooms, one for each group, which it uses for homework assistance. Although there are more than 20 children in the groups at the beginning of the day, many parents have picked up their children by the time the groups go to their classrooms. Mr. Gonzales said he is very happy with the space allocation.

He said the ASP does not use the school’s library or computer lab, but there is a computer in the room that houses his office, and sometimes the kids play games on it. There are reference materials and dictionaries available in all three rooms, as well as leisure reading books. Mr. Gonzales has not seen a need to increase classroom space or change locations. The rooms are right on the blacktop and very convenient to the groups. The ASP once used an art room. Pictures the children produced are on the walls of a current classroom. There are also essays written by the students.

Mr. Gonzales is happy with the cleanliness of the school and encourages coaches to leave rooms cleaner than when they arrived. He has also spoken with the Youth Services (YS) about keeping trash off the field.

Mr. Gonzales is less than satisfied with the snacks. He said the kids do not like the peanut butter pretzels and they never get fruit. They get milk and juice, and they like the banana bread. The agency gives them a snack in the late afternoon called a “chewy bar” and another type of more popular pretzel. The agency gives the ASP the materials and equipment it needs.

**Relationship with the School**

The ASP’s primary contact with the school is the principal. Mr. Gonzales said they have a good relationship. He said they talk face-to-face at least once a week about schedules, facilities, events, and occasionally, individual children. The principal also meets with him at the beginning of the year to discuss ASP goals. Occasionally, they leave a note for each other in the mailbox. Mr. Gonzales talks to the school’s literacy coach about homework and poetry activities, and about his idea that the ASP should align its classroom activities with the daytime curriculum.

Mr. Gonzales said there is very little communication with the teachers, except at the beginning of the year, to acquaint them with the ASP. The teachers do ask Mr. Gonzales to send notes home and talk to parents when they cannot reach them. The ASP does no joint planning with the teachers and the school does not share the children’s test or assessment scores.

Mr. Gonzales is happy with the autonomy he has to run his program. He has the support and trust of the principal, and nobody looking over his shoulder. He keeps the principal aware.
Relationships with Parents and the Community
Mr. Gonzales said the ASP has a close connection with families in the community. Several coaches live near the school. One even walks to work. Mr. Gonzales knows the families through his long experience as a coach and teacher’s aide in the area. He said the families are all low-income, bilingual, Hispanic, African-American and, increasingly, middle-eastern. He talks with parents at sign-out time and via cell phone. He has had to address negative behavior three or four times this year. He also sends letters and flyers home to alert parents of special schedules and events.

Mr. Gonzales said parents strongly support the ASP. At a recent potluck, parents contributed a large amount of food and time. He complains about parents who have someone else pick up their child. He does not believe this helps the ASP.

The ASP has received donations of soccer equipment and uniforms. Otherwise, Mr. Gonzales said there is no relationship with local businesses or community organizations.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
Mr. Gonzales described positive but limited relationships with the agency and Beyond the Bell. He is happy with the agency support. He has the key to their offices, and they do the payroll on time. He does not believe Beyond the Bell has sent observers to his ASP, so he cannot speak to a relationship with the organization. He said his ASP has had no conflicts with Youth Services (YS).

Attendance
By the end of the school year, only the kindergarten has a wait list. During the year, seven children joined the program from a wait list of 17. Three families moved and four children just stopped coming to the ASP. Mr. Gonzales believes making LAS the most attractive program possible is the best way to ensure strong attendance. He feels that the ASP should listen to the kids to determine what to offer.

Activities planned around the students’, families’, and community interest in soccer keep interest up, Mr. Gonzales said. Attendance grew for a soccer clinic put on by the National Women’s Soccer Team. Every participant has a soccer ball, shoes, and a uniform donated by the Los Angeles Galaxy and Chivas professional soccer teams. LAS has a cooperative relationship with YS, even though both compete for students.

Safety and Security
Mr. Gonzales said he is satisfied with the security for both the children and property. The ASP has a person in charge of sign-in who sits at the only open gate. She supports both LAS and YS. He said she has “a good system for keeping track of the kids.”

Observers indicate good supervision. Safety is as good as can be expected of children who play soccer on blacktop. Still, there were times when more aggressive safety measures could help. The children spend up to 90 minutes each afternoon in vigorous exercise on a blacktop playground without the benefit of any sun protection or readily available water. (A coach did not hesitate, though, when a boy asked to go get a drink.)

One drill involved pairs of boys competing by running after a soccer ball and attempting to pass it back to their own team. About half the time, one of the boys went down. They have no knee pads or hand protection. To reduce the pushing that seemed to come naturally to the boys, coaches repeatedly recommend that they pass with their hands in their pockets. Should a boy have trip, he might sustain serious injury.
Conclusions and Comments
LAS provides a very strong soccer program. The children enjoy soccer and develop strong skills. Staff members provide close supervision and positive coaching. The site is well staffed during soccer time.

In addition to soccer activities, the ASP features poetry and math games and an energetic playtime for younger children. Relationships with the principal and parents are positive.

By the time of the observations, the school had largely ceased assigning homework for the year. The data were not adequate to judge homework assistance quality. Growth areas for the ASP include supervision during snack time, classroom management in some contexts, alternative activities for children without homework, and some aspects of safety on the soccer field.

Ultimately, the ASP model is its greatest strength and major limitation. Children have become skilled soccer players and they enjoy the game. They are safe and supervised while playing. Because of the secondary focus on poetry, many children are comfortable with the use of language. The ASP has been successful in fulfilling its goals. On the other hand, the narrow focus limits the experiences available to the children. Opportunities for enrichment in math, science, social studies, music, drama, dance, crafts, computers, non-competitive physical activity, and sports other than soccer do not exist.

ASP goals also reflect some limitations. Mr. Gonzales wants to add sections that align with the school’s curriculum, field trips to local sights, and more exposure to arts and culture His vision would increase the focus on learning and enrichment, consequently increasing the ASP’s similarity to other ASPs in the area.
## School Site Profile

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<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Atwater Elementary School</th>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>3271 Silver Lake Boulevard</td>
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<td></td>
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### Principal
Karen Sulahian

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>324</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.9% Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.5% Filipino</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.9% White</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5% Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.3% Black</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 47.2% |
| Total: 153 |
| 134 Spanish |
| 12 Pilipino |
| 4 Other |
| 2 Cantonese |
| 1 Armenian |

## After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>Learning For Life</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greg Salce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>greg.salce@learning for lifela.info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-250-1131</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th># ASP Students</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>%72-107 Days</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>77%</td>
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</table>

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 731 |
| API – 2007 | 723 |
In the interview, Ms. Sulahian said she is content and positive about Atwater’s ASP, Learning For Life (LFL). She said LFL reflects her philosophy about what an AFP should provide: (1) a safe, nurturing, controlled program conducted by veteran community members; (2) a series of pleasant but unremarkable activities that do not over-tax children, many of whom have been on campus for seven before the ASP begins; (3) a format that runs itself, freeing her from the burden of direct involvement with LFL issues; and (4) strong communication between the principal, the day school staff, the parents and the ASP leaders, reinforced through a trustworthy full-time site coordinator and Atwater campus aide. Ms. Sulahian addresses minor problems as necessary and suggest several improvements but her view that LFL is an integral part of Atwater and that “all is well” is evident.

Components
Ms. Sulahian considers homework assistance satisfactory. Priorities for leaders are maintaining a quiet, orderly place where cooperation and concentration on assignments is the rule. Ms. Sulahian believes LFL staffers are all capable managers of the students and she does not believe they need additional training beyond that given by LFL. As for site-provided training, she said if she were required to offer, for example, a twice-yearly session on how to conduct successful homework help for LFL leaders, she would certainly do this. However, in the absence of directives to this effect, she says she does not have the time to do it on her own. She believes successful homework help is a combination of “them and us,” and the school sets the tone. She finds LFL staff caring and able and believes that, because they are all from the immediate community, homework time goes well.

There are limited opportunities for academic enrichment, and Ms. Sulahian is not acquainted with the day-to-day offerings. These classes meet after homework time and are developed by LFL. The leaders have had varying degrees of success in conducting enrichment activities, which are contained in a large binder. For example, there are science activities and discussion guides for topics such as “Why Is Family Important?” Also, a popular cooking class funded by Atwater Neighborhood Council, is coordinated through LFL. More classes of this nature would be welcome, she says.

Specific fine and performing arts classes are not a part of the ASP’s offerings with the exception of routine coloring, drawing and the making of seasonal cards and crafts. Ms. Sulahian says truly relevant art or music classes would require much more training than that received by LFL program leaders. She also believes that high-level instruction at this time of day, to already tired children, might tax them too much.

Ms. Sulahian believes that ASP sports and athletics should be similar to recess: more of a break in the afternoon that gives children an opportunity to run and play, rather than organized games or supervised physical activity. Ms. Sulahian believes Youth Services, which runs a sound, popular program, should be the entity to develop athletic skills and to conduct competitions and tournaments, not LFL.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers have said they wish LFL were better connected with school curriculum and instructional objectives. Feedback indicates school staff like LFL and use the coordinator as a contact to notify leaders that certain children require additional help or encouragement.
Parents are very happy with the three hours of supervised activities, with the homework help and with the fact that safety procedures are reinforced every day. The popularity of the program is an occasional problem. The coordinator does not deal well with “expelling” from the program, children who are excessively absent or who present serious behavior problems. But there is a long waiting list and frequent inquiries from parents about program openings. Ms. Sulahian has had no complaints from either the teaching staff or the parents about LFL.

Agency and District Support
Ms. Sulahian reports an excellent relationship with agency personnel. The director visits frequently and is responsive, working with her on minor issues. Although she does not believe she has had any influence on Beyond the Bell policies, she knows whom to call if problems arise. She could not comment on the effectiveness of these policies because she has had no need to ask for assistance or intervention.

Additional Comments and Recommendations
The interview revealed a cooperative relationship between Atwater and LFL. Both entities’ employees and administrators are satisfied with the organization and goals of LFL. They do not see the program as a time or place for high-level academic demands, but they do consider LFL a resource for Atwater children.

In conferences involving pupils with difficulties, teachers recommend their participation in LFL. Ms. Sulahian believes all participants benefit socially and emotionally from time spent in LFL. This view fits in with a prevailing belief among elementary educators in the importance of programs and events that reinforce growing up, getting along and maturing with the guidance of caring adults.
Case Study Observations
Learning For Life (LFL)
Atwater Elementary

Introduction
This program takes place at Atwater Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Atwater Village, an enclave of small, single-family homes from the 1940s located between Glendale and Griffith Park. Learning for Life (LFL) is the sponsor and Esperanza Meza is the site coordinator.

Highlights
Learning for Life at Atwater Elementary is a reflection of the surrounding community: a close-knit, friendly, and well-organized ASP where participants know program leaders who live in the immediate neighborhood and vice-versa. Safety and procedures are important. All staff maintain schedules, daily supervision, and sign-in and sign-out policies. Program leaders and the site coordinator have been with the program several years. Enrichment and supplemental exercises gives participants a variety of activities each month.

Three dedicated bungalow classrooms provide the space needed to plan and execute long-term projects where children can see their work on display and can add to it as their interest and experience grows. Staffing issues this year have presented challenges for the site coordinator.

Homework
Homework help is the first activity every day except Friday. Participants assemble in three groups: K-1; second- and third-graders; and fourth-graders. There are only a handful of fifth-graders. Several fifth-grade girls work somewhat independently, completing homework on their own and then serving as tutors for lower grades.

Each group has a program leader who remains with it for the length of the program each day, accompanying the children to snack, supervising outdoor games, offering enrichment activities, and conducting homework help.

Homework tends to be significantly influenced by the day of the week, the weather, fluctuating staff, school events, and numerous other distractions. Observers report a wide variety of interactions between children and program leaders during this initial hour, from frequent positive activities to extended periods of noise and inattention. A few comments follow:

The combination second- and third-grade homework group have a dedicated classroom, as do the K-1st and 4th graders. The room is colorful with student work, rules, and reminders. Everyone has a homework assignment, and half-way through the hour, three fifth-graders arrive to assist as tutors.

A young man working on his teaching credential supervises the fourth-grade group. He has adequate control, although there is a lot of activity in the room. He puts math problems on the white board for pupils to come up and solve. He is popular, upbeat, and a good role model.

Homework time for 17 third- and fourth-grade students: five girls sat at a round table eating ice cream cones. Five boys were playing with Yu-Gi-Oh! cards. Only three third-grade students had homework. They completed sentences related to a temperature graph.
When the staff asked about the Spring Fling, the dialogue became loud and the three students doing homework became distracted. One left his seat.

The staff member tried to quiet the students down. He told the students he had to cover the class next door, but sent a student to deliver cut-out gingerbread men instead. He was waiting for the substitute, who arrived at 3:00 p.m. During my first visit, this staff person was also covering two classes in separate bungalows.

The students worked independently on their individual homework packets; no help was offered by the staff. The staff asked the group if the site coordinator had checked their homework earlier. If they answered yes, she drew a smiley face next to their name on the dry erase board. She never moved from her seat.

Perhaps because of the heat, the week of testing, the nearness of year’s end, or because it is the eighth month of a casual relationship with the program leader, these fourth- and fifth-grade boys and girls are rowdy and restless. They speak out of turn, fail to raise their hands, and are not highly focused on homework. It is hard work keeping them under control.

The second- and third-grade grade group is doing homework in a reasonably quiet and organized fashion. They are cooperative and receive help when they ask. At the end of the session, a fifth-grade teacher’s assistant comes in to help. The leader is also the coordinator who will likely be handling this group until the year is over. Nobody is going to be hired and trained with four weeks left of the year.

The K-1 homework group presented ongoing difficulties reported on multiple visits by data collectors. The group was large and, in the very warm weather of May, it was difficult for students to settle down and keep engaged in either homework or games and coloring. Keeping their attention after eight hours on campus took constant cautions and reminders. Observers also noted that routine tasks such as organizing students into seating groups took fifteen minutes or more, and this appeared intentional. All homework sections were frequently interrupted by parents coming to sign out and collect their children, sometimes as early as 3 p.m.

According to the site coordinator, program leaders know what homework is assigned because the children carry homework packets. However, observers did not report efforts by program leaders to routinely scrutinize these packets. Direct assistance with homework through walking around the bungalow and observing assignments, having students sit in groups corresponding to their classroom teachers, asking for information about assigned homework, etc., did not occur.

There were comments, however, about the positive support from the fifth-grade tutors.

The coordinator made no suggestions for changing the homework hour. She did not consider this activity a challenge for her staff. “We check homework every day and help the students do their homework and explain the questions,” she said. “We have excellent communication with the teachers regarding homework.”

Enrichment and Supplemental Academics Activities

An orderly snack period followed homework. Then there was an organized restroom break and outdoor games. Beginning about 4:30 p.m., the students return to the bungalows with their program leader for enrichment and supplemental academic activities, unless students needed more time for homework.
By far, the most successful academic activity witnessed by observers was the ongoing exercise to learn about, draw, and ultimately place internal organs on a paper outline of the actual bodies of the second- and third-graders. Earlier in the year, each student stood in front of a length of butcher paper while a program leader drew an outline of his or her body. Later, that student cut it out and the leader pinned it to the bulletin board. By May, all paper bodies had the brain, the heart, and a set of pink lungs in place. Students discussed the function and location of these organs. During early May, the stomach was introduced. One observed noted:

Since my last visit, the life-sized cut-outs of the children’s bodies tacked up around the room have gained another internal organ. The leader tells me the class is very anxious to add a bladder. “there is high interest,” she says, smiling. She must be saving the bladder for next week. She will take digital pictures of these cut-outs and send them home for summer.

Other well-intended academic enrichment exercises presented challenges for the staff. Observers reported on public speaking activities for the fourth- and fifth-graders. There was much enthusiasm but questionable expertise on the part of the leader. One observer said The staff was not skilled in public speaking techniques like using eye contact and correct English sentence structure.

In comments about the Fun Friday auction, an observer noted student confusion. LFL students earn pretend money at the rate of $5.00 day for homework completion and good listening. The observer saw problems in banking the money and understanding the auction concept

Students used the money earned throughout the week to purchase goodies such as pencil erasers and stickers. Two students who did not grasp the concept kept bidding lower. Their peers tried to explain the math involved in successful bidding, but they were still lost.

Another difficulty, this time with managing negative behavior, was documented during a skit activity:

The students performed two very short skits, followed by a discussion about the characters. “Were they being a good friend?” They were not. The boys in the second skit refused to let another boy play with them after he asked several times.

The possibility that students would gain skill or insight through these varied exercises was often frustrated by a lack of student preparation and program leader inexperience, despite the earnest efforts of staff to conduct these events.

Learning For Life provides program leaders with a binder of class discussion topics. Data collectors reported observing two such discussions during the next to last week of the school year. Both exercises reflected a need for additional training in leading group discussions. From one observer:

The leader is trying hard during the enrichment hour to lead a meaningful discussion with the second- and third-graders on the importance of family, a lesson provided by her agency. It is not working well. She is determined to extract from these hot, tired, and unruly students what the word importance means…she might have had more success if she talked about what a family is, what it does, and what these little pupils like about and need from their families. I am wondering if the agency has run out of materials for arts and crafts, games, etc., and is expecting the leaders to tap dance with group discussions for the rest of the year.
A similar experience was noted during the observation of a discussion on instant gratification:

Leading a thoughtful discussion at 4:45 p.m. on a hot afternoon with fourth- and fifth-graders would test the management skills of any teacher. Most would have the background to realize this is not the time nor place…. There is simultaneous shouting and challenging of others’ responses, and endless minor skirmishes to get the attention of the leader, but mostly of the other students. One result is the reinforcement of bad behavior unacceptable during the regular day, but commonplace after school. … This group has come to have diminished respect for the eager young man who is asked to do more than he is trained or capable of. He is caring and excellent at organizing outdoor games.

**Arts**

Art activities supported other events, not as separate learning or exploratory opportunities. Observers watched the preparation of Mother’s Day cards by all age groups, a hand print project where all students contributed to a paper circle of adjoining hands around the room, a sea life artwork activity as a follow up to a field trip to the Long Beach Aquarium, and basic, daily coloring exercises for the kindergarten students, which often replaced homework. On very few days did the kindergarten students have actual homework. Coloring was also a part of the ongoing science lesson on internal organs, and a mainstay fill-in when other activities ended early or unsuccessfully. According to the coordinator, arts and crafts are the activities the students like best.

**Sports and Games**

Each day following the snack break, which is well-run, organized, predictable, and welcome after an hour of homework, outdoor games are scheduled. The activities are not formal or highly structured, and include time on the jungle gym apparatus for lower primary, soccer games, volleyball, basketball, and for some, the chance to run around with friends. Each program leader watches his own group, sometimes with the help of the Youth Services staff, who have an impressive number of young people out on the blacktop for most of the afternoon. One observer noted:

The second- and fifth-graders were playing on the slide, monkey bars, and walking on the bridge. Some were sitting on the soft foam-covered ground under the slide set, playing Yu-Gi-Oh! cards. Two students serenaded us with their plastic flutes. They played ‘Ode to Joy’ and another song, using…flute music books. There were two supervisors on the playground. Another group was playing soccer. The flute players were great!

This outdoor time is reported as very orderly and well-supervised, a friendly period of time that permits the students to interact positively with companions and be free for a spell from the scrutiny or demands of teachers, program leaders, coordinators, parents, and others. Some observer comments:

This is the activity period after the snack and before formal enrichment…. The site makes sure all participants have sufficient outdoor time to burn off energy. When it comes time to move on, both the pupils and leaders move slowly; it has been extremely hot. Before they make the trek across the field…they all stop at the restrooms by group for a supervised break. Program personnel look after safety and security details in a conscientious manner both times I have visited.

This was free play time for the first graders. They are playing on the slide set…their parents sat on the bench and watched the children play. Some of the parents spoke with the coordinator.
On their way to the bungalows, the second-grade group has made a “conga line” behind the leader and is having a little fun with her. She enjoys the game.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Generally, there were three levels of student engagement: (1) Good attention and engagement during *some* homework sections, often at the beginning of popular enrichment activities before the interest wanes, or when the leader is unable to maintain group intensity; (2) a cooperative but passive state of low engagement where students follow directions, participate at a rote or routine level without gaining new information. This is reported frequently when fatigue or boredom sets in during repetitive activities or exercises not understood by the students, or when, for a variety of reasons, they visibly disconnect from their peers and the leaders; and (3) no intellectual engagement at all with some homework or other classroom activities.

Order inside the bungalows is maintained through a combination of established rapport, reinforced routines, frequent reminders, occasional banishment to another leader’s room for misbehavior, through isolating students who disrupt within the room, and by the oft-heard raising of leaders’ voices to quiet down, sit down, get to work, return to your seat, etc. The coordinator knows the participants very well, as she sees them also during the day. From a parental view, her assumption of the second- and third-grade group because of a long term vacancy has resulted in a reasonably controlled and orderly classroom even with frequent distractions and short visits to other rooms. Her class management is the best available within this friendly, companionable program.

Other leaders have less success in consistently maintaining appropriate levels of engagement, order, and calm. They struggle at times to create the atmosphere within their rooms to support positive interaction between students, or to provide a time when academic growth might take place, all the while evidencing their enjoyment in working with children even if they cannot routinely keep them in total control. One observer reports:

> The leader-in-charge is training to be a teacher. I hope he has learned from this year the energy, planning and constant monitoring needed to keep older elementary pupils…within acceptable behavior bounds. He does not ask for quiet before he speaks and he answers or recognizes students who speak out of turn and dominate the noisy conversation.

The coordinator identifies in her interview that behavior and class management training would be helpful. Much is expected of these untrained but willing and caring leaders.

**Staff**

Atwater LFL staff earn $10.00 per hour and the coordinator earns $12.00 per hour to start. The coordinator, who has kept the program going smoothly despite a vacancy for several weeks, maintains that openings are not hard to fill. An observer describes the situation:

> The site coordinator semi-supervised this group. She was also supervising another group in a bungalow across from this unit. The door…was closed. I later learned in my interview that a staff person was fired last week and she was waiting for the substitute to show up. A new staff person was hired this week to replace someone else, but they were still one short. They are currently in the process of hiring someone to replace the terminated employee.

Another observer said:
Ms. Meza gave a talk about the importance of telling the truth. Someone had taken a picture from her box where she collects…students’ class pictures. Ms. Meza needs help. She needs reliable staff who are punctual, prepared, and organized, and who possess good group management skills.

Ms. Meza said:

Staffing was a problem this year. They were tardy, and one person was dismissed this week (she did not elaborate). Another one started yesterday. We have a ‘floater’ today. I want more responsible staff. I think the new one will work out well.

Substitutes provided by the agency are called floaters. The coordinator had nothing negative to say about their performance. Occasionally, the program uses parent volunteers to, for example, teach soccer. Fifth-grade tutors constitute a surprisingly important prop for this program during homework time, evidently relieving program leaders from the task of scrutinizing student work as the tutors help younger pupils in several ways. One observer noted:

These, mostly girls, are a true support to the program leaders who are dealing with as many as 28 students each. As they move around and assist, they are learning as much from their participation as the pupils learn from their help. When in a group together, fifth-graders can be a challenging level. This is a very positive method of taking advantage of their developing maturity.

Two days of training are provided by LFL, which focus on the agency theme of Learning for Life by stressing the lessons in the binder. Training also covers certain classroom situations and suggests rules and consequences.

**Material Resources**

LFL uses three dedicated bungalows, a luxury perhaps not fully appreciated by the staff. Not having to interfere with a day teacher’s materials, set-ups for the next day, or information on the black or white board frees the staff to engage in multi-day or multi-week activities, among other advantages. Having dedicated agency rooms also leads to messy work areas and habits by both leaders and students. Although the coordinator states that the rooms are cleaned every day, one observer reports:

The room is a fright, as are all three of the dedicated classrooms. Old work from months ago is on the walls. The desks are untidy and some are partially covered with poster paint. Each of the leaders makes some attempt during homework and enrichment hours to keep the room orderly, but all rooms need a thorough cleaning. I suspect the coordinator would do more to help this situation, but she has NO time between keeping everything going, getting the snack out, watching sign-out, and running the second- and third-grade group. It’s a stretch.

Other descriptions refer to the lack of organization in the rooms, the clutter, and the lack of a rug for lower elementary. Boxes of “stuff” and portable storage units are placed haphazardly around the rooms, contributing to a less-than-orderly appearance. Frequent turnover in staff contributes to a lack of ownership for the physical condition of the rooms.

The program does not use the library, and Ms. Meza says she has not requested nor does she feel a need for additional space. She has no personnel to teach computers. She could not think of any new or additional activities she would like to see. Despite reliance on the binder lessons during the last weeks of school, the coordinator shared in her interview that she had sufficient materials from the agency. The
snacks are apparently appreciated and not an issue. “We can request a change in the menu whenever we feel like it,” she said.

Relationship with the School
Interview responses reveal a positive view of the relationship between the day school and the Agency ASP. The coordinator’s primary day school contact is the principal and she says the relationship is very good. They communicate daily through face-to-face contact facilitated by the fact that the coordinator is a campus aide during the day. On occasion, the principal will write notes inquiring about the program or asking if there are needs, if she happens to miss seeing the coordinator during the day.

Communication with day school teachers is less frequent and takes place solely with the coordinator. She reports that if there is information from teachers needed by the ASP staff, she shares it herself. There are no jointly planned activities with the day school nor are standardized test scores made available.

“We are notified if students need help in reading or if their grades are dropping,” she said. There is no notation to indicate how this information is gathered or how it is shared. Still, the coordinator has said one of the strongest features of LFL’s connection with the school is “the relationship with the teachers regarding homework.” Each child is expected to maintain a daily calendar in the front of the homework packet.

No problems with the custodial staff were reported nor were there any suggestions for how support from janitorial services could improve.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Personal communication between the site coordinator and the parents was identified as a strong feature of the ASP. The coordinator says the parents are great. She says staff speak with them individually almost every day. They discuss behavior, homework, and related issues. She says the daily discussions are critical. “Parents tend to help the students more if you discuss homework issues,” she said. “Students are exempt from doing homework only if their parent writes a note stating that the parent will do homework with their child.”

There is no mention in the observation data collected to indicate a conflict with day school intervention programs which take place two or three afternoons each week for an hour after school. These classes keep participants from attending the first hour of ASP homework help. Perhaps the reference to freeing a given child from homework springs from children who complain they have to do their homework after intervention, when other children are involved in enrichment. Observations do include mention of children who are still doing homework as late as 4:40 p.m.

Some limited community involvement was mentioned. An unidentified donor gave items like a volleyball net to the program, the coordinator said. The coordinator also speaks to a strong relationship with the business community and community organizations “They say they like the program and they donate board games and candy to the kids,” she said. No additional specifics are provided.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The coordinator offers no feedback regarding this area. “I don’t have enough knowledge to answer this question,” she said. “I heard the name Beyond the Bell mentioned in one or two agency meetings.” The coordinator says her relationship with the agency is fine and it provides everything she needs.

Attendance
There is a roster for all the children assigned to each program leader. The staff initials the “in” column, and the parent initials the “out” column on this roster, finding the child wherever he/she happens to be when the parent arrives at the school. Observers mention the interruption to the enrichment and homework hour by constantly arriving parents. However, the program leaders like seeing the parents. It may be that the best communication takes place with those who collect children after 5:15 p.m. When the coordinator is not filling in for a missing leader, she has more time to talk with parents who arrive during enrichment and homework.

The coordinator takes rosters to the agency each month. She does not give any suggestions for changing this procedure. She adds that children attend regularly unless they are sick and offers no information about how to encourage more regular attendance. “The parents know the rules,” she says.

There is a waiting list of twelve pupils with a number assigned to each application. Filling vacancies, which does not happen often, is done with strict attention to first-come, first-served. Openings usually occur because families move out of the area. Little competition is mentioned as an issue for LFL; the coordinator says there are only two ASPs on site (the other may be Youth Services). Field trips and pizza parties tend to increase both average daily attendance and total hours, according to Ms. Meza.

**Safety and Security**

There are no problems with the security of the campus nor with the security of items or property in the dedicated classrooms. The gate at the front of the school is open until 4:30 p.m., as is a gate adjacent to the lunch area and close to a parking lot where parents enter. This is the primary pick-up site for students who remain on campus until the close of the program.

**Conclusions and Comments**

When asked if there was anything else the coordinator wanted the interviewer to know, she enthusiastically volunteered, “My kids are great!” This comment provides insight into one of the central features of Atwater LFL: the inclusive, family atmosphere one senses after spending time on campus. It’s not “THE kids are great,” but, “MY kids.” This type of caring connection goes a long way to create a program that parents trust and appreciate. The attention paid by LFL staff to procedures and safety is also evident from the data collected.

Several interviews touched on the issue of turnover and inconsistent staffing. It was cited again and again as a drawback to the success of the program, as a contributor to less-than-ideal student behavior, as a hindrance to delivering successful enrichment lessons and homework help, and as a significant drain on the coordinator.

The coordinator loves her charges and single-handedly manages to communicate this despite myriad difficulties created by marginal staff. However, she has been stretched thin. Her time would be better spent looking after the conditions of the rooms, talking with parents, talking with children, considering ways her program could develop and improve, designing more arts and crafts projects, or working with her agency to select and train capable new recruits. Should a more dependable staff be assembled, extensive initial and ongoing training would enhance the experience of program leaders as they work and become more skilled. Satisfaction with the after-school experience might also help retention. Higher salaries would definitely help.

Parent expectations for how their children spend these three hours appear to be in line with the structure and substance of this ASP Primarily, they want a safe, friendly, organized, and trustworthy site with a variety of activities. A more engaging experience for young people in enrichment and homework sections might be desirable. This would turn them into quality hours where the leader gets more involved by
walking around the room, by personally checking work, by preparing for lessons, and by working to establish consistent behavior standards that set the tone for classrooms, where higher levels of reinforcement or even learning can occur. Nevertheless, this seems to be a program that has many more positives than negatives affecting it.
# Site Profile

**Literacy, Arts, Culture, Education, and Recreation (LACER)**

**Bancroft Middle School**

*Source: LAUSD School Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site Profile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Site</strong> (location)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Hildreth</td>
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## School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>868</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td>82.1% Hispanic; 7.5% White, 10.4% All Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
<td>222 Spanish (92.5%); 6 Russian (2.5%); 12 All Others (5.0%)</td>
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## After-School Program Profile

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th><strong>LACER</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Ortiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:ortizlinda99@yahoo.com">ortizlinda99@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>323-957-6481</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># ASP Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Days of Attendance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>%72-107 Days</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 699 |
| API – 2007 | 689 |
Ms. Hindreth describes Bancroft’s ASP, Literacy, Arts, Culture, Education, and Recreation, not as an integral part of the school but as an “independent unit operating in a cooperative and supportive way.” One can see in her responses many examples of how LACER complements the life of the school and the uniqueness of the community.

Through activities and leadership, LACER addresses:

1. The social and emotional requirements of teens with features like a “common room” and caring leaders who acknowledge the value of connecting to young people;
2. The need for colorful, appealing, and contemporary activities to broaden student horizons;
3. Academic needs through homework help delivered in several locations; and
4. The need to build broader connections to local neighborhoods through field trips to local attractions and hiring staff from the community.

Ms. Hindreth knows the program has a loyal following, which she attributes to an active and engaging staff. Many LACER “graduates” return to reconnect with program leaders and volunteer their time.

Components

Homework assistance, which is optional, is delivered in three locations determined by the number of students, their needs, and by other scheduled activities. Students use the common room or the library, both with computers, or meet in a double bungalow. Ms. Hindreth wants attentive leaders who, in her view, do not require specialized training in LAUSD curricula, but need college-level experience to correct grammar and guide students’ thinking about assignments. Ms. Hindreth knows LACER is trying to improve homework help with a better communication system between the program and teachers.

Ms. Hindreth is pleased with academic enrichment offerings such as a chess club, Freschi films, a poetry “rap” group, computer instruction and field trips to museums, performances, and local attractions. Members of Bancroft’s classified staff lead the chess and computer classes.

Fine and Performing Arts offerings are impressive and particularly appropriate, as they are an extension of the Performing Arts Magnet program. Magnet and regular students have dance and drama classes during the day, but LACER also offers a music studio for CD production, a classical guitar class, and drum instruction.

The sports program is satisfactory, with routine sections flag football, soccer, and basketball. Coaches also draw pupils in with softball, rarely seen in ASPs. Youth Services works in concert with LACER, sponsoring intramural competitions, which Mrs. Hindreth likes. She also is pleased that the drill team gets extra practice and instruction in LACER. Ms. Hindreth did not see a need to significantly change any of these program components, but she wishes it were possible to offer gymnastics and to hire an “artist in residence” to upgrade drawing and painting opportunities. Overall, Mrs. Hindreth would like to see far more technology used in multiple capacities by LACER’s program leaders.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
The teaching staff at Bancroft supports LACER as an appealing, comfortable and safe place for students. The homework assistance helps teachers insist that participants complete homework assignments. When teachers finish work on individual websites, communication with LACER over homework issues will improve. Neither Ms. Hindreth nor the teachers have suggestions for improvement.

Parents have few complaints about LACER’s programs and activities, and they particularly like the homework assistance. Occasionally, they express concern about campus safety during ASP time: LACER pupils sign in and out, but Youth Services allows pupils to come and go at will, projecting an atmosphere of informality and weak supervision.

Agency and District Support
ASP representatives meet each month with the administration. LACER agency staffers are responsive, often on campus and ask the principal for input. There is strong communication; no issues have required agency involvement. Ms. Hindreth is content with local and regional LACER staff and with the program; she expressed no ideas for improved management. There has also been no need for Beyond the Bell interventions. Mrs. Hindreth was unable to identify specific Beyond the Bell employees.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
LACER is connected to the surrounding community in several ways: It enjoys support from *The House of Blues* as a venue for guitar performances; program leaders work both at LACER and at local firms; and the program has received modest donations. And while LACER reflects the energy of Hollywood, surrounded as it is by sound stages and digital imaging labs, it is also a quiet haven for participants. Bancroft’s population is diverse in language, ethnicity and economic status. For some students, the program is more than just a place to enjoy after school -- it serves as a refuge from chaotic neighborhoods. Mrs. Hindreth hopes the program will continue.
Case Study Observations
Literacy, Arts, Culture, Education and Recreation (LACER)
Bancroft Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Bancroft Middle School (a 6-8 school) in Los Angeles. Literacy, Arts, Culture, Education and Recreation (LACER) is the sponsor. Mr. Ramiro Segovia is the site coordinator.

Highlights
LACER is a popular, busy ASP operating in an area of Los Angeles that is just blocks from Hollywood. Sound stages and multiple-unit housing, surround this urban school, and congestion is a daily problem in the community. The program’s greatest strength is its site director and program leaders, who reflect the efforts of the agency to deliver quality. They put together a schedule of activities that responds both to the needs and interests of middle school students.

LACER staffers are committed to young people regardless of format or venue, whether it’s doing homework in a classroom, producing music in a homemade recording studio, playing a baseball game on the blacktop, or talking informally in the common meeting room. The site director is eager to offer “anything…through which [the students] can establish a relationship with program leaders.” It is clear that students who choose this ASP are a part of the group, feel valued, and appreciate the flexibility and energy put forth by staff.

The program’s daily opening activity in the common room is an excellent mechanism to connect with students. An observer noted: LACER…starts with an ‘opening ceremony’ before the snack, to go over the day’s events, to recognize special people and activities, to alert participants to the absence of staff, and to set the tone. The students come in with high energy, right from their classes, and sign up for the ASP events on a sheet by the door. Then they look for friends…and sit down noisily.

This practice recognizes preteen students’ need to find their place in a middle school environment with support, safety, friendship, interesting activities, and the chance to exchange chat and voice ideas.

Homework
Homework assistance takes place every day, including days when other activities might interfere. For example, an annual beach trip drew almost 50 percent of the students away from events on campus, but that did not mean cancellation of these. On days with no interruptions, homework occurs in two or three locations: a double bungalow, a section of the library, and at computers or work areas in the common room.

This altering of the physical setting may be one way the staff responds to the ebb and flow of homework numbers. There is always some area where students can get help with homework. One observer notes:

After the opening meeting, several rectangular tables replaced chairs. Today, because the numbers were low, only two tables were needed . . . the program leader sat at one of the tables and helped several girls with an English assignment. She was interested and asked questions to help the girls get through the work.

The common room also houses eight new computers with large monitors. These are popular for academic support activities and homework.
Kids sit, some two in a chair, and...look at news items, today on the fire at Universal Studio a few days ago. They are very adept at...getting the information they need. Some boys had to do homework projects on the computers. Others were...searching for topics/subjects on the Internet as part of improving their research skills.

LACER students can use the library when all the computers are taken and the common room is full. That doesn’t happen often with ASPs.

A section of the library is used for homework when students need...computers or when they wish to be with friends with a common assignment from the same class. All computers are busy today with these students; others who have finished are allowed to play Scrabble. If students elect to participate in the homework club, they must either have an assignment or use computers for class work. [They should] understand that only word games are permitted. . . . The kids on the computers have few questions and are finishing reports due next week.

The observer notes that two tutors work with the students, one of whom is in charge of limiting library access to only LACER students. On probably the last viable day for homework, the observer monitored homework assistance in the bungalows. The observer watched about twenty four students of mixed grade levels working in adjoining rooms:

Most have some kind of an assignment or are at least work with notebooks... . A few have books to read. It is a friendly and companionable group with two program leaders available... . One is walking around and checking ...the other greets students as they enter. Everyone needs to be engaged in helping, working or reading.

The site coordinator said the program recently hired a homework “specialist” (a former teacher) who increased productivity during homework time by making this hour less structured and being there to show students how to approach their homework. Bringing this new staff member aboard is a good example of how the agency and the site coordinator explore ways to enhance homework time and make the hour productive.

The site coordinator believes the homework component works well, although not many students have much homework at this time of year. She hopes the specialist will improve attendance and focus on this component. Staffers sit together kids with similar assignments, as well as eighth-graders with sixth-graders, so they can share and help each other. Homework assistance is not a mandatory activity at LACER, and other academic activities can substitute for it.

**Academics**

LACER does not offer a lot of academic support. Three courses bear mentioning, however: : the daily computer classes, a specialized twice-weekly gathering called Knowledge Breakers, and City Life, an impressive field trip program.

Besides homework assistance, the common room computers serve a daily research skills class led by an experienced program leader. Observers noted:

The computer teacher has...interesting searches,[like] where is a certain university, is it noted for anything special, how much does four years cost, etc., or where is Kenya and other questions about geography, topography, population, economics, and so forth.
The instructor moves from unit to unit to see how the two-person teams are doing. Questions today require teams to survey several selected colleges to see how many have graduate schools in medicine and law, how many professors have PHD’s, how many students are there in the freshman class. These questions take several layers of searching.”

During the last two weeks of the semester, research skills are not on the agenda in regular academic classes, the site director said. Grades have been submitted, several teachers have collected textbooks, and computer research is not assigned. This computer program uses competition to keeps students interested. The instructor says there is strong participation. Besides, centering searches around post-secondary sites is a good way to expose students to what colleges and universities offer.

Knowledge Breakers, met on days observers did not visit Bancroft. It is a rap/poetry/English language development class that promotes literacy through creative use of rhythmic language. The site coordinator says this small class (eight to 10 students) helps students realize previously unknown talents.

The LACER program has a van, but the site coordinator says a second one would let more students go on weekly field trips for the City Life class. Some of the sites visited include: the Los Angeles Central Library, the Aquarium of the Pacific, and a performance of Romeo and Juliet, Disneyland, Los Angeles Galaxy and Dodger games, and the annual beach trip.

**Arts**

Fine and performing arts are a strong LACER component. Classes include jewelry-making, drawing, painting, sketching, and arts and crafts. Instructors are all attentive and helpful. Observers noted classes that gradually taught students the skills to produce a music CD in the recording studio off the common room.

Students were doing research on their favorite artist; they had to get information on…music and lyrics. Then, they had to memorize one song. Once ready, they went to the recording room, where they learned the whole recording process. They would sing the song…and provide their own rhythm.

Students composed the rhythm back up for their songs and learned techniques in a drumming class. Sometimes, rhythm tracks are synthesized. The studio contains professional turntables, computers, microphones, and other equipment for this popular activity. Observers say:

Today there are five boys with the ‘artist’ teacher to watch the process…four others are outside plotting out a future recording, talking about what they will need, how will it sound, and what steps they need to follow.

On the wall in the studio is a CD encased in glass with the title *b boyz*. This CD was made this year after several months of preparation and rehearsal. It is music from this group and others in the “drum styx” class…. [It was the] culminating project of many weeks of effort and instruction in multiple components of recording. After rhythm tracks are recorded, keyboard is added, [as well as] other real and synthesized music. You can see the pride in the students.

LACER also offers classical guitar classes with instruments provided by the program. The students practice with the instructor in small groups and one-on-one. The instructor is pleased with their progress. “Two weeks ago, these students performed at The House of Blues in an annual concert with
Bancroft students and those from other schools,” the instructor said. “Parents were invited… and the students did well. Several want to continue instruction in high school.”

A year-round filmmaking class sponsored by Fresh Eye Films is offered, but observation periods did not coincide with its schedule. The site director said it is popular, and praised the short films produced by participants. The class seems appropriate for the site.

Sports and Games
Sports are a mainstay with this program. There are adequate numbers of coaches and instructors. Frequently, they play basketball, soccer and softball with the kids. One observer says:

On this beach trip day, you can always find a soccer game, even without a full team on each side. This game has just six…two of them girls. Despite the numbers, the game is spirited and there is laughing, running, kicking and scoring. Nobody appears to be keeping score, although maybe the refs are. There are two roving coaches on the field and two Youth Services workers at the other end of the blacktop area. They move between basketball and soccer, so if there is a problem or a place for another player, they are available.

The site director is trying to bolster the sports program. He goes on yearly “recruiting” trips to the Bancroft P.E. classes. He wants a sports conditioning class to prepare eighth-graders for high school sports. One observer commented on a softball game:

The best organized of the sports activities today…is the softball game. I haven’t seen softball or baseball this late in the year, until this program. On the team are two Youth Services coaches and one from the ASP. They have a good game with high interest and all positions covered. They have obviously played softball here many times before. The blacktop is marked with bases and baselines—there are very limited grass fields here at this older school.

There are also indoor games, including Mancala, Monopoly, card games, Connect 4, mini toy skateboards, and so forth. The common room’s comfortable atmosphere after homework puts the students at ease. There is always a supervisor close by.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Student engagement varies widely. Students almost always focus on computers activities, whether they are doing homework, working on research, or playing games at the end of the day. Students in the music classes are very engaged. It’s obvious they are gaining self-confidence. Those who seek out the filmmaking class are likely making good use of their time and talents.

Less intellectual engagement was reported for homework sections; there was often a low to medium level of noise although disruptions and activity do not seem to distract students who are working to complete their assignments. One observer commented:

I have read that some students thrive in noisy settings—even with loud music playing—and are able to solve problems and acquire information at a level exceeding that when the setting is silent. This large common room (a former industrial arts shop) was noisy but nobody doing homework seemed to mind, including the helpers…Maybe if anyone reaches AP calculus, they will appreciate a quieter place in which to concentrate. From what I’ve seen of assigned homework at ASPs, intense concentration is rarely required.

Because these young people have a large degree of freedom at LACER to select activities, nobody is compelled to interact in an unpopular setting; class management techniques seem more than adequate
among the staff, and the “containment” of participants is bolstered by a well-established rapport between students and leaders. The practice of choosing whether or not to participate in homework is a double-edged sword for middle school ASPs: those who participate are compliant and cooperative (the resistance and time-wasting so common at elementary sites—when students reluctantly drag out their assignments—is absent). On the other hand, many members of LACER come just for the sports, the game room, and often pick sections where their friends are. This program tries, with varying success, to provide a safe and nurturing environment, an assortment of attractive activities, and exercises that move them academically to a higher plane, as well as expose them to unique cultural experiences and teach them new material.

Staff
LACER at Bancroft has a site Director plus an assistant site Director; they have program leaders called “artists” and tutors and sports instructors; they get paid $15-16 an hour, and some of the more specialized staff receive roughly $20 an hour. Volunteers are primarily high school students, former members, who return to help with tutoring and homework. One observer noted, “The instructor in the recording studio is volunteering his time to guide students through the process of singing and recording…He gets points toward graduation for volunteering.” Volunteers come and go, with the site director making the best use he can of their talents, sometimes just happy to have the LACER students see successful former members. The site director recently hired a homework specialist. He says significant turn-over is not a problem and coaches get paid for attending neighborhood tournaments on weekends. All program directors attend the District safety training; everyone at LACER will actually renew their CPR certification this coming weekend. The Agency does “basic training” in the do’s and don’ts of working with kids and how to build rapport. When asked about preparation in class management, the site director said, “No training specifically targets class management. LACER will be paying staff to attend “Aspire” training this year—a program to learn how to encourage students to work harder, aspire to greater personal goals, keep up their interest in school. etc. LA Bridges receives referrals from LACER for kids who need extra help with issues of behavior and relationships. There are two case managers available. No training is available for homework help or in LAUSD courses taught.” As for other types of professional preparation, the site director thinks that some kind of training in self-improvement and how to develop new talents and skills for program leaders would be helpful. LACER does not provide nor does the site director think he needs substitutes; he has a large program and when there is an absence, they cover for each other or simply close down certain sections. They have no problem finding and hiring specialized staff.

Observers find evidence of both sound and possibly questionable judgment in the expressed goal of staff to build relationships with young people:

I was a little dismayed to see the coordinator, who I found out later was going on the beach trip, appear before the kids with a blue printed bandana around his head, a notable gang-like accessory. Also, one of the program leaders wore his pants well below his hips and had socks pulled up to his knees. I have not seen this at any other site and know that some days schools prohibit these types of dress.

On the other hand, another observation noted:

One of the students appears to be special needs and the program leader tells me he has a mild form of cerebral palsy. This leader knows a lot about students with disabilities, as he works earlier in the day at a school for autistic students; he holds a behavioral studies degree. There are many positive role models among the many young program leaders I have seen and talked with.

Material Resources
LACER enjoys the use of the common room and keeps it tidy and neat even though chairs and tables are taken up and down and the snack is served here, too. They also have a double bungalow for homework. The site director says he gets all the supplies he requires from his Agency, including new staff if a need develops.

LACER is very happy with their facilities; they are able to use the library and the library computers. There have not been any meetings to request additional rooms or to discuss denial of facilities.

In response to queries about the daily snacks, the director said, “They’re OK with the snacks—orange juice is a big favorite, and peanut pretzels; they also like the soda crackers and cheese, the graham crackers and the chocolate bears. Berry juice is NOT popular. The site director is also happy with the cleanliness of the site, although one observer reports that she found the school to be one of the dirtiest she had visited.

**Relationship with the School**

The coordinator works with both assistant principals depending on whether he needs scheduling help or help with facilities—he gets very good responses—and he says he gets excellent assistance from the principal. They have a very trusting relationship. To communicate with these administrators, the site coordinator simply walks into the Main Office during the day before his program starts and speaks to whomever he needs to; topics include special schedules, working with school security, occasionally a pupil problem, scheduling the gym, program activities, etc.

Communication takes place with teachers primarily when teachers come to the LACER room and discuss their needs; there is a regular process for ongoing communication; teachers will let the program know if a student needs special attention; kids are accustomed to bringing homework and to doing it—they don’t actually need to attend homework, and can elect not to go if they don’t have any homework.

Joint activities with Bancroft staff this year have included a luncheon put on by LACER to acquaint the teachers with his program and staff. LACER has also gone to PE classes to recruit students for the program, pointing out the strengths of the sports offerings.

The site coordinator would be interested in learning both the overall GPA his members achieve, and in seeing the standardized test scores for his program participants. He receives neither from the school, but he says the strength of his relationship with the school is the “open door” communication and trusting relationships; the weakness, the uncertainty of funding for future years (everybody’s issue this year),

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

This program communicates with parents through flyers and through letters home. The site coordinator has had very few occasions to make telephone calls about bad behavior or attendance difficulties—maybe 8-10 all year. He thinks the relationship with parents could be stronger and he hopes to get a website up and going just for LACER at Bancroft; also, all program leaders will be calling every parent to invite them to the culmination activity for the program next week.

In the arena of community relationships, the site directors contributed the following about staff knowledge of the surrounding neighborhoods: “Many of my staff live in and around the Hollywood community and also Westwood, and are good sources for thinking up appropriate “City Life” field trips.”

The site coordinator lives within walking distance and is a professional actor. This particular program has a very strong familiarity with the immediate community.

Some business and community support occurs in support of the ASP. Their strongest connection was with the House of Blues who sponsors an annual student-produced concert. The guitar class performed with several other student acts during the afternoon; parents were invited. It was a big success. The site coordinator would like to develop more business contacts and generate some fundraising. This program and others recently were invited to a Chamber of Commerce “mixer” and made some promising business contacts.

There are not as many business/community connections as the site coordinator would like to see in place—if there were more time, he would cultivate some and follow up on the Chamber of Commerce
mixer held earlier. They did generate $2,000 from that event which they used on field trips. He would like to raise funds for another van.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
When asked about his relationship with the Agency, the site coordinator stated, “It’s all good!” His sole comment about BTB was that he knows “Sergio” who makes periodic visits; and LACER participates in Youth Services and some BTB tournaments on weekends.

Attendance
Regarding how attendance is taken, a student roster is always on the door to the LACER ‘common room’ and the coach stationed there checks off the names; ‘write ins’ are also added as non-registered students show up. The lists are copied and sent to the Agency, and once a month the data is compiled on a spreadsheet and forwarded to the Agency. The site coordinator said that computerized attendance would be a great improvement.

There are periodic recruitment events such as dances and lunch activities to boost attendance. Word of mouth is an effective tool and weekly field trips also draw students in. Other attendance-boosting exercises include continuous reminders through various means (homeroom announcements, dances, field trips, etc); all increase attendance in the short term. The biggest “competition” comes from the District/school-sponsored ELP after-school tutoring conducted by Bancroft teachers. Students come an hour later on those days (sometimes 3 days each week). Youth Services works with the program and does not affect attendance. The site coordinator, just prior to the interview, made a presentation at the incoming 6th grade assembly to advertise the program.

Safety and Security
When asked to comment on site security staffing, Ramiro is diplomatic and says all components can always be better—LACER sends their funded campus aide out to the front of the school each day to supervise that area and there are 2 school campus aides that stay until 5pm; everyone carries radios but he would like to see a regular campus aide there until 6 p.m. He reports no losses or problems with LACER property in his rooms or program security issues.

Conclusions and Comments
This is a strong program with an enthusiastic site director who wants to build strong relationships with students to achieve positive change. Participants feel safe, valued and engaged, and graduates come back to volunteer.

He has good ideas for next year. Right now the participants like almost all of the varied offerings at LACER, the field trips, the programs for drumming and music recording, sports, and computer activities. The site coordinator would like to offer cooking, a skate park, Brazilian dance, and gardening. He has a role in recruiting specialized “artists” and coaches—he then sends his choices to the Agency for hiring; the only facility conflict would be with the custodial staff who are very much against the problems to the plant that a skate park (even through Youth Services) would bring.

The site coordinator’s responses show he has the energy and resolve to make changes happen here. He seems very happy in this position which supplements his acting career nicely. If his calculation of hourly rates is correct, it is one of the more generous Agencies.

No ASP is perfect—and there are many variations in ASPs…many ways of being successful. However, this is clearly one of the highest quality middle schools ASPs observed in the last two years.
**Site Profile**

**Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)**

**Malabar Elementary School**

*Source: LAUSD*

### School Site Profile

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Jorge Rios</th>
</tr>
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**School Demographics (2007-08)**:

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<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>833</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td>99.4% Hispanic .6% All Others</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 52.3% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 436 |
| | 436 Spanish |

### After-School Program Profile

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<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 693 |
| API – 2007 | 682 |
Administrator Interview
Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)
Malabar Elementary School
Jorge Rios, Principal
December 8, 2008

Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) at Malabar Elementary is a well-established program with a strong coordinator who is also a full-time paraprofessional during the day, Mr. Rios said. She is dedicated to the program, is on top of things, personally knows the day staff, and has established rapport with many parents. She communicates with teachers and has credibility with students: children know that bad conduct or less-than-truthful responses about homework will be quickly reported. Day-to-day contact also lets the coordinator and ASP staffers address individual student issues during SST and IEP meetings.

Both earnest college-age and veteran community program leaders contribute to a well organized and well regarded, if routine, ASP. Mr. Rios believes the ASP runs smoothly and takes good care of Malabar children. He says LACC could improve with more enrichment activities for students and more training for program leaders in behavior management and conflict resolution. Leaders also should align their efforts with teachers and understand district initiatives, such as Open Court and strategies for English Language Learners. Mr. Rios said he is pleased to see Youth Services (YS) and LACC work together. A review of components will provide more detail about the varying strengths and weaknesses of this comfortable and popular after school program.

Components
Mr. Rios knows children receive basic homework assistance, but sometimes hears from teachers about incorrectly completed assignments. He says this element does not need a new structure, just improvement. He believes homework leaders should provide guidance in all content areas. Their training should come from both the district and the agency and should cover basic math strategies, use of manipulatives, writing, and an understanding of thinking maps. He said the Malabar math coach has worked with ASP staff on math concepts.

Academic enrichment is not a strength of LACC. There is no computer lab, daily science lessons, or other ongoing academic support. The program sponsors special events like the sea animal experience and a Metro-Link presentation. They also use Connections from Scholastic, which links physical activity and art concepts. Mr. Rios wants to see added, activities that support speech and public speaking. He believes oral presentations build language skills and confidence.

There are numerous sports offerings at Malabar, with kickball, warm-up aerobic exercises, and games with the children in the YS program. Mr. Rios wants LACC to concentrate on developing physical skills and coordination. The YS coordinator said the school has generously allowed the ASP to use its new P.E. equipment, ping-pong tables, and soccer goals. He says children get extensive coaching before they compete in softball, football, soccer and basketball intramurals and they have done well.

Arts and crafts and seasonal projects make up the fine and performing arts program. Mr. Rios wants theatre, dance, and an occasional guest artist.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers appreciate homework assistance but want leaders to know more of what students are learning in the day school. They complain of messy classrooms, an issue jointly addressed by Mr. Rios and the agency. Teachers report that they have not seen any impact in their classes from LACC participation. Parents value the “babysitting service” and homework help. There is a long waiting list.
Agency and District Support
Mr. Rios finds the agency responsive. He has met with representatives to discuss problems and solutions. The agency has put some of his suggestions into practice. Mr. Rios knows whom to contact at Beyond the Bell if he has a serious issue, but so far, none have come up. He thinks Beyond the Bell should support expanded enrichment through a “resource packet” so agencies might more easily put such activities in place.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
LACC would benefit from better communication with teachers regarding academic assignments, Mr. Rios said. Aside from the common requests for better training, more capacity, and a wider variety of enrichment, Malabar LACC runs smoothly. “Malabar’s YS and LACC programs are self-sufficient, self-sustaining and have an amicable situation,” Mr. Rios said.
Case Study Observations  
Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)  
Malabar Elementary School

Introduction
The ASP takes place at Malabar Elementary School (a K-5 school) located in the City Terrace area of Los Angeles. The sponsor is the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC). The site coordinator is Ms. Maria Solis.

Highlights
The ASP is noteworthy for its integrated curriculum and homework assistance. During the field study, academic enrichment focused on the themes of predators and prey and dinosaurs. Staff members incorporated these themes into other activities. Children stayed engaged and productive during homework sessions. They worked actively and sought help from staff. Those who completed their homework often read or engaged in academic activities. Staffers knew the children’s subject matter, but did not merely give the answers. They asked guiding questions to help the children think through the solution.

Homework
Homework is a strong area for the ASP. Ms. Solis expressed her confident in the staff’s preparation, saying she has no challenges here. Observers saw that staff members usually attended the children thoughtfully. Observers wrote:

A “floater” staff member helped the first-graders with their homework. The day teacher also was in the room and involved with the kids, but not in an official capacity. About half of the 13 children did homework. The rest played games like Time Bingo and Memory on the rug. They did not so much play the games as handle the game pieces. The classroom teacher tried to help them get started with bingo, but the kids did not play. The staff member gave minimal attention to the children with the games; he focused on those doing homework. He gently asked questions to help them work on math.

Some children who finished their homework read books from the classroom library. Others continue to work. The staff member spent most of the time helping two of them. From time to time, she called out directions to the other children in English and Spanish. She asked questions of the two to help them work out an answer. Many children did their homework on their own, without assistance or direct supervision.

All of the second-graders did homework or read on the rug. The children have sincere respect for her and she treats them with kindness, firmness, and a determination to make this 45 minutes valuable.

The third-graders played board games or finished a few final assignments for the year. The staff member sat at her desk, talking with the observer and cautioning the children. A second adult in the room went from child to child. He was training on the job. He helped with a few language worksheets. The children were responsive and eager to show him their work. Thirteen fifth-graders were in one homework session. The staff member circulated and asked questions. She reminded the students of concepts they should know and asked them questions that applied them. Early in the session, she separated two boys so they could
focus on work. Later, she moved a girl for the same reason. The staff member showed
good knowledge of math.

Ms. Solis wants to expand homework support next year. She wants to get a computer lab because many children do not have computers at home

**Academics**
The ASP offered academic enrichment on dinosaurs and on predators and prey. Staff members also referred to these themes in other activities. There was an art activity focusing on dinosaurs, a game of tag on the playground that divided children into predators and prey, and a discussion during a cartoon movie of how a whale eats. When introducing such activities, staff members often reviewed academic material that the children had learned. Observers wrote:

The third-grade group read a book on dinosaurs. They took turns reading and then discussed the content: where dinosaurs might have lived and why they became extinct. After the staff member discussed tectonic shifts, one of the children asked, "How can the earth move if it is stuck to the ground?" The staff member said that is a good question and explained earthquakes. The children paid attention. After the reading, the children used crayons, glue, and straws to make a picture of a dinosaur.

Three groups of third- through fifth-graders, each less than 20, sat in the auditorium with their staff members, who directed them in English and Spanish to trace and cut out a "predator of your choice" and glue it to another “camouflage” sheet they had finger painted previously. The staffer did not review the children’s prior knowledge of predators. It was more of a simple crafts project than academic enrichment.

An observer watched kindergarteners learn about maps. They read a book called “Map Keys.” They discussed the parts of the book and then they looked at the maps. The group then drew maps of the school. The staff member was very encouraging and supportive. She said she was very impressed with the detail in the maps. They later used the maps for a scavenger hunt.

During another observation, the kindergarteners sat on a carpet with a map of the world and pictures of animals that come from each region. The group discussed them. The children stayed interested.

**Sports & Recreation**
Observers saw children doing calisthenics and playing soccer and a tag game.

One staff member led a soccer game for 13 children. He was very involved in the game and switched between the two teams. He also encouraged the children and cheered them on. He took the goalie and a few other players aside to give them pointers.

During an observation on the final week of school, the children were happy to be sent out to the blacktop a few minutes early. In addition to the customary soccer, kickball, and basketball, there was a session of stretching and calisthenics for the first- and second-graders. They did jumping jacks, toe touches, and burpees. Afterward, they started playing kickball. Everyone was running around and excited that the school year was almost over.

Another day, a staff member introduced a new activity to a group of ten first- and second- graders. He mentioned a previous lesson on predators and prey. He divided the children into two groups and lined them up about 40 yards from the edge of the playground. He gave the prey about five yards head start and
told them to run as fast as possible to the edge before the predators could tag them. Those who got tagged became predators for the next round. The staff member warned the children to tag and not to push. Before they began running, he had them start an arm's length from each other. These young children were physically active and having a lot of fun.

Ms. Solis said the children liked the outdoor activities. The girls like dance and the boys like sports. She said they go to tournaments and recently won a soccer competition.

**Arts**

Students made a banner, sculpted on clay, drew weather maps and discussed artwork characteristics during the field study.

Two groups joined to make a banner for their soccer team, which was to play in a tournament the next day. The staff members drew a blueprint of the banner on the board and assigned a part of it to each child. The children used markers, felt, and glue to make the design. One of the staff members taught the children how to use a dye-cutting machine to make paper letters and soccer balls for the banner.

Three different groups of children worked on a project to sculpt dinosaurs out of clay in the auditorium. The staff members gave them books with illustrations of dinosaurs so the children could shape their ideas. The staff members reviewed what dinosaurs were, when they lived, and what happened to them. One of the staff members also briefly described the theory of evolution. Before the children began, the staff provided all the supplies they needed and gave them some directions.

Children in the first-grade drew different types of weather symbols onto a map. The staff member showed the children a picture of a weather map to help them with the project.

During the final days of the school year, the third-graders helped a staff member tidy up the classroom. They removed all the student work from the walls. There were many art projects. They decided on a critique of the works, which included digital pictures, Easter eggs and animals, and extra placements made this week for Father's Day. The children had a good discussion about color, choice of materials, good drawing, and related topics.

Although observers saw mainly visual arts activities, Ms. Solis said the ASP offers performing arts enrichment in the form of dance, which is among the students’ favorite activities.

**Other Enrichment**

Fridays are free days for the students, but enrichment did take place. A group of younger children colored, used flash cards, and played Jenga. Eventually, the kids joined another group making a banner. Another group asked to play Heads Up, 7-Up. One child explained the game and a staff member supervised. Ms. Solis joined the game. She joked with the children. The students had fun. Another group watched Peter Pan cartoons in the auditorium. Staff members sat among the children. Some children played with toy cars in the back of the room.

Another day, about 15 second-graders watched *Finding Nemo*. The staff member led a discussion about the movie. During a scene inside a whale's mouth, the staff member talked about how real whales eat. An observer noted that this seemed consistent with the theme of predators and prey. The children protested when the staff member stopped the movie at the end of the session. She told them they would have to do their homework tomorrow before seeing the rest of the movie.
Engagement and Classroom Management

The ASP offers well-structured and engaging activities that promote learning. Children in different grades and activity stayed busy and happy.

There were a few classroom management issues. One example occurred during homework time for the older children. A boy repeatedly distracted his neighbor. The staff member tried to redirect him. When he stopped working, the staff member challenged him. She asked to check his homework and he resisted. The session was a battle of wills between the two of them, and neither won.

Another group arrived in the auditorium for an arts activity, but the staff member first asked them to put their heads on the table and wait. After everyone arrived, the staff member told the children of three handprints left on the wall after finger painting. Unless the guilty parties confessed, everyone would have to clean the auditorium. The session started 15 minutes late.

Staffers and students wasted a lot of the three and a half hours of ASP time in transitions between activities and before the start of the program. Children received less than two hours of actual programming. The students gathered at the beginning of the ASP and walked to their classroom. Homework began 20 minutes after the final school bell. At the end of the day, staff members gathered children in the auditorium to wait for parents to pick them up.

An observer called the wasted time a missed learning opportunity:

The fifth grade meets for homework in the covered lunch area. They are very comfortable with one another. They chat. The leader stays with them, but does not engage them in any questions or encourage them to find an assignment or a book. They are just waiting for snack and then outdoor activities. This idle 45 minutes is another teachable moment lost. The fifths grade went to UC Irvine on a field trip today. I ask them many and varied questions about the trip. The most anyone can tell me about their day at UCI was the origin of the school mascot, the anteater. There could have been a short written assignment by the ASP leader to get these kids at least thinking about why the school spent money to take them to a prestigious university.

Staff

Staffing seemed to be an area of concern for Ms. Solis. She said the educational requirements make it difficult to fill positions. The ASP requires program leaders to have 12 units of college courses and a high school diploma, all with transcripts. “It gets complicated,” she said. Program leaders earn $12.00 per hour and there are no volunteers. “We never have substitutes or specialized staff,” she said. “We just cover for each other. Youth Services has subs, but we don’t.”

Ms. Solis said both new and experienced staff members receive training on how to talk to children and conducting activities. Outside organizations train staffers on conflict resolution and student behavior. “I don’t personally provide any training,” she said. Staffers receive training in student behavior management, classroom management, and understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. She said her staff would most benefit from elementary-specific training. Most LACC ASPs are geared to middle schools.

Ms. Solis spoke highly of the staffers’ ability to provide high-quality homework help, but expressed concern about general support for children with special needs. She said that is the biggest challenge facing the ASP. “It is hard to handle that situation, because they require one-to-one attention, and that is difficult with all the other kids in the class,” she said. “We need more staff and more manpower.”
Material Resources
The ASP had adequate space, equipment, and materials. Ms. Solis has no complaints in this area. She has access to the library. The school has no computer lab. She wants to establish one for fourth- and fifth-graders to work on projects.

Ms. Solis is generally happy with the snacks and janitorial services the school provides. She commented on repeated offerings of cereal, which may point to a need for variety. She is happy with the work of the custodians, though she noted the school is short-staffed in that area.

Relationship with the School
Ms. Solis describes a very strong relationship with the school. Her primary contact person is the principal. They talk every day, by walkie-talkie or in person, about upcoming events and discipline problems. “He has always been supportive,” she said. “He comes out to all of our events.” At Thanksgiving, the principal helped served food and conducted a raffle.

Ms. Solis often talks with teachers, whom she knows personally from her previous work as a teacher’s aide. They keep her informed of homework assignments, and so do students, who “tell on each other.”

The school has not shared children’s test or assessment scores with the ASP. Staff members and teachers do no joint planning or coordination.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Ms. Solis said she talks regularly with parents, face-to-face and by phone, about homework and behavior issues. That communication can be challenging.
“The parents want their kids in the ASP, but a lot of them are street vendors,” she said. “Instead of coming back for their child, they just take them and don’t let them stay in the ASP while they work. The kids don’t do their homework and then the parents complain.”

An observer noted that parents at sign-out seemed happy and comfortable at the site. Staff members know the community, but the ASP does not have relationships with community organizations or local businesses. “This is my home school and I’ve been a T.A. here for a very long time,” she said. “A lot of my staff is from this area as well.”

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
Ms. Solis said the ASP has a positive relationship with both the agency and Beyond the Bell. She said the agency responds quickly to her concerns and her requests for supplies. However, an observer noted her complaints regarding lack of substitutes and staff. This could be an area of weakness.

As for Beyond the Bell, she seemed to confuse it with YS. “We don’t have any weak points,” she said. “We work together, watch each other’s kids.”

Attendance
The ASP holds perfect attendance competitions and raffles, and rewards students who attend with Malabar Bucks, pretend money they can spend at the student store. Ms. Solis said student word-of-mouth is very effective in recruiting new students.

The ASP had a waiting list earlier in the school year, but had drawn it down by field study time. She said NCLB tutoring offered at the library took some of the ASP’s students away. She said the tutoring was the biggest competitor for student attention, even though there is no actual competition from other ASPs.
One day, Ms. Solis told an observer 110 students would attend the program, rather than the usual 130, and she blamed the tutoring and the hot weather. The observer estimated that fewer than 100 children attend that day.

**Safety & Security**
Ms. Solis is happy with student security at the school. Staffers have walkie-talkies to communicate in case of a lockdown.

Observers wrote that the physical configuration of the school promotes security. The school was built on a steep hillside, and the office and multi-purpose room are at street level. Most classrooms are one or two stories below them and the playground is well below the classrooms. A wall and fence surround the playground. It would be very difficult for the children to leave the campus or for unauthorized adults to have access to the children. Also, school staff and YS staff, walk the campus, as well as LACC staff.

Ms. Solis said staff should do more to ensure ASP property security. Rooms sometimes remain open. She said more vigilance is necessary.

**Conclusions and Comments**
The ASP’s strengths include effective homework assistance, integration of academic content into recreational activities, a skilled and dedicated staff, and a very positive relationship with the school. Children are safe, engaged, and happy. They get important learning opportunities throughout the afternoon.

Ms. Solis’s main worry is staffing. She is happy with her current staff, but said positions are difficult to fill because of educational requirements. She gets no substitutes or specialized staff. Training opportunities seem more appropriate for middle-school ASP staff than for those working in elementary schools. She also wants more staff to better support children with special needs.

Despite the strong academic enrichment and high levels of engagement, there is a major gap in the use of children’s time. Less than two of the ASP’s three and a half hours were devoted to homework or enrichment. The rest was waiting and going from place to place. Activities end at 5 p.m. and staff members leave at 5:15 p.m. With schedule modifications, the children could receive an additional 30 to 60 minutes of rewarding enrichment activities each day.
# Site Profile

## Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)

### San Fernando Middle School

### School Site Profile

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<th>School Site (location)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Rafael Balderas</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 1716
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**:
  - 97.1% Hispanic
  - 1.2% Black
  - 1.0% White
  - .3% Filipino
  - .2% Asian
  - .1% American Indian/Alaskan

- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 38.3%
- **English Language Learners**:
  - Total: 657
  - 654 Spanish
  - 2 Pilipino
  - 1 Other

### After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
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<td>lvialacorps.org</td>
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- **# ASP Students**: 1086
- **Average Days of Attendance**:
  - % < 36 Days: 79%
  - % 36-71 Days: 12%
  - %72-107 Days: 5%
  - % > 107 Days: 4%
  - % of Capacity: 67%

### Academic Performance Index Change

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<tr>
<td>API – 2007</td>
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Administrator Interview
Los Angeles Conservation Corps
San Fernando Middle School
Rafael Balderas, Principal
November 21, 2008

Mr. Balderas said the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) program at San Fernando Middle School is a dynamic mix of three elements: (1) the principal’s own concept for intensive language arts and math preparation; (2) staffing that consists predominantly of the school’s teachers; and (3) several popular, well-attended co-curricular programs.

This powerful combination of academic performance supports and site staff connections reflects a cooperative ASP model shaped by the principal, the district, and the agency to extend the work of the school until 6 p.m. Not every element is as effective as it could be, but Mr. Balderas believes LACC has increased both individual skills and self-esteem, and is responsible for higher API and AYP scores. The strength of LACC lies in planning and commitment.

Components
Teachers direct homework assistance in their own classrooms, working with their own pupils. Mr. Balderas wants improved accountability, an evaluation process to gauge success and a form to identify individual student deficits. There is significant potential here, but this component could benefit from more attention and from higher expectations.

LACC does not offer academic enrichment classes such as science, computers, or journalism. In the spring, however, Mr. Balderas launched an academic “boot camp” that he designed with cooperation from LACC and Beyond the Bell. It is an ambitious month-long program stressing test-taking skills, language arts, and math reinforcement designed to put participants in the best possible position to address CTS Spring testing. One hundred eighty students, selected for their academic deficiencies and scoring at the lowest levels on CST and other measures, attended regularly and helped raise SFMS’s AYP and API by 35 points. He intends to continue and enhance boot camp this spring.

Fine and performing arts is a strength. The school has an award-winning, impressive mariachi group, a dance troupe that has also won competitions, and an enthusiastic drill team. Students in all groups are a pleasure to observe. Their enthusiasm and engagement is a visible testament to the success of extending co-curricular activities into the ASP. Teachers also offer a variety of arts and crafts programs.

Mr. Balderas considers the ASP sports and athletic component conducted in concert with Youth Services only satisfactory. He would like to see the caliber of organization, skill development, competition, personnel and management of students that “LA 84” demonstrated when his campus won selection for its flag football program. LA 84, “a class act” according to Mr. Balderas, shows the disparity between a quality approach and day-to-day programs.

Sports activities, when well done, can meet many needs of struggling middle school students: athletics enhances personal self-discipline, develops an appreciation for practice, fosters an ability to handle highs and lows of sports and life, and promotes pride, self-esteem, teamwork, sacrifice, and fitness. Sports should not be written off as an unproductive “fun” time, but should always be a way to reach adolescents, exposing them through training and competition to challenges that develop strengths that will serve them throughout life. In his remarks, Mr. Balderas shows he wants the very best for his students, whether in the classroom or on the PE field.
Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers genuinely appreciate the opportunity to work with the neediest pupils after school though Mr. Balderas did not recall specific teacher or parent feedback. He knows teachers believe the boot camp was an excellent academic support. Parents like students to be in a monitored, supervised setting. They are also very impressed with LA 84 giving families the chance to share in a successful program where pride and self-esteem blossomed. He recalls no negative parent comments about LACC. Teachers generally believe the structure and offerings of LACC have developed a safe, colorful place where pupils can improve academically while enjoying quality creative experiences.

Agency and District Support
LACC at San Fernando Middle School is a living, evolving example of what effective communication and flexibility can achieve. The cooperation Mr. Balderas received from Beyond the Bell and LACC on the boot camp made it a truly successful program. He also devoted time, money, and energy to develop a mariachi group to rival any in the district. Mr. Balderas has no complaints about District or Beyond the Bell personnel and appreciates their support.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Mr. Balderas has seized on after school time to further academic reinforcement and worthy activities for his students. He wants more general accountability and targeted assistance and he could use campus aide time, field trips, upgraded sports efforts, and more flexibility to hire the finest of his instructors. He hopes BTB and LACC will continue permitting him to influence the ASP to best serve his population.
Case Study Observations
Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC)
San Fernando Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at San Fernando Middle School (a 6-8 school), located in the City of San Fernando. Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) is the sponsor. Ms. Nicole Guzman is the site coordinator.

Highlights
LACC at San Fernando Middle School has three main features that contribute to its quality: (1) a large contingent of day school teachers, as many as 13, who work as program leaders; (2) excellent co-curricular performing groups that showcase student talent in the regular and after-school programs; and (3) a design that lets students stay with the same program leader all afternoon.

Even during the end-of-year portion of field study, observers reported on the excellence of the performing groups and on the connectedness of the students to their leaders, even when attendance began to diminish. Ms. Guzman is also a vibrant and capable director with a grasp of the components necessary to maintain a sound ASP.

Homework
Homework assistance comes in three varieties: (1) individual teachers funded by the ASP who work only with their own students; (2) program leaders combined with self-directed groups of students; and (3) a generalized homework help room with an LACC program leader who is also an SFMS teacher.

Ms. Guzman said one obstacle to providing quality homework assistance is the “double book” problem. The school sends older textbooks home with students for homework and keeps newer sets in class. When the time comes for after-school homework help, neither is available. Ms. Guzman does not know how to get around this problem. She believes more staff training in curricula and teaching strategies might help. When staffers cannot help a student with homework, they send him or her to a teacher.

Some observations of homework help follow:

I am watching eight girls in mixed grades work on homework in the adaptive P.E. room, adjacent to the gym. They sit on the floor and working steadily to finish their assignments. About fifteen other girls stand around talking inside the room and on the stairs outside.

On Tuesdays, the regular homework assistance leader, who is a teacher, attends staff development, so young LACC program leaders take charge of the entire program. One group of students works on its own. They need to finish homework and are willing to delay a rehearsal. Everyone knows the drill on Tuesdays and accepts the different schedule of activities.

This has to be the last homework section standing during the next-to-last week of the school year. A regular SFMS teacher leads it in her classroom, and there are five students. Her room also functions as a detention site for those who do not show up for her section or who are late. She stays engaged with this little group, and I think they gain from this connection with a full-time credentialed teacher interested in their progress.
Midway through this afternoon, the dance group has finished a homework session and practices on the blacktop outside rooms near the gym. Another group is using the dance room. The girls help each other rehearse a routine. They are cheerful, motivated, organized, and are missing only one thing: the dance instructor.

It is the day before the last day of school, and a group of 11 students meets during the homework hour. Of course, there is no homework. Instead, the teacher conducts the game Catch Phrase. The questions challenge the students. One young man plays against three girls and the leader. “What is the name of the process when the moon goes in front of the sun?” the leader asks. He answers successfully and beams with pride. He is the only boy in the group. Meanwhile, a regular math teacher clears his desk.

**Enrichment and Supplemental Academic Activities**

In the absence of supplemental academic enrichment classes, LACC offers several fine and performing arts classes. Ms. Guzman wants to bolster academic help with a computer lab. The program once offered it, but despite the high degree of trust between the teacher and the site coordinator, security issues interfered.

Ms. Guzman, like many others, wants field trips for the kids. Because they take place after school, they would not take students away from regular classes. She believes students would benefit from getting out of the community and seeing performances. She wants a broader selection of activities, including a game room, more sports, and specialty speakers.

**Arts**

Observers liked several performing groups. The behavior and commitment of the young people in these groups impressed them. During observations, members of the choir, drill team, dance troupe, and a skilled mariachi group rehearsed, practiced routines, and improved their skills. There was no loitering or inappropriate behavior. They took pride in their endeavors. Some comments follow:

Although it is a shortened day and teachers are in meetings, the choir/drama teacher takes 20 “stolen” minutes after dismissal to rehearse with enthusiastic students from the regular program and the ASP. They will perform at graduation in three weeks.

A large, vibrant, and skilled mariachi group playing in the band room is a pleasant surprise this afternoon. There are eight violinists (two girls, six boys), seven guitars (two girls) and four trumpets (all boys). The group also sings well, when appropriate. They are rehearsing for a performance at San Fernando High School. It is refreshing to see live music by students who have clearly practiced for months, if not years. It was a pleasure to hear them—a quality group.

Today, the dance instructor has two groups: the drill team and a dance company. She spends fifteen to twenty minutes with each, getting them started or giving instructions. The drill team is in the room and the dance students are just outside, so she can easily monitor both. The dancers seem fine with rehearsing on their own.

The drill team is a very accomplished group of about twenty girls who focus on practicing their latest routine. They have competed in district contests and Youth Services tournaments. That they share the coach today seems not to disturb them or dampen their enthusiasm in the least. They are motivated, energetic, and happy to be involved.
Today, all drill team members have to try out for next year. There is keen interest and anxiety as the girls rehearse routines in the gym and then go into the adaptive P.E. room for the try-out, two at a time. They perform for a panel of three: one eighth-grade veteran, the sponsor, and Ms. Guzman.

Both the drill team and the dance class have been working together for many weeks. Their performance skills are testament to the success of the leaders in forming cohesive and dedicated groups. When necessary, they practice on their own. Both groups do appropriate dance and drill routines. There are no acrobatics or unsafe maneuvers. Ms. Guzman watches from the stairs. She tells me the girls often practice alone, and both groups have won competitions. YS contests require that participants maintain a C average; hence, the attention to homework before practice begins.

Performance activities such as drama, music, choir, drill team, and dance are very strong at this site, and the mariachi group is excellent. These are attractive activities to middle school students. They learn new skills, build confidence and self-esteem, and provide a creative outlet. Talented and caring adults connect young people to pastimes that might stay with them for a lifetime, or simply provide a well-supervised and healthy social setting for frequently difficult teen years.

Observers also watched arts and crafts sections. On one visit, the arts and crafts group abandoned its projects and moved outside to play soccer. They tossed the ball and socialized with friends. “The coach is the center of attention. After all, she has the ball,” the observer wrote. “But these young ladies are just as likely to decide together to go home, much as they decided to leave the indoor arts and crafts exercise.”

Keeping students connected and attending the ASP regularly is a critical goal. At this location, the structure permits students to remain close to a favorite leader instead of moving around from one group to another.

Ms. Guzman also noted other creative and art-based sections taught by SFMS teachers, such as the video class and drama. Observers did not see these.

Sports and Games
The LACC program is as popular with boys as drill and dance are with the girls. Ms. Guzman said basketball, soccer, and flag football competitions, as well as games between the faculty and the students, are the most popular activities at this ASP. Observers had many chances to watch soccer, basketball, and volleyball. “Soccer reigns supreme,” one wrote. “Other sections have disappeared, pupils have stopped attending this last week of school, many students wander about not involved with any organized event, but there’s a full-on soccer game underway, with a complement of two coaches, whistles, and team members in P.E. clothes.”

Other observers described outdoor activities:

Before the game started, I saw students working with supervised soccer drills. This is encouraging. Both LACC and YS coaches remain intent on increasing skills and keeping the game from being simply a casual get-together. Students play soccer for the sheer fun of participating and, many times, nobody even keeps score.

Inside the gym are about 25 boys of various grade levels shooting baskets and watching others play. There is no organized game at this time, but as I watch, the coach, who is also playing, indicates a game may start soon. As with other activity and sports groups
today, the basketball group lacks some team members. There is a lot of milling about, friendly talking, and basket shooting.

Students play volleyball in the hot gymnasium... Two huge fans circulate the hot air. Several students complain that water fountains are off and vending machines are empty.

In contrast to the organized and competitive soccer game going on the athletic field, basketball today is a loose association of students, coaches, YS members, and whoever else wants to participate. It goes on inside the gym, around the drill team girls, and outside on the blacktop. When I speak to the director about the apparent lack of organization, she tells me that in about 10 minutes, the YS coach will begin several games on the outdoor courts. This is warm-up. LACC leaders will join the YS coaches.

The leader and his students talk, laugh, and wait for a game to start. They kick the ball around and joke. It is a very laid-back and patient atmosphere. As I leave, the coach appears to get a drill started. I suspect several players are not here today.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Limited observation sessions revealed varying levels of student engagement with activity or homework sessions. Students with SFMS teachers stayed focused on their work, adhered to a stronger work ethic, and appeared to welcome the teacher’s attention. Intellectual involvement was not intense, but it was sustained.

While not intellectual in nature, drill team, dance, mariachi, and choir classes held the students’ attention. Students in these groups did not waste time and appeared to enjoy their time practicing while they worked hard to improve skills. These outstanding co-curricular after-school activities, and the influence they have on adolescents, should not be discounted because they are not academic by definition.

For those students at SFMS not involved in performing arts and not a part of teacher-led homework, LACC did not provide a particularly stimulating or engaging program. Sports are popular and well organized, but many students just wander around campus, idly joining informal basketball or soccer games and having no clear connection to an adult-led activity.

**Staff**

LACC has five program leaders who earn $12.00-$14.00 per hour unless they have less than 16 college units, in which case they earn $9.00 per hour. The teachers hired by the agency earn $30.00 per hour. They teach specialties like mariachi, dance, drill team, art, and a video class. Some conduct homework sessions and tutor their own students after school. Ms. Guzman has personal connections to a dance institute and brought them to the ASP on her own, to work with her dance group.

Volunteers come and go. They usually have some relation to the students. Ms. Guzman has had to deal with new staff each year. Usually, about half return. Others find better paying positions.

LACC conducts two weeks of paid training in the summer before programs start. It includes class management, safety issues, how to recruit students, and how to plan and schedule activities. All program leaders attend the district safety training. Ms. Guzman knows of no training for experienced leaders.

There is no training in LAUSD curricula and the staff of LACC is not included in after-school staff development from the regular school that might apply to this program; Ms. Guzman, who wants to be a
teacher and will start her credential next year, listens in sometimes because she is on campus when
regular teacher staff development occurs.

Ms. Guzman believes training in classroom subjects would help. Even though the SFMS teachers provide
most of the homework help, some students still ask staffers for help.

There are no substitutes available through LACC. The program needs none. There is adequate staff to
cover or combine groups when someone is out. Ms. Guzman said her staff has good rapport and
cooperation.

**Material Resources**

Ms. Guzman is happy with the supplies and equipment she gets from the agency. Her office/store room
has several shelves of games, arts and crafts, and books. The program has no access to the library. Last
year, it had access to a computer lab. She wants that again.

Additional use of facilities has presented few concerns. Most of the classrooms available to the ASP
belong to teachers who work in the program. When Ms. Guzman needed a classroom for the drill team
during homework, the assistant principal found her one. The program has access to all the rooms in the
gym and a few regular classrooms for arts and crafts and dance. She said her staff tries to leave these
classrooms in better condition than they find them each day.

Ms. Guzman says the custodial staff does a very good job. There is little graffiti. The rooms and the gym
are usually quite tidy when the ASP begins. As for snacks, the program students are bored with the food
and get excited when they get something new, like cereal. They like peanut butter pretzels and prefer
juice. When they get graham crackers or chocolate bears, they want milk.

**Relationship with the School**

Ms. Guzman said Mr. Tobar, an assistant principal, is her primary contact. She has a positive relationship
with him as well as with the principal. However, the principal has no mailbox, so she has to find him to
talk with him. Topics include approval for special activities, permission to use space not previously
assigned, and students. Recently, Ms. Guzman mentioned to him that Disney animators are coming to the
ASP to chat with focus groups of students.

Communication with teachers occurs when teachers want to discuss issues involving specific students.
Staffers also know about special events and schedules through conversations with teachers who work in
the ASP. Even so, ASP staffers have planned no joint activities with day school staff, and LACC does not
receive any information about standardized test scores. Ms. Guzman wants this to change.

The best feature of the ASP/school relationship is administrators’ and teachers’ awareness and support of
the program.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Ms. Guzman and LACC staffers talk with some parents at pick-up time. Because children sign themselves
out, they have to take the initiative to go speak with parents in their cars. Topics include leaving without
signing out, minor injuries, bad behavior, and fights. She does not send notes home with pupils because
they are not likely to reach parents’ hands. She has called a student’s home regarding minor problems
perhaps ten times this year. She and her staff regularly attend Back to School Night and Parent
Conference evenings to promote the program and talk to parents. There are flyers for special events.
Ms. Guzman’s biggest personal challenge with parents is that she does not speak Spanish. She always has to count on one of her staff members to help. She wants more partnerships with parents and wants more of them at ASP performances and showcases.

The relationship with the community is not strong, but some of the performing groups entertain at holiday time in several community locations. There are no regular, ongoing relationships established with businesses or organizations. This aspect needs immediate attention. Ms. Guzman believes the agency might develop these alliances. She has no time to work on this herself.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Guzman said the agency is supportive and easy to reach. However, she is still waiting for a promised bonus for leaders who recruited new students.

Ms. Guzman associates Beyond the Bell with Youth Services. They have a positive and cooperative relationship that observers also documented. She appreciates YS because of its work with sports and the emphasis on good school performance for participation.

**Attendance**

Program leaders take attendance through student sign-in and sign-out sheets. Ms. Guzman forwards them to the agency once a week, and it compiles the data. She has no suggestions for improvement.

Ms. Guzman’s believes improving and expanding the sports program with more organized leagues and competitions will improve student attendance. There is no wait list.

Ms. Guzman said the Extended Learning Program, where regular teachers tutor students for an hour each day, interferes with attendance in her program. However, it only occurs for a few weeks. Also, the principal ran a boot camp for a few weeks before standardized scares to help prepare students. This took away some students. LACC has a cooperative relationship with YS. It does not compete with the ASP.

**Safety and Security**

ASP budget cuts took away the ASP’s security guard this year, so Ms. Guzman has to take on a campus supervision role, rousting students out of corners where they seek privacy. She said she needs a school-funded aide who can stay until 6 p.m. to keep track of students who are and are not in the program. One YS worker who is a daytime aide helps whenever possible.

As for the security of her property and materials, Ms. Guzman said she is content, and there has been no vandalism.

**Conclusions and Comments**

LACC provides a solid, viable program with unique features and procedures.

The use of regular teachers enhances homework assistance and encourages a positive relationship between the ASP and the day school. Ms. Guzman plans to start as a substitute teacher next year, and that should further improve the connection. This illustrates the potential benefit ASPs bring to communities as sources of future teachers.

Ms. Guzman is a competent, assured leader on the campus. She knows and protects her staff. She gently countered concerns one observer had with the quality of the sports program. She also helps with the dance class and drill team and supervises the campus when she has the time.
The performing arts component is the most impressive feature of this ASP. Regardless of whether LACC developed these programs, it has the expertise to recognize their value and fund competitions and performances. Any school in LAUSD would be proud to present these excellent student musicians and dancers.

The partnership with YS also greatly magnifies the strengths and attendance levels of both programs.

Gangs abound in LAUSD --few schools are free from them--and the San Fernando area has a long history of gang-related crime. School officials have a responsibility to mitigate their influence on campus ASPs can do their part by providing appealing activities, safety for participants, and a welcoming atmosphere. LACC does that at this school. Observers saw virtually no graffiti, no dissention between students, no older high school-age loiterers, and no menacing strangers. This was a clean and orderly campus.

Conversations with teachers during observations were positive, although some lamented the school’s bad reputation. Programs such as LACC will help dispel negative opinions and serve as a guiding light for other LAUSD schools and ASPs facing similar problems.
### School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Foshay Learning Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3751 S. Harvard Blvd.</td>
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<td>Los Angeles, CA 90018</td>
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<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Veronique Wills</th>
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#### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

- **Student Enrollment**: 3372
- **Student Racial/Ethnicity**: 78.1% Hispanic, 21.2% Black, 0.2% Asian, 0.2% White, 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan, 0.1% Filipino, 0.1% Pacific Islander
- **English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**: 28.0%
- **English Language Learners**: Total: 945
  - 940 Spanish
  - 2 Cantonese
  - 2 Other
  - 1 Pilipino

### After-School Program Profile

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>Martin Luther King Legacy Association</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:elee@sclclosangeles.org">elee@sclclosangeles.org</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>323-290-4100</td>
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- **# ASP Students**: 251
- **Average Days of Attendance**: 220
  - % < 36 Days: 0%
  - % 36-71 Days: 1%
  - %72-107 Days: 1%
  - % > 107 Days: 98%
  - % of Capacity: 45%

### Academic Performance Index Change

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<th>API – 2007</th>
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<td>645</td>
<td>621</td>
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</table>
Ms. Wills, who has worked as a teacher, coordinator, and administrator at this school for sixteen years, describes a large, busy, and challenging campus. Foshay Learning Center is a year-round, K-12 school with almost 3,400 neighborhood students. One of the ASPs, the Martin Luther King Legacy Association, has served pupils for many years, offering programs that change with the times and with students’ needs. There are so many ASPs running simultaneously at Foshay that the principal says she has “a little army of kids.” They mix between programs, moving in and out of Youth Services, MLK, L.A. Bridges, L.A. Trade Tech Institute, USC programs, sports clubs, tutoring classes, district intervention, and others.

To lend oversight to this second shift of the school day, Foshay employs a full time RLA administrator. She keeps track of pupils and uses a “triage” form when students reach the middle school years. Ms. Wills considers her an excellent and trustworthy resource for this large body of students and staff. MLK is considered an integral part of Foshay because it offers what middle school pupils need: homework help, specialty classes, and targeted assistance. A review of components will highlight numerous positive features and weaknesses of MLK—and touch upon relationships between numerous supportive after school programs.

**Components**

MLK hires only Foshay teachers, aides, and paraprofessionals for homework assistance. They work with all pupils to see that homework is completed, and an excellent math tutorial program identifies and targets specific math deficiencies. Staffers use CST data to spot weak areas connected to math standard “strands” or skill sets. Ms. Wills says school CST scores reflect the results of this approach. She only asks to add before-school and high school programs.

The program offers several impressive academic enrichment classes, including robotics, chess, filmmaking, conflict resolution and anger management. Ms. Wills is very pleased with these stimulating and unique activities. To broaden the variety further, she wants to add a foreign language class and field trips to USC. She also wants to reinstate a debate class, public speaking and a book club. Academic enrichment through ASPs should offer what the regular school cannot, Ms Wills says.

**Sports** are the almost exclusive domain of Youth Services. Ms. Wills considers these routine athletic activities sufficient. YS also schedules noon leagues. In addition, USC frequently comes to campus for sports clinics and competitions. Ms. Wills wants to add golf both after school and during P.E. class.

Fine and performing arts is not a strength of MLK, but it does sponsor a fine dance program. MLK and Foshay face the common problem of finding, hiring and funding specialty staff. Whenever possible, Ms. Wills prefers to hire from the teaching ranks. One promising idea: hire talented high school seniors with a community service obligation to conduct art, music, dance, and drama classes. She also wants trips to USC for performances, and enriching field trips sponsored by YS. These should not be just for sports and entertainment.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers are pleased with MLK as a resource for students, parents, and staff. The school has a case review panel that meets to discuss the academic, behavioral, and social needs of students referred to it.
Teachers often suggest MLK as a place where students can receive the attention they may miss during the day. They like the monitored setting and the fact that staffers press students to complete assignments. However, there is no effective form of communication between day staff, MLK teachers, and paraprofessionals. Teachers would further support MLK if they had a roster of participating students and access to feedback. Ms. Wills says her teachers like data.

Parents are eager for a safe, secure location and are less interested in the quality of the experience. They want the administrator on campus each afternoon locating kids and helping with problems for the duration of the program. Ms. Wills knows some parents are happy for their children to be occupied with something that interests them. But they want more supervision as well as Saturday classes.

**Agency and District Support**
Agency staff members visit the school, walk through classes, and respond to calls. The RLA meets frequently with all ASPs, and there is an initial meeting at the start of the year to set goals, coordinate offerings and decide scheduling. Ms. Wills also meets with the founder of MLK. The administrators find Beyond the Bell easy to reach but suggest that a BTB comprehensive policy guide would better serve the field and an administrative organizational chart would further help.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Ms. Wills wants MLK and all ASPs on her campus to know academic goals and daytime practices. The same administrative policies regarding dress and conduct and showing respect to teachers should apply after school as well as during the day. She believes both the ASPs and the school share responsibility for the students. So many programs simultaneously serve Foshay pupils that lines between ASPs sometimes are blurred. There is a positive and collaborative atmosphere with the collective goal to serve children wherever they can learn and grow, with more attention to helping participants and perhaps less to who is claiming them.

Keeping track of where active pupils go from day to day and hour to hour is a constant challenge. Coordinating the many programs is a full-time job, but creates differentiated ASP experiences. After-school programs at Foshay Learning Center can be tailored to meet both the academic and social needs of children.
Case Study Observations
Foshay Learning Center
Martin Luther King Legacy Association (MLK)

Introduction
This program serves the middle school students at Foshay Learning Center (a K-12 school) located in south Los Angeles. The sponsor is the Martin Luther King Legacy Association (MLK). The site coordinator is Ms. Climmie Jones.

Highlights
The highlight of this program is the quality of activities. Students engage in appropriate and challenging activities. They seem motivated to work hard, but also enjoy themselves. Staff members in these activities engage the students in a positive and productive manner. These staff members focus on the tasks and command respect. The students respond positively to them. However, there are indications that MLK activities do not serve the large populations claimed by the data.

Homework and Academics
This program integrates academic enrichment into homework help sessions. There is a math homework club, an English homework club, and a general homework club. “The math teacher helps the math homework and the English teacher helps the language arts homework, so there is high-quality homework assistance,” Ms. Jones said. “There is no problem with homework assistance.” In addition, teacher aides help the general homework staff member and refer questions.

Observers confirmed this. In one session, 20-30 sixth-graders worked on a project related to global warming. The teacher’s overhead projector displayed a letter titled "Let's Clean Up the Planet for Future Generations." The students worked individually and in pairs through a homework packet on homebuilding. This day they drew floor plans. The teacher returned graded papers, answered questions, and helped the students. Half the students talked softly while they worked. The teacher did not seem to mind, telling them to keep voices down only once.

Another afternoon, activity hummed in the math room. About 25 students worked on pre-algebra exercises and chatted. They worked individually and in groups of three to five. The groups tended to be same-sex, but of mixed ethnicity. Some students worked problems on the board for their groups. The teacher rarely spoke to the whole class, except for at clean-up time. She and an aide walked around helping those who needed it. There was good flow and the students made progress. When the end of the activity came, the students protested. They clearly wanted to stay. This was more like a clubhouse than a classroom.

Another math group wound down when the observer arrived. A Beyond the Bell delegation was leaving after viewing an Options curriculum presentation. Eight students worked individually and in groups. One worked out a slope-intercept problem at the board; others coached him. The staff member sat at her desk, working with the radio on. She answered questions when the students approached her. They seemed very comfortable, like they belonged there.

Ms. Jones remained in the room after the delegation left and the teacher told her of the students’ progress. She said they are the best, but if they ever get in trouble, Ms. Jones should refer them to her because she is harder on them than the dean is. The staff member took the initiative to send home a slip with each student vouching for his or her whereabouts.
Academic time is important to the students. Ms. Jones said math and science are among their favorite activities.

**Sports & Recreation**
Observers watched basketball, soccer, and cheerleading. An observer spent three days watching the boys’ basketball team practice for the Beyond the Bell sports league. On the first, 11 boys started the practice and others joined in. They began with stretching and running. They followed with passing, jump shots, and rebound drills. The coach ran the drills in business-like fashion. He encouraged the players and expected them to practice hard. The boys responded in kind.

Another day, nine boys in grades 6-8 played a game. They played cooperatively even though the coach was out about 15 minutes to call a parent about a disruptive student.

Another practice involved 14 team members who began with stretches and running. The coach inspected the soles of one player’s shoes to keep them from damaging the gym floor. After a few minutes of free shooting, the coach divided them into teams for a game. He provided some direction.

At the end of the day, students from MLK and two other ASPs played soccer. They ran and kicked without soccer balls or scores. Ms. Jones said this was for "the stray Beyond the Bell kids." By 5:30 p.m., the MLK staff had left and YS staff members supervised the playground activities.

Four students practiced cheerleading. No one coached or supervised them. They were well coordinated, both vocally and physically.

Ms. Jones wants to offer swimming. “Every student should learn how to swim,” she said. However, finding parent volunteers might be a challenge.

**Arts & Other Enrichment**
Additional enrichment activities included projects and clubs. An observer watched one project session. Fifteen students in the seventh and eighth grades worked on a recycling project. The students stayed engaged.

The chess club has more than 30 members. They trained for a biannual tournament. One afternoon, 12 team members practiced in the school library. They were very engaged. The group planned a trip to Northridge. Ms. Jones showed pictures of the chess club to an observer. She said a school newspaper article featured them.

The school has a robotics team. Six members, three boys and three girls, sat at a table in the back of the sixth-grade math room. While the girls sat to the side and did math homework, the boys were programming and practicing. They instructed a Lego robot to go around a track and pick up a ball. Their program was glitched. The teacher, who led a math group of about 25 students, monitored the robotics team. The boys interacted intensely. The girls, less so. One engaged the boys in a spirited debate about the logic in programming the robot to go around a track. One boy seemed to direct the group, but he was more active than informative. Late in the observation period, the teacher checked on them. She asked many knowledgeable questions to guide the group’s actions. At one point, this boy repeatedly talked over the others. She told him to listen and let the others speak.

Observers also watched computer and crafts activities. The computer group had seven students and one staff member. The students quietly played individual computer games. The staff member watched them,
but did not leave her desk or interact with them. The crafts group consisted of one staff member and five students. Two students painted. The staff member said students decide on their projects and required supplies for fundraisers. They recently participated in the 2008 Pasadena Chalk Festival.

Ms. Jones said projects like arts and crafts, robotics and making a camera are among the students’ favorite activities. She wants to offer self-esteem and public speaking classes, but she said finding an instructor and resources would be a challenge.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Observers had limited opportunities to view activities. All four-observation days were atypical. One was an in-service Tuesday that took away staffers who were also day school teachers, prompting cancellations. There was also eighth-grade graduation day, and a day when the interview with Ms. Jones took most of the time. When observers saw the sessions, students stayed engaged in appropriate activities and enjoyed themselves under close supervision.

Staff members rarely faced discipline problems. Disruptive students tended to be overly exuberant during the activities. During most observations, staff members encouraged students, commanded respect and stayed focus on the task. The participating students seemed to thrive in that environment. Sometimes, staff members provided little more than supervision.

An observer noted the difficulty of applying determining whether students were friendly to the staff, as opposed to merely respectful. “There was a clear difference in status between the staff and the kids,” the observer wrote. “The kids respected the staff members and responded very positively to them, but ‘friendly’ doesn't describe how they relate.

Although the program’s listed closing time is 6 p.m., activities tended to end much earlier. On observation days, almost all students were gone by 5:15 p.m. It is possible that the early departures were due to the special scheduling.

**Staff**

According to Ms. Jones, administrators at Foshay mix staff members and students from different ASPs and funding streams to achieve adequate daily coverage. In terms of staffing, the boundaries between MLK and other ASPs are not distinct.

There are two staff levels: teachers, who earn $25.00 per hour, and teacher aides, who earn $20.00 hour. This is about twice as much as staffers earn at other ASPs. Ms. Jones attributes the difference to using certified teachers as staffers. She said she has no difficulty keeping posts filled.

Volunteers help with security. The program does not appear to use substitutes or specialized staff.

Staff members receive minimal training. Both new and experienced staff members get CPR and first-aid training. Also, an assistant principal reviews school policies and emergency procedures. Ms. Jones said the staffers get no special training on classroom management or understanding LAUSD curricula, but certified teachers on the staff already have such training. “Teachers have some of their own students in the after-school class,” Ms. Jones said. However, she said staffers would most benefit from training on emergency procedures and classroom rules.

Staff members keep a professional demeanor when dealing with students. Most do a good job of structuring activities and helping students learn. Ms. Jones is excited about the ASP. One observer described her as “very talkative, informative, and dedicated.”
Material Resources
Ms. Jones is happy with the ASP’s allocation of materials, equipment, and space. She said there are enough materials and equipment for between 15 and 30 students per class. The program also has access to the school’s library and computer lab. She is also satisfied with the snacks and the janitorial services provided. The snacks consist of protein, fruit, and juice or milk. However, she said she wants more variety and hot meals once a month. About two weeks after her interview, Ms. Jones learned schools should provide ASP snacks. Up to that time, she had been directing extra program money to purchase snacks herself.

Ms. Jones is happy with the custodians’ work. “Bathrooms are always getting cleaned,” she said. “Graffiti gets cleaned up quickly. If there is a problem, students come and tell the [staff].”

Despite the bounty of resources, Ms. Jones said a lack of transportation has been a challenge for the ASP. She wants that included in the budget. She also wants budget meetings every three to four months, when tracks change.

Relationship with the School
The ASP has a very close relationship with the school. Ms. Jones said “teachers and administration work with us.” Her primary contact at the school is an assistant principal, with whom she has a good relationship. “I look up to her,” she said. “She is inspirational to me.” They talk every day, in person, in meetings or by cell phone. They also carpool together. Common topics are food service improvements expected by July 2008, behavior issues, plans, and budget cuts.

Ms. Jones communicates with teachers through visits to their classrooms and meetings. She said she helped teachers plan the chess club and arts and crafts class, and she provided supplies for a robotics club competition. She has not asked the school to share students’ test or assessment scores with the ASP. She said staff members learn of homework from students, who she said are truthful because they prefer to do it at school instead of at home.

Ms. Jones seemed to have a personal and friendly relationship with all the school’s adults and many students. “As we walked in the halls, she introduced me to different people,” one observer wrote. “Everybody knows her. She is very outgoing, dedicated, and loves the students. She puts a lot of effort into the ASP.”

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Ms. Jones described strong relationships with both parents and the community. The ASP communicates with parents through orientation, flyers, and a twice-yearly parent night. They also answer parents’ questions at pick-up time. The staff also tries to provide services like parenting classes, computer classes, and English classes. The parents, in return, support the program.

Staffers have close ties to the community, especially churches, schools, businesses, and neighbors. If a student misbehaves at a local establishment or in the neighborhood, employees or community members call the school. Ms. Jones said students recently received free tickets from the Staples Center and to the Ford Amphitheatre’s presentation of *Romeo and Juliet*. USC has offered free access to its sports events and helps advertise the tutoring program. Also, Superior Market donated $7,500 for the robotics team.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
Ms. Jones said the agency is supportive. It gives the ASP whatever it needs. She said communication is good. “I know all of them and love them all,” she said. “loves them all.” She cited no
weaknesses in either relationship. Jones also spoke of desiring an expanded relationship with Beyond the Bell and its partner agencies. She said she would like to take one group of students every year to Beyond the Bell to show the staff what the students have been doing. Also, Ms. Jones told an observer that she would like [the evaluators] to share their ASP information with other sites and she would like to learn more about other ASPs.

**Attendance**

More than 500 middle school students participate in after school activities at Foshay, Ms. Jones said. This includes MLK, school-based intervention, YS, and LA Bridges (all of which are under the Beyond the Bell umbrella). The school’s mixing of staff and students from different ASPs made observing program attendance and participation difficult. Still, observers indicated that, on any given day, the total number of students in the classrooms identified as part of the MLK was fewer than 50.

Ms. Jones said the ASP attracts participants and encourages attendance through “fun days,” announcements of events over the P.A. system, word-of-mouth, classroom orientations, and promoting the tutoring program as a way to improve grades. The program has no wait list.

Ms. Jones said the various ASPs on campus do not compete for, but instead share, students. She said robotics and sports offerings had drawn more students to improve MLK’s attendance statistics, and attendance in the overall program has improved.

Program attendance seemed noticeably low during the two May observations. Ms. Jones said teacher in-service training and a track change might have interfered with attendance. Later, during another observation, she cited standardized testing as an obstacle. She said the school did not dismiss the students early after the tests. As a result, they left the ASP early. An observer wrote:

> The ASP lasts from 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., but by 5:15 p.m., students were gone. I received a schedule of classes with room numbers. Some rooms were locked and one class was on a field trip. Ms. Jones was helpful and walked me to several classrooms. However, I was only able to observe five activities because when I arrived, I had to wait for Ms. Jones to come; some classrooms with scheduled sessions were locked; one class moved to a different building, but students were gone; and students left early.

**Safety & Security**

Ms. Jones is satisfied with the safety and security of the school. She said six staff members walk the floors with walkie-talkies. Ms. Jones has a direct number to the police for emergencies. Observers recorded no concerns about student safety.

Property security is “pretty good,” Ms. Jones said, noting that the program hasn’t lost anything. Ms. Jones suggested no improvements here.

**Conclusions and Comments**

This ASP has some very strong activities and relationships. The math clubs, robotics club, and basketball team feature structured activities, knowledgeable staff, and opportunities to develop skills. The students in these activities worked hard and enjoyed themselves. The site also offers important opportunities for students to participate in chess and physical activity.

Ms. Jones has a close and productive relationships with parents, the community, and especially with other ASPs and the school. Foshay seems to have one ASP with multiple providers, purposes, and funding streams. It is impossible to determine the role of MLK in providing the program activities.
Much of the program was not available to observers, despite an extra visit to gather more observations. They only observed a fraction of the students and activities that Ms. Jones described. Although Ms. Jones pointed out many strengths of the ASP, she mentioned only two weak points.

Overall, observers noted that the ASP offers a few high-quality activities for a small number of highly motivated students. Programming for the vast majority of the middle school students did not seem to exist. Also, observers noticed a discrepancy between the ASP’s attendance data and what they saw. When the project’s survey specialists visited the ASP, they could not complete enough surveys to meet their minimum requirements. A second visit was required to collect at least 30 student surveys, the number required for statistical viability.

The observation schedule, at a time when middle school ASP attendance tends to fall off, may have been responsible for some of the problem. But we recommend further observation of this ASP next year to resolve the data discrepancy.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Virgil Middle School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>152 N. Vermont Ave.</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90004</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Ada Snethen Stevens</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>2179</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.9% Hispanic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3% Filipino</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5% Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4% Black</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>.6% White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.4% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 43.7% |
| English Language Learners                      |       |
| Total: 952                                     |       |
| 858 Spanish                                    |       |
| 49 Filipino                                    |       |
| 24 Korean                                      |       |
| 20 Other                                       |       |
| 1 Russian                                      |       |

### After-School Program Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>BRESEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fonda Whitehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:fwhitehead@bresee.org">fwhitehead@bresee.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-387-2822</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># ASP Students</th>
<th>336</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Days of Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%72-107 Days</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 641 |
| API – 2007 | 585 |
At Virgil Middle School, the coordination and supervision of multiple ASPs is delegated to the Assistant Principals, who gave informed responses on the P.F. Bresee Foundation. This ASP excels through efforts on numerous fronts to build rapport with participants and their families by providing excellent after-school activities and connections that support participants. Bresee maintains sound academic programs, stresses positive socialization and builds self-esteem through a structured format.

Examples of Bresee’s commitment to Virgil Middle School and to its members include: (1) more effort this year to reach out to students and staff through higher visibility on the Virgil campus, including taking part in daily supervision; (2) providing rides home to participants because of the hazardous neighborhoods surrounding the school and the off-campus Bresee Building where the program operates; (3) a history of community services to the local families; (4) a well-regarded case management unit and tutoring program, and (5) contributing as an active member of the Virgil Resource Coordination Team at IEP and SST meetings. This involvement is not commonly seen by ASPs: participation provides important data about student needs, social interaction and information gathered in the specialized setting of an informal, yet structured, after school program.

As with almost all district ASPs, school supervisors suggest improvements. In their review of program components, Ms. Snethen and Mr. Valdez share similar views on the ASP’s strengths and weaknesses, but are generally pleased with the Bresee Foundation.

**Components**

*Homework assistance* shows effort and dedication but could improve through the use of smaller groups with more staff working in more rooms. Math homework help is a strength at Bresee and is coordinated with Virgil Middle School math coaches who align homework with school curriculum and teacher expectations. The program might improve with more training in other academic areas, to be provided by agency and school leaders. Program leaders might be more effective if they had more help in managing student behavior. Both assistant principals want to contribute to such training.

Bresee’s impressive computer lab, housed in the Bresee building, is where various forms of academic enrichment take place. In addition to technology experiences, Virgil administrators and teachers suggested other enrichment activities, including classes featuring science, history, journalism, environmental education, and a gardening club.

*Sports* are a relatively routine activity at Bresee. Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen believe more variety would attract students and provide better skill development. They suggested a bike club, a running program, softball and additional intramurals with other schools. “Kids get engaged through sports,” Ms. Snethen said. She wants to add a track and field component with cross-country and year-round running. *Fine and Performing Arts* should be enhanced with music, more student performances in the existing groups, and field trips to see musicals, band performances and theater productions.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers are generally pleased with homework assistance. They also like a program that stresses an additional three hours of English. They believe smaller groupings are needed, but are impressed with the Bresee math homework help. In general, teachers approve of the Bresee Foundation because it engages young people productively and keeps them from going home “to empty apartments.” Teachers also appreciate and comment on the excellent computer instruction provided by this ASP in its lab.
Parents have shared their approval of Bresee, saying they value the homework help, they like the staff and find comfort in the safe, structured atmosphere. They have heard no complaints, but parents do ask for more family events and more activities where their children can participate in concluding performances.

**Agency and District Support**
Both assistant principals attested to excellent communication with Bresee local and agency staff, saying they know whom to contact. Minor issues with students in this program are handled at the site “before they become problems,” and there has been no need to involve agency personnel. They consider the agency to be both active and responsive.

“The administrators and the agencies have meetings where they talk about what the program is doing and what the administrators would like,” said Mr. Valdez. “They are very collaborative. They have formal meetings at least twice a year and meet informally anytime.”

The administrators do not have much communication with Beyond the Bell. “It’s pretty collaborative,” they said. “If the administrators have needs, they just have to voice [them].” Mr. Valdez believes Beyond the Bell should continue what they are doing and says, “Whatever message they send to their subcontractors is good.”

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
In their concluding remarks, Mr. Valdez and Ms. Snethen noted Bresee’s strong homework “club” approach and its extension into the Virgil tutoring program. They note strides have been made in communication and image enhancement. Overall, they consider it a successful, well-liked program.
Case Study Observations
P.F. Bresee Foundation (BRESEE)
Virgil Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at the Bresee Foundation Community Center in mid-city Los Angeles. The program serves students from nearby Virgil Middle School (a 6-8 school). Ms. Fonda Whitehead is the site coordinator.

Highlights
A noteworthy characteristic of this ASP is that it does not take place at the school. It is located at the Bresee Foundation Community Center, approximately three blocks from Virgil Middle School. The program provides van service between the middle school and the community center. The arrangement defines this program in many ways.

The community center has multiple rooms. Central to the program is the building’s Youth Center, which contains a snack bar, video games, a television room, a D.J. room, reading materials, and many types of games. All participating students gathered in this room at least twice a day. This area appeared to function more as a clubhouse than a school. Also, only a few activities occurred within a classroom setting, with a staff member acting as a teacher. Often, small groups of students participated in activities of their own interest. Activities with large groups of students involved many adults circulating and interacting with the students.

Although the program followed a definite schedule, the students had substantial unstructured time with many appropriate activities from which to choose. There were also extended off-site events (such as multi-day camping and biking trips) that were important to the students. Overall, the program intentionally functioned more like a youth club than an extension of the school day.

Homework and Academics
Homework assistance occurred in the Learning Center and two other rooms. During separate observations, a group of about 20 students participated in homework time in the Learning Center.

Several adults and high school volunteers (up to five of each) provided assistance. The students trickled into the room and sat at tables in groups of up to five. Most began working on their own, and on-task behavior tended to fluctuate early in the session. Further into the session, more students focused on school-related work. Some adults and high school volunteers circulated; others provided one-on-one help. To get one boy started on his homework, a high school helper brought him a pencil and showed him the assigned math problems in his book. The staff and volunteers generally were proactive in asking the students what they were working on and seeing if they needed any help with their homework. Early in one session, the leader asked for the students’ attention for two minutes. She explained how they could earn incentive points by bringing in their progress reports or report cards. They could earn points for bringing them in and more points for improving their grades. Students who had completed their homework played games until the end of the session.

Another homework area was the HOSTS room. The HOSTS (Help One Student to Succeed) program brought in adult volunteers to provide mentoring and homework assistance. On each of the two observations in this room, there was one adult and four or five students. On each occasion, the students focused on the programmed task, whether completing homework or an art project. One day, the adult read with one of the students, asked him questions, and looked for words in a dictionary. Another day, three
students asked the volunteer about college. The observer said they wanted to know “what she majored in, how she decided on her major, and if she liked her major now that she is done with school. The volunteer answered their questions and the conversation seemed very productive.

Students also did homework in the computer lab. Staffers said students who had homework requiring research could spend homework time in this lab. During the observations, one staff member supervised up to 10 students. The students engaged in a variety of activities: formatting documents, playing computer games, viewing websites, and working on typing skills. The staff member circulated and provided help. The room was quiet and there was little conversation between students. Both of the observations occurred late in the session, which might have been a reason that there was little evidence of students using the computers for research.

In an interview, the site coordinator said:

Homework assistance is not a big challenge. [The program has] appropriate staff to do it. It can improve if staffers talk to teachers to make sure students are turning in their homework. The program also needs more space to improve homework assistance.

**Sports and Games**

The site coordinator said sports is one of the activities students like the most. Despite this, observers did not see many sports activities. One observer did notice a large group of students playing soccer in the gym. They were preparing for an upcoming game. On another day, basketball was cancelled due to a funeral at the church where the gym was located.

**Arts**

Students engaged in a variety of arts activities. Music-related activities included one staff member teaching four boys how to play some notes on the guitar and students recording in the D.J. booth. The Community Center has a full D.J. booth that the students use to record beats or songs they have created. A D.J. also visits to teach D.J. skills to the students.

Students also engaged in filming and acting. While two boys helped a staff member behind the camera, six other boys acted out a skit. Actors wore *lucha libre* masks, a giraffe costume, and other animal costumes. An observer describes the activity:

The group is acting out a scene where the *luchadores* gang up on the giraffe. The skit is very funny. All of the students are very engaged and appear to be having a lot of fun. The site coordinator said film and editing classes are among the students’ favorites.

The Girls’ Club used a visual arts activity as a way to promote conversation. Staff provided magazines, scissors, glue, and paper, and the girls made collages. Afterward, they discussed their feelings.

A group of boys painted on small canvasses. They worked from photos of buildings, but their products were relatively abstract representations. The staff member began the session by checking-in on what each had accomplished so far and discussing a painting of the nearby Eco-Village. During the session, she tried to keep the participants on-task and reasonably quiet.

The site coordinator expressed a desire to expand arts programming. “I would like to see more arts like dance and music workshops,” she said. “The challenges would be having the resources and professional staff.”
Other Enrichment

Many activities at Bresee did not fall into the categories of academics, sports, or arts. Instead, they tended to focus on social development, socializing, and free time.

Observers viewed the Girls’ Club on three different days. This club aims to boost participants’ self-esteem through conversations about being a girl. During the observations, up to seven girls and two staff members participated. A staff member asked a question of an individual girl, she answered, and the staffer asked follow-up questions. One day, the girls talked about an incident during the week in which they felt positively and/or negatively about themselves. On another day, the question was about the girls’ hopes and dreams in life. The staff member provided examples for both the short and long term. Some girls mentioned graduation, traveling, and being a better person. Staff members contributed to the conversation and provided advice. An observer described the sessions as a comfortable environment. “The girls were engaged in the conversations and not shy about sharing their experiences,” the observer noted. Some boys participated in an anger management class, but it was not included in the observations.

The first 45-minute period of each day was listed as “Snack & Chat.” Participants arrived from school and gathered in the building’s youth center. The number of students and adults in the room increased over time.

On a typical observation day, students participated in different activities, including playing pool, browsing through magazines, playing checkers, playing or watching “Dance Dance Revolution,” and eating. A small group of adults stood in the snack bar area, made peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and lined them up on the counter. Other adults wandered around the Youth Center and talked with the students, some initiating games of pool or checkers. One stood at the edge of the TV room, making sure that the students did not bring food into the area; another was inside, playing “Dance Dance Revolution.” Music from this game and the students’ energetic chatter could be heard throughout the youth center. At 4:15 p.m., a staff member called, "Homework time!" The students finished their activities and walked to the learning center.

After homework assistance, all of the students (including those in the high school program) gathered in the TV room for announcements. They sat on theatre-like tiers while staff members talked about upcoming events and the day’s activities. One day, they watched a 10-minute video of the “Bresee Olympics.” This event, which had occurred a few weeks earlier, included relay races, a pie contest, and other competitions. The students enjoyed the video. Another day, the topic was filling out and turning in permission slips for a five-day, 230-mile bike trip to Morro Bay. The students seemed very excited about this trip. The announcements included the day’s activities (computer class, a movie, art, and basketball). After announcements, staff released the students to participate in the activity of their choice.

One of the late afternoon sessions was the computer class. Students worked on different projects and activities, including some school projects. The staff member, a graphic designer, taught operations on the computer. The display from his monitor was projected onto a wall for the students to see. He taught students in a relaxed and organized manner how to insert an image into text, check the spelling of a report, and complete various Photoshop operations. He demonstrated the steps, providing the names for the different bars and tools they used. He also used Spanish to speak with a boy who was new to the class.

After demonstrating a few steps, he circulated among workstations checking students’ progress and helping them catch up. There was limited interaction between the students. The staff member said some students expressed an interest in graffiti art. He showed them how they could scan their own images onto a computer, and then tweak them with color and other elements. The students were very impressed by this and want to use the computer more in this way. The staff member said he liked that they were able to practice their art in a safe and productive way.
The TV room was an important space for afternoon activities. Students often played “Dance Dance Revolution,” with the game projected onto the large video screen. Observers noted that the students exercised, had fun, and waited their turn while participating in this activity. Staff members supervised and made sure that everyone had a turn to play. Another activity in the TV room was called “Two Thumbs Up,” which involved watching a movie. One afternoon, most of the students were in this group. An observer visited the room twice and saw students watching a movie, but did not note any discussion or activities pertaining to enrichment.

These other enrichment activities were an important part of the ASP. The site coordinator told an interviewer that computers, video games, and summer camps are among the students’ favorite activities.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Engagement in program activities varied across time and groups. Although the students were generally quiet and not disruptive, observers saw a number of instances where students were not on task. This was often evident during homework time in the learning and computer labs. Conversely, during many other activities, like Girls’ Club, acting and filming, HOSTS, and “Dance Dance Revolution,” the students were highly engaged and enjoying their program time.

Much of the program was devoted to free-time activities or activities that the students chose. Other than homework time, there was limited opportunity or need for staff members to engage in classroom management behavior. The primary strategy used during homework time and Snack & Chat was to have several staff members and volunteers circulating and engaging the students. This provided supervision for all and assistance for those who needed it. Those who were not engaged, but also not disruptive, tended to remain that way.

The only classroom management problem observed occurred during an art class. The six boys in the class tended to be on task when the staff member spoke to them, but did a lot of playing when she did not. The boys often talked loudly, and the staff member raised her voice to be heard over them. She told the observer that about half of the boys were new to the group (probably due to a recent track change). She also told the observer that there were usually two teachers. Her co-worker was stuck in traffic. About that same time, another art teacher entered the room and went right to work with the boys. The energy in the room immediately changed and became more focused and quiet.

During Snack & Chat, one boy—small in stature and possibly the only one in the room of Asian heritage—wandered around eating. He did not engage in any activities, but seemed to hover around different activities to watch. He stopped and stood a few feet away from the pool table to watch four boys play an energetic game of pool. A bigger boy who was playing brushed past him almost as though he wasn't there. Later, the Asian boy did play checkers with other students in a seating area of the youth center. A staff member initiated the checkers game and then returned to the snack bar after enough students got involved.

An important strategy for engagement and classroom management was the Bresee “points” system. The students earned points for attendance and positive behavior. They could use these points to purchase snack bar items and school supplies, or to pay for part of their costs for a field trip. The program had a points bank in which the students could make deposits and withdrawals, thus learning about banks and how to save.

Staff
Staffing appeared to be one of the major assets of this ASP. Many staff members have been with the program for five years or more and many were alumni of the program. The site coordinator told an interviewer that they “have no problem keeping employees.” She also reported that the program has no problems securing substitutes, specialized staff, or staff members qualified to provide homework assistance. In addition, the program has support from volunteers who help with leading workshops and sports, mentor students in reading and math, and help coordinate trips. The site coordinator provided the salary ranges for four positions at the site: $15.00-$16.00 per hour for program coordinator, education coordinator, and computer instructor, and $15.00-$17.00 per hour for case manager.

Training opportunities are available to staff. New staff members receive basic after-school program training, along with CPR, team building, and financial training. In addition, experienced staff members receive training on how to start an after-school program. The site coordinator reported that the staff also receives training in behavior management, classroom management, and understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. She said more such training, plus an element on team building, would most benefit staff.

“There is a general sense that the staff members really care for the students and are very invested in their success,” an observer said. Other observers agreed. The program had many staff and volunteers. They actively engaged both individuals and groups of students. The staff and volunteers seemed to enjoy working with the students and getting to know them. They showed ample motivation and engagement.

**Material Resources**

In contrast to other ASPs, this was a self-contained program. It did not receive space, snacks, or janitorial services from a school. This middle-school ASP had access to a multi-faceted youth center, learning lab, computer lab, and MPR in the community center. Sports activities occurred in the gym at Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, which is on the same block and visible from the community center. This church founded the Bresee Foundation in 1982. Between the community center and the church was a small garden of native plants. The community center also served high school students, who had separate space and largely separate activities.

The site coordinator reported that the program has plenty of space and enough materials and equipment. The youth center includes a pool table, video games, D.J. and viewing rooms, and a well-appointed snack bar. The program had its own computer lab, as well as many books. The site coordinator was satisfied with the cleanliness of the building and there was a janitor on staff. The program provided its own after-school snacks to participants. The only challenge regarding material resources related to space for homework. The site coordinator said she needs more.

**Relationship with the School**

The site coordinator described a positive relationship with Vigil Middle School. The ASP’s primary contact persons were a vice-principal and the principal. She said they have an excellent relationship and “help each other out.” She explained that the administrators were very open to allowing Bresee staff to come onto campus and also to take students on field trips. They communicated bi-weekly by email, telephone, and in person. Common topics included coordinating services, attendance, report cards, and upcoming events.

Communication with classroom teachers was “very good,” the site coordinator said. Teachers commonly came to the program site and led workshops. They also called to inquire about students. Math teachers provided curriculum to Bresee staff and engaged in some joint planning. Students took daily homework sheets to their teachers. If the teachers signed off, the students received Bresee incentive points. The site coordinator did say, however, that homework assistance could improve if staffers talk to teachers to make
sure students are turning in their homework. The school did not share the students’ test or assessment scores, and joint planning with teachers occurred only in math.

Asked about the strengths and weaknesses in the ASP’s relationship with the school, the site coordinator said there was “good communication; the school is very informed about activities.” On the other hand, “the school needs to communicate to the agency [about] minimum days, testing, etc.”

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

The program has strong connections with parents and the community. Family events and workshops impart information to parents. Workshops occurred every six weeks and topics included nutrition, aerobics, support groups, and computer classes. The program also sent parents quarterly fliers on activities. Staff members have attended parent conferences with teachers at the school site. The program also has reached out to parents of students new to the program as a technique to encourage students’ regular attendance. A program strength in its relationship with parents was the many activities that involve them. A weakness was the difficulty of getting parents involved when work interferes with the program schedule.

The site coordinator said that staff members were “very familiar with the community; they know everyone [within] a mile radius.” Community organizations and local businesses provided diverse forms of support, including funding, food, workshops, help with organizing events and use of certain buildings. For example, Subway provided sandwiches, Von’s donated bread and money, and the Los Angeles Eco-Village gave ecological workshops and talked about bicycle safety. Regarding the community, she said “there is a good relationship [and] they help each other,” but they could share more resources.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The site coordinator had little to say about relationships with the agency and Beyond the Bell. Because the program occurred in the agency’s facility and was the agency’s only after-school program, there was no distinction between the ASP and the agency. Of Beyond the Bell, she noted that they come to campus and work like Bresee staff. She would like to build a stronger relationship with Beyond the Bell.

**Attendance**

Attendance seemed a difficult area for the program. There was no wait list and the site coordinator said keeping students three to five times a week was the biggest challenge this year. The program has applied many strategies to encourage enrollment and attendance. The site coordinator said these included:

…providing fun activities, calling students when they are absent, giving them incentives such as points for consistent attendance, and hosting family events. We attract new students by going on campus at Virgil during lunchtime and passing out fliers. We give points to our students when they bring friends. We also attend school events on campus.

Another technique for increasing attendance was initial contact with the parents. “Once they come in the agency, they can buy into [the Bresee] system,” the site coordinator said. “Parents are impressed and get involved.”

Other factors interfered with attendance, including:(1) The school’s addition of a seventh period; (2) student tendency to disappear when they go off track; (3) tutoring programs for low-performing students; and (4) student testing schedules. Also, another LAUSD-funded ASP is on campus at Virgil, and it competes for the same students.

**Safety & Security**
The site coordinator expressed no concerns about safety or security. She said the students were “very safe.” She also noted that the students carry I.D. cards, and the program is very aware of everyone that comes in. Staff members carried phones or walkie-talkies. She also said that the program was satisfied with security for property.

The program largely took place inside one building. This building had one entry door, which was staffed by a receptionist. The homework room and youth center had a unique feature that would be very uncommon in a school setting: as students enter a room, they swipe their I.D. cards, which unlocks the door and credits them for being in the room. Thus, program staffers know who has been in the computer room each day.

Conclusions and Comments
The Bresee Foundation program for Virgil Middle School students had many characteristics that distinguished it from other ASPs. The program took place in its own facility and had many material resources to support activities. The program was responsible for its own space, snacks, security, and cleaning. Despite being separated from the school, the program remained connected to it. There was frequent communication with administrators and teachers, collaboration regarding homework, and some joint planning. Program staff received curricular information from teachers and participated in some parent-teacher conferences. The program also received much support from the community.

Although the program had structural assets like a variety of resources, a dedicated staff, and volunteers, the activities themselves were not distinct from those of the better middle school ASPs. There was a homework hour with varying levels of engagement and actual homework. Academic programming was limited to that. Small groups of students participated in art classes, computer classes, and sports. Students could and did choose to go through the day with no enrichment activities beyond the homework hour. The one special activity observed at this site was the Girls’ Club.

The program provided a context for students to relax, engage in recreational activities, socialize with peers, and spend time with caring adults. The staff provided a safe and supervised environment, and the students seemed to enjoy their time in the program. This is one of the finest middle school ASPs operated in partnership with Beyond the Bell. Any ASP that has access to four or five classrooms or portable buildings could replicate nearly all of its features.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Hamasaki Elementary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90022</td>
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### Principal

| Ana Perez |

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.5% Filipino</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment |
| 48.1% |

| English Language Learners |
| Total: 202 |
| 201 Spanish |
| 1 Vietnamese |

## After-School Program Profile

### After School Program Provider Agency

| Para Los Niños |
| Natalia Flores |
| nflores@paralosninos.org |
| 213-392-0072 |

<table>
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<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 72-107 Days</td>
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<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>63%</td>
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</table>

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 720 |
| API – 2007 | 698 |
Ms. Perez has visited the ASP often and wants to visit more. She is satisfied with some elements, but many others need improvement. For example, the program serves 90 children with three or four program leaders, a ratio that does not support effective homework assistance. Also, there are no classes in art, music, or drama and communication between the ASP and day school is very weak.

Para Los Niños uses only the cafeteria, auditorium, and outdoor eating pavilion. Homework assistance necessarily is a large-group activity, and there is no way to schedule closely monitored academic enrichment opportunities---and no requests from the agency to do so. PLN is adequately delivering only a program of supervised childcare with limited activities conducted by a small, inexperienced staff.

On the positive side, the agency responds quickly to minor problems, and parents consider it an asset. Staffers do a good job with sign-in and sign-out, also supervising a controlled snack period. They cooperate with Youth Services, which absorbs students from the ASP’s waiting list. Ms. Perez is not satisfied with PLN’s limited vision. She plans to get more involved to champion higher expectations and upgraded activities.

**Components**

Ms. Perez has many suggestions for improved homework assistance. Staffers should make sure students understand and complete assignments and should check homework agendas. She knows some students go to the program but do not do their homework. PLN might consider paying Hamasaki teachers to stay later and train staffers on reading and writing support. Ms. Perez said they do a better job with math. The high student/leader ratio does not support individual help for students with questions.

Ms. Perez mentioned no academic enrichment activities as part of the PLN program. Last year, a video expert made a video with the students, and it was a popular activity. Ms. Perez wants regularly scheduled academic enrichment such as science lessons where students do actual experiments and make presentations.

Sports activities resemble recess time. Ms. Perez wants cardiovascular exercises and structured activities like games with rules that use large and fine motor skills. The directions should have two steps or more to help with listening skills and leadership skills. “Sports do that,” she said, “help with leadership skills.” Ms. Perez wants more competition: intramurals, soccer, flag football, cheerleading, drill team. “They need more structure and physical engagement,” she said. “I don’t see much physical engagement in the program and it tends to get a little loud.”

Outside of the video activity, Ms. Perez said she has not seen any fine and performing arts. She wants dances from around the world, so students can learn about other cultures.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers know when the ASP fails to provide homework help. They and Ms. Perez want better communication. The teachers do not consider PLN as an integral part of the school and see it as “just an after-school program for working parents.” She wants to survey teachers on their opinion of PLN’s impact.
Parents, particularly those who speak only Spanish, appreciate the homework support. They find the program safe. Ms. Perez believes the ASP could provide some parent training through the 40 Developmental Assets method, which could give them questions to encourage conversations with their children. “Children have a long day here,” Ms. Perez said. “When they come home, they usually don’t want to talk.”

**Agency and District Support**
The agency has shown only mild interest in working with Ms. Perez, although it responded to problems brought to its attention. Officials come to the school at the beginning and end of the year, and the site coordinator came by to introduce herself. Ms. Perez said the former coordinator was more proactive; she also had a vision for the ASP that more closely supported the day program. She said the supervisor should regularly monitor the ASP and the new coordinator. She wants a monthly newsletter to keep her informed and to give notice of special activities “sooner than the day of or the day before.” She has yet to see a calendar.

Beyond the Bell has not become involved in resolving any serious problems. Ms. Perez wants a meeting with its personnel to discuss strategies and fiscal support.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Ms. Perez wants a quality experience for her students in the afternoon. She thinks PLN misses many opportunities to provide academic support and enrichment. She hopes it improves soon.
Case Study Observations
Para Los Niños
Hamasaki Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Hamasaki Elementary School (a K-5 school) in East Los Angeles. The sponsor is Para Los Niños. Ms. Gabby Sanchez is the site coordinator.

Highlights
The two most noteworthy aspects of this program are the arts enrichment and the sessions with multiple activities. Observers saw the arts as the ASPs strongest offerings. Children participated in printmaking, crafts projects, and Latin percussion. There was a class on video production. Students wrote, acted in, and filmed a brief video. All these activities significantly engaged the students.

Often, a group did not have a specific activity for all the children. Instead, staffers provided a range of materials and the children chose something to do.

The observations did not capture the program at a typical time. In addition to standardized testing and end-of-year activities, the school building was under construction. The ASP could not use its usual space. Also, Ms. Sanchez said intervention classes prevented some children from starting the ASP on time.

Homework
Homework sessions took place outdoors. The construction was a factor, but Ms. Sanchez also said staff members could choose whether to have homework assistance indoors or outdoors.

The children sat by grade-level groups at outdoor lunch tables. A staff member supervised each group, which sat away from other groups in the lunch area. Janitorial staff had recently hosed down the area. Some tables and benches were still wet. It was windy. The noise level varied, but was sometimes too high for effective homework time.

The level and types of activities varied. A kindergarten group sat waiting, without an activity. They had books, but could not read the words. The staff member did not engage the children. “Some begged me to read to them,” an observer wrote. “I read two stories to a group of about six kids who begged for attention.” Members of a first- and second-grade group drew, colored, and completed worksheets. The fourth- and fifth-graders sat at two widely spaced tables, and one staff member shuttled between them.

The homework assistance session was better another day. Many children worked on homework, and staff members helped them. Those who finished played with Legos, read, or jumped rope. “The students are doing homework outside, but it is quiet enough for students to concentrate,” an observer wrote.

Academics
Observers saw limited academic enrichment opportunities. In one activity, the children stood near a map of the 50 states painted onto the playground. The staff member called out the name of a state and the children guessed the location by standing on the state. The running and jumping provided the children some physical activity.

A group of eight boys in the fourth and fifth grades participated in an academic competition. Members in two teams took turns writing words on a whiteboard that a staff member called out. The staff member also
gave them math problems. He checked their work and gave the teams points. “The boys are engaged,” an
observer wrote. “They seem to like competing against each other.”

Ms. Sanchez said science is one of the students’ favorite activities. However, the observers saw none. She
wants to bring professionals on campus to lead science activities.

**Sports and Recreation**

Ms. Sanchez said the children also like sports. Observers watched one soccer game. A staff member
played alongside the boys. He also encouraged them and cheered when they did well.

The most popular game was handball. Mixed-age groups of up to eight children played against a vertical
board with a playground ball. The children had fun and stayed actively involved.

A staff member usually supervised a group directly. On one occasion, a staff member oversaw both a
handball game and a homework group at the same time.

The children enjoyed other physical activities. They played catch with a ball and Velcro mitts and
climbed on playground apparatus. An interesting activity involved children in second grade and below.
Two staff members wiggled a jump rope on the ground. The children tried to jump over it. If the rope
touched them, they were out. Those called out watched and cheered.

**Arts**

Arts enrichment is an important component of this ASP. Ms. Sanchez said students rate art and theatre
among their favorite activities.

In the printmaking class, first-graders worked on a portrait of Frida Kahlo. The activity leader talked to
them about color and composition in printmaking. She asked them to look at a Frida Kahlo print and
identify which colors are the most striking. She then told them about how to arrange their drawing and
about the dimensions of the face. One child raised his hand and asked, "Miss, can we try our best or does it
have to be exactly like that [referring to the Kahlo print]?” “No, I want you to try your best,” the leader
said. “This is your own work. It will represent you. So, your best is all that I want.” The children began
working on their drawings, using pencils and crayons.

The children had many chances to do crafts. Materials provided included construction paper, scissors,
glue, glitter, ribbons, pens, markers, crayons, and pencils. The children made greeting cards and drawings
of their own choice.

Two groups of children – 10 from kindergarten and first grade, and eight from second and third grades --
participated in a percussion class. Working with a music teacher and a staff member, the children sat in a
circle and learned to play Latin rhythms on drums. The music teacher taught them techniques, which they
imitated. The children enjoyed themselves and helped each other learn. One child told another how to
place her hands on the drums. An observer noted that children in both groups tended to interrupt the
teacher by hitting the drum or talking with raising their hands.

The video production class was a five-week effort led by a representative of Freshi Film Worx. Observers
saw this class in sessions about a month apart. During the first session, the group sat at outdoor lunch
tables while the leader used a laptop to edit the work they had written, acted in, and recorded. As the
leader edited, he also explained and demonstrated what he was doing. A few children interacted with him.
Others watched, but were not involved. Children constantly came and went with little supervision. During
the second observation, the group celebrated the completed video in a classroom. It was a 12-minute
movie and interview on the topic of honesty. They watched the movie while eating cookies and doughnuts. The leader gave them certificates. Several staff members joined the celebration. Some took group photos.

**Other Enrichment**

Sometimes, children participated in other structured activities, such as building items with Legos or playing the card game Uno. Other times, the groups gathered at the lunch tables and each child could pick from a range of activities, such as writing, reading, coloring, or playing games. A basket of books was available.

An observer wrote:

> Half the kids worked on Mother's Day items and half jumped rope. Three others chatted at the far end of the lunch tables. After a few minutes, only one kid was on-task. The arts and crafts activity was quite short.

Although observers did not watch cooking classes, Ms. Sanchez listed this among the children’s favorite activities. This is another class she wants a professional to teach.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Children stayed engaged in arts and sports activities and enjoyed themselves. Structured activities with small groups of children tended to have the most engagement. However, a group often did not have a specific activity, or children in the same group did different things. Engagement was mixed. Often, the staff members seemed to be keeping the children occupied more than providing enrichment.

Staff members kept disruptions in groups to a minimum, but did not always supervise the children. Although the outdoor lunch area could become loud, staff members succeeded in keeping the volume down. However, children could wander through the area without participating in any one group. Staffers often watched more than one group at a time.

The program stayed open until 6 p.m., but activities stopped at 5 p.m. The schedule listed the last hour as free choice. Staff members used the time for cleanup and sign-out. They also kept the children occupied while they waited for parents. Most children left by 5 p.m. One observer noted that only 10 to 15 children remained at 5 p.m. one day. The early end of organized activities significantly reduced enrichment time for the children.

**Staff**

Ms. Sanchez said she is satisfied with staffing despite some challenges in hiring. “The hiring process is too long and applicants lose interest,” she said. Even when qualified candidates apply, the long interval before a final decision discourages them. Posting jobs online and actively recruiting for staff might mitigate problems.

The site coordinator earns $13.00 per hour, the administration clerk earns $11.00 per hour, and associate teachers earn $10.00 per hour. The ASP has no problem securing specialized staff and substitutes. She has confidence in the staff members’ ability to help students with homework. However, increasing staff in that area might help some students who need individual help. The ASP does not have volunteer staff.

New and experienced staff members get the same training: orientation to the daily routine, paperwork and payroll procedures, arts and crafts, IMPACT workshops, and school policies. Supervisors also have weekly meetings. Ms. Sanchez said training in classroom management or LAUSD curricula is still a work
in progress. She said the curriculum coordinator reviews homework with the staff, and the other training will come soon. She said that is the training that would most benefit her staff.

Ms. Sanchez praised the staff and their work. “We enjoy what we do,” she said. “We’re here for the kids and family. We offer a lot, especially when they don’t have the income or [have] other limitations.”

Observers agreed that staff members did seem to enjoy and care about the children. Interactions were positive. When children did not engage, it was likely due to a lack of structured activities.

**Material Resources**

Ms. Sanchez is generally satisfied with the program’s material resources. She said she gets enough space for the program, and the agency provides enough materials and equipment. Observers agree. She said they have access to the library until 4:30 p.m. daily, but there is no computer lab. And she said there is not enough transportation to take all children on field trips.

She is less happy with the snacks and janitorial services the school provides. “Students get bored of the same snacks,” she said. “More variety should be added to the menu.” The areas she uses are usually clean, she said.

**Relationship with the School**

Ms. Sanchez reported a positive relationship between the ASP and the school. She said the strong point is “good communication and willingness to help.” The principal is the primary contact person. They have a good relationship and talk face-to-face three to four times a month, depending on the situation, she said. Common concerns are use of facilities, notification of special guest visits, and new student enrollment.

As for communication with teachers, Ms. Sanchez said teachers regularly ask staffers about student homework completion and behavior. Staffers learn of homework, which is the same for every grade level, by asking students directly or looking in their agendas. She said staffers have done some joint planning with teachers. “Teachers ask us about upcoming themes or field trips to implement or reinforce in their classes,” she said. Staffers have not asked for students’ standardized test or assessment scores.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Ms. Sanchez spoke positively about parent and community relations. She said the program holds monthly meetings for parents (more often if she deems it necessary). Parents have staffers’ phone numbers, and vice versa, for immediate contact. Usual topics include upcoming events, parent involvement, and paperwork procedures. However, even with all this communications, “some parents don’t attend meetings, so they miss out on information,” she said. “They don’t know what is going on.”

Ms. Sanchez said the ASP has good relations with community groups and local businesses. Staffers know the community because they live in it. Office Depot provided supplies this year, and Shakey’s and Dairy Queen awarded certificates to the children.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Sanchez had generally positive things to say about the agency and Beyond the Bell. She said the program usually gets what it needs. The exception is transportation for field trips.

Ms. Sanchez equates Beyond the Bell with Youth Services. “We have good communication and we try to work together,” she said. However, she mentioned that instability weakens the working relationships administrators try so hard to establish.
Attendance
Attendance is strong at this ASP. There is a wait list of 20 students, which staffers use to motivate children to attend. “Every month we see the attendance records,” Ms. Sanchez said. “If we see a pattern of absences, we call parents and give them a week to respond. If [they do] not, we close the case and enroll those on the waiting list.”

She said basing activities on student interests helps keep them involved. “If they are absent, we call the parents. If we see the kids on the playground during recess or lunch, we also ask them.” For recruitment, she sets up a table with balloons where she passes out information and enrolls new students. Also, the principal’s office gives parents flyers about the program.

Despite these efforts and a lack of competition from other ASPs, the average daily attendance in the program dropped during 2007-08. Ms. Sanchez said the school now offers one-on-one tutoring, and that has hurt the program.

Safety and Security
Ms. Sanchez said she is happy with security for both students and ASP property at the site. However, an observer noticed an open and unguarded gate between the school’s playground and Belvedere Community Regional Park. Adults and children use this gate to enter and leave, and it provides a clear opportunity for strangers to enter the campus and for children to leave unnoticed.

Observers also witnessed supervision lapses during many activities. Staff members sometimes oversaw several groups at once or did not engage all children in their groups. Children left groups without asking permission, not always to attend another activity. Children wandered in the lunch area or the playground without being attached to a group.

On the other hand, an observer saw a well-organized procedure for signing-out property.

Ms. Sanchez expressed concern about safety and emergency situations. “We have no access to emergency bins if there was an emergency,” she said. “We need keys to have access to bins and other rooms if necessary.”

Conclusions and Comments
The highly attended and enriched program that Ms. Sanchez described was very different from the program observers described during the May/June observation period. On four visits, observers did not see many activities listed by Ms. Sanchez as among the children’s favorites.

Arts enrichment is clearly the strength of this ASP. The program offers diverse activities taught by specialists that engage the children. However, offerings in academic enrichment and physical activity were limited. Homework assistance often included children involved in many different, non-homework activities.

One glaring area of disagreement regarded security. Ms. Sanchez seemed satisfied, but observers saw some worrisome practices. She complained that hiring new staff is difficult and there are few training opportunities for experienced staff members.

ASP staff members had to contend with many disruptions during the observation period, including testing, school construction, chronic student lateness due to intervention, and the approaching end of the school year. These problems might not represent the norm at this ASP, and some observations revealed areas of effectiveness.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
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<th>School Site</th>
<th>Pio Pico Elementary School (K-8)</th>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
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### Principal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Ronald Steele</th>
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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.3% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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<td>.2% Pacific Islander</td>
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**English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**

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<td>12 Korean</td>
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<td>10 Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Pilipino</td>
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<td>1 Vietnamese</td>
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* Combined elementary and middle school

### After-School Program Profile

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<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natalia Flores</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:nflores@paralosninos.org">nflores@paralosninos.org</a></td>
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<table>
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<td>Average Days of Attendance</td>
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<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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</table>

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 687 |
| API – 2007 | 666 |
Ms. Fimbres is in charge of intervention and the extended day academics at Pio Pico Elementary School (a K-8 school). Principal Dina Sim, who is new at the school, sat in for part of the interview.

Ms. Fimbres considers Para Los Niños (PLN) an excellent ASP, possibly a model for other schools. It has a strong, caring coordinator committed to the success of the ASP. He is responsible for all components in an unusual dual program for span school students. The elementary and middle school entities are almost totally separate, except when special speakers come to campus.

The agency provides site clerical support, uncommon among ASPs. A part-time clerk keeps track daily of all records, schedules and correspondence. This person also responds to parent calls, serves as a liaison between leaders and teachers, and helps publish the monthly PLN newsletter. “We have excellent organization and daily communication with all our partners,” Ms. Fimbres said. “We never have serious problems.”

She attributes the low incidence of behavior issues among middle school participants to the special character of the span school, where older students look out for and interact with younger ones, who are often their siblings. The students also see their elementary teachers every day and feel an obligation to impress them with their good behavior. This atmosphere carries over to the ASP.

PLN’s assets include a responsive agency, clerical support, dedicated classrooms, and strong administrative and certificated personnel. Among these are an administrator directly connected to all campus ASPs, an intervention counselor, and an experienced and well-regarded coordinator. This interview dealt with components that serve middle school students.

**Components**

*Homework assistance* takes place in the multi-purpose room, where students gather by grade level. Three program leaders supervise them. Ms. Fimbres said the experience is positive, but she believes the program could benefit from extending the core curriculum during this time. Ms. Sim also wants improved communication and accountability for the work the students do during homework time.

*Academic enrichment* will expand this year with the use of a mobile computer lab with laptops. This support program is still in development. Program leaders conduct weekly discussions with grade level students on core values and other topics selected by Ms. Sim. Examples include work and careers, tolerance, and making good decisions. Students complete projects around these topics, and their posters and banners hang on the walls of ASP rooms and around the campus. Outside speakers include lawyers, police officers, and local businesspeople.

*Sports* include soccer, flag football, basketball, and softball. Both girls and boys participate. Ms. Sim suggested intramural competitions and more time on skill development. Ms. Fimbres said the athletics offerings represent student preferences.

PLN offers many *fine and performing arts* activities. The agency brings in specialists from time to time. Ms. Sim suggested more culminating activities and experiences shaped to enhance English language development. PLN also schedules activities for the whole school, such as dances and festivals where
middle school students bring friends. This helps with recruiting. The elementary program has a waiting list, but the middle school program does not.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers like the supervised homework assistance, the informative monthly newsletter, and the rosters of participating students. Because of the close relationship among teachers, administrators, and the intervention counselor, referrals come to PLN through SST and IEP meetings. Teachers appreciate the coordinator’s follow-up on behavior concerns or issues with special needs students. He also meets with the staff weekly to plan and direct activities.

Parents are very happy with PLN. They like the monitored attendance and supervised activities.

**Agency and District Support**

The agency received no referrals from the site on problems last year, Ms. Fimbres said. Representatives visit once a week. The agency does some limited fund-raising and secures Dodger tickets and small holiday gifts for students. Administrators have had little contact with Beyond the Bell. Ms. Fimbres wants more funding for late afternoon supervision, and she wants Beyond the Bell to provide radios for ASP and school security staff.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

Both administrators consider Para Los Niños an integral part of Pio Pico. Three years ago, another agency was in charge of the ASP, and it had several serious problems. They are very happy now to have such a well-run and popular ASP. “With David here [site coordinator] we never worry about anything,” Ms. Fimbres said. Although the program could stand some improvement in enrichment and homework assistance offerings, the administrators are happy with this program as it is.
Case Study Observations
Para Los Niños (PLN)
Pio Pico Elementary School

Introduction
This ASP serves the middle school students (grades 6-8) at Pio Pico Elementary School (a K-8 school) located in mid-city Los Angeles. Para Los Niños is the sponsor. Mr. David Torres is the site coordinator.

Highlights
One highlight of this ASP is the off-campus activities and special events. On separate days, Mr. Torres showed observers photos of these activities, which include a weekly ceramics class at an off-campus youth center, guest speakers, field trips, and an end-of-the-year camping trip. Mr. Torres said the trip provides an incentive for students to attend the ASP. He exuded excitement and pride while showing these photos.

He said students’ favorite activities were sports, teambuilding, guitar, ceramics, and theater arts. Except for sports, these did not occur on campus during the observation period. These activities seemed to be a major focus of the ASP.

Homework & Academics
Observations during May and June included limited homework assistance sessions. Staff members answered questions and clarified assignments. When the students completed their homework or did not have any to do, they played board and table games, ate, and socialized. At the time of the observations, the site did not seem to offer any academic enrichment beyond homework assistance.

Mr. Torres said providing quality homework assistance is moderately challenging, depending on the material covered. It might improve by assigning specific staff members to the homework club.

Sports & Recreation
Mr. Torres said sports are at the top of students’ preferences. Observers witnessed students and staff playing softball, soccer, basketball, and flag football.

One afternoon, Mr. Torres led an activity in which girls and boys stood in a circle. A student with the ball called the name of another student in the circle and threw the ball to him or her. When someone dropped the ball, all the students had to do push-ups. Each student was to have a turn at catching the ball. The students had to try several times before succeeding at this. When they did, they won candy. They seemed to enjoy the challenge and the chance to interact with Mr. Torres.

The students also played over-the-line softball on the playground. Observers saw students that played cooperatively, got along with each other, and stayed engaged. Mr. Torres and another staff member supervised. When students not in the ASP rode skateboards near the softball players, Mr. Torres reminded them not to ride in that area.

The students also played soccer, basketball, and flag football. A group of 15 played soccer. The staff member started by having the students warm up (stretching and running laps). Following the warm-up, they began playing soccer. The staff member watched and encouraged the students. He gave them tips on footwork and on making goals. Two staff members and students not in the ASP joined a basketball game. Also, eight students played flag football. A staff member supervised them, but did not join the game.
Arts
Creative arts are important to the ASP. Among these, students like guitar, ceramics, and theater arts best. Observers did not see these.

On two occasions, about five girls drew and painted on butcher paper. They made a Mother’s Day banner shortly before the holiday. This included lettering, cutting, and gluing paper hearts. The staff member used shaving cream to make pastel colors and molded lettering for them. Another day, the girls picked leaves and drew pictures of them or traced them onto paper. Observers noted that the activities engaged the girls and the staff member provided adequate materials.

Other Enrichment
Other activities often consisted of board, table, and card games. These included chess, checkers, caroms, Uno, Connect Four, and a miniature version of pool. One day, the students and two staff members took up brooms and trash bags and cleaned the school’s cafeteria. The students stayed engaged, though it was unclear if they enjoyed the activity.

Staff members paid attention to the students while they played the games. One afternoon, only three students remained by 5:45 p.m. Each was engaged in a one-to-one activity with a staff member. One boy and Mr. Torres played catch with a softball. The other boy played caroms with a staff member. The remaining girl talked earnestly with another staff member on the sidelines. This started while they worked on an art project but became an extended, private conversation after the other girls left.

Although Mr. Torres identified teambuilding as among student favorites, observers did not see any activities specifically devoted to teambuilding.

Mr. Torres wants to offer Pokémon and skateboard clubs. The latter would not involve actual skateboarding, but would include visits to skateboard shops and skateboard maintenance talks. But he said hiring the right staff and getting support from the district would be a challenge.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Observers saw few organized activities at Pio Pico. During many observations, the students had “free choice” and spent their time playing board and table games or chatting. When they participated in sports and arts activities, they engaged and interacted positively with staff members. That seemed important to the students.

An observer wrote:

    Students did not have homework because it is Friday. They were free to choose an activity and switch whenever they wanted. A staff member was absent. Students met in the multi-purpose room, but had to leave because someone else was going to use it. Some students decided to go home.

Another day:

    Students started to arrive in the multi-purpose room at about 3:30 pm. They ate their snacks, chatted, and played games. I asked one staff member if they were going to start activities. She said they would start sports at 4:30 p.m. They did not. I left close to 5 p.m.
Staff
Mr. Torres said it is a challenge to keep staff positions filled because other ASPs pay more. Also, middle school students intimidate some. He said this ASP pays associate teachers $10.00 per hour, the administration clerk $11.00 per hour, and the site coordinator $15.00 per hour. He said the ASP does not have problems finding specialized staff members or substitutes. Parents sometimes volunteer at the ASP, helping organize field trips.

Mr. Torres said staff members have many opportunities for training. New staff members receive LAUSD emergency procedures training and IMPACT training. "Experienced staff members join in with the new staff training," he said. “They also learn how to interact with the students and parents and learn the curriculum and activities.” Staff members also get training in student behavior management, classroom management, and understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. Mr. Torres said they could benefit from more curriculum and behavior management training.

The site provided a limited set of activities. Staff members rarely led activities. More often, they merely supervised the children and participated.

Material Resources
The ASP has access to the multi-purpose room, the covered lunch area, the playground. On two of the four observation days, other activities prevented the ASP from using the multi-purpose room. Mr. Torres said the ASP staffers can borrow classrooms for homework assistance, but they prefer to spread out in the multi-purpose room or outside on the benches. They have access to the library, but Mr. Torres has not requested access to the computer lab. He said space is limited at the school. Last year he spoke to the vice principal about getting dedicated classrooms. He gave no further details. He said the site has enough materials and equipment to support their activities.

Mr. Torres is not happy with the snacks or the school’s cleanliness. He said he wants more variety in the snacks and “a warm meal for a change.” He said the janitors should do a better job cleaning. He does not believe the school has enough of them.

Relationship with the School
Mr. Torres said he has a good relationship with the school administration. His primary contact is a vice principal. Because they share an office, they are in communication every day. Common topics include safety, scheduling, and special events. He only asks that the school notify him of events with more notice.

ASP staffers communicate with teachers through flyers and notes in their boxes. If they have a specific issue to discuss, they make an appointment with the teacher. Teachers get blank progress report cards to rate the ASP staff. Staffers do not plan jointly with teachers or ask for students’ standardized and assessment scores.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Mr. Torres said parents get monthly flyers and meet monthly with ASP staffers. There is also a bulletin board with general information. Staffers can also call parents if there is a specific concern. Usual topics include attendance, upcoming activities/field trips, emergency procedures, and community events. Parents generally support this ASP, but Mr. Torres wants them to volunteer more.

Staffers live in the community, but relationships with local businesses and community organizations are limited. Mr. Torres said businesses and organization are aware of an ASP at the school, but he has not asked them for support. There has been a lack of communication.
Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell

Relationships with the agency and Beyond the Bell are not particularly noteworthy. Mr. Torres reported good communication and support from the agency. He did say the agency should hire staff members “that want to work.” He apparently did not involve the agency in his conversation with the vice principal regarding dedicated classrooms. Mr. Torres also said there was good communication with and support from Beyond the Bell. He said he talks with officials when there are behavior problems. This comment may indicate he confuses Youth Services (YS) with Beyond the Bell.

Attendance

Mr. Torres said he had seen enrollment in his ASP grow because Para Los Niños has another ASP at Pío Pico Elementary. Track changes have caused temporary declines in attendance. Mr. Torres said it takes two weeks after a track change before the staff members know how many students to expect. Other factors that might affect attendance include the lack of regular access to the multi-purpose room and competition with YS. The ASP has no waiting list.

The ASP promotes attendance through monthly field trips and the annual camping trip to reward those who attend regularly. Also, staff members hold pizza parties and award prizes monthly or quarterly. Guest speakers are another draw. Word-of-mouth from students at a neighboring youth center helps. New students hear about the ASP from their friends or read about it on flyers.

Safety & Security

Mr. Torres is satisfied with security for materials and equipment on campus, but expressed concerns about safety for students. He said the security guard leaves between 4 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Mr. Torres wants him to stay until 6 p.m. He also wants to close the campus. Anyone can open the gates now.

Observers also noticed problems with school security. One day, when a helicopter circled the neighborhood indicating a police suspect search, Mr. Torres brought students into the covered lunch area for “lock-down.” Staffers provided board games. Despite the lock-down, an observer saw people continue to enter and leave the campus, and the lunch area was relatively open and unsecured.

Conclusions and Comments

The ASP provides a limited agenda of on-campus enrichment activities. During observations, the only organized activities were sports and visual arts. Relatively small groups of students actively participated, as did staff members. The students were engaged and enjoying themselves. Observers rarely saw homework assistance. Although the open campus presented a threat to safety, staffers kept a close eye on the students.

The ASP has adequate equipment and materials, but it does not have access to classrooms and even common space is an issue. Although Mr. Torres said the ASP has a good relationship with the school, support for the ASP seemed limited. It also needs more support from parents and the community.

Mr. Torres emphasized off-campus activities and special events rather than daily, on-campus activities, which seemed to play a secondary role. The students’ favorite activities all take place off-campus. There are many areas for potential growth here. Still, Mr. Torres seems satisfied with the quality and quantity of offerings. The vision to provide more for the students could be this ASP’s greatest need.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Kenneth Urbina</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Site (location)</td>
<td>Gardner Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Site</td>
<td>7450 Hawthorn Ave.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90046</td>
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## School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>436</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>52.8% White</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.4% Hispanic</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1% Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.9% Black</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1% Filipino</td>
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<tr>
<td>.7% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 41.3% |
| English Language Learners                      |
| Total: 180                                     |
| 81 Russian                                    |
| 72 Spanish                                    |
| 18 Other                                      |
| 5 Armenian                                    |
| 3 Korean                                      |
| 1 Pilipino                                   |

## After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
<th>After School Program Provider Agency (central office location)</th>
<th>STAR Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>After School Program</td>
<td>Katya Bozzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td><a href="mailto:starincorp@earthlink.net">starincorp@earthlink.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>310-842-8040</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th># ASP Students</th>
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<tr>
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<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 72-107 Days</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
<td>101%</td>
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</table>

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 841 |
| API – 2007 | 838 |
Mr. Urbina is very pleased with the STAR program at Gardner Elementary School. Capable, trained program leaders direct this well-designed program, adhering to a unique rotational schedule that moves all participants daily through homework assistance, math, language arts enrichment, and creative arts. On specific days, the program offers additional academic experiences, as well as some sports and games. Last year the coordinator was a fifth grade teacher at Gardner, facilitating communication between teachers, ASP staff, and parents.

Some STAR limitations include the lack of a kindergarten program and a long annual waiting list. Except for routine room sharing problems and a more serious enrollment misstep this year, Mr. Urbina thoroughly supports STAR. He suggests some improvements in the delivery of homework assistance.

Components
While STAR does a conscientious job with homework assistance, Mr. Urbina wants more tutoring and individual attention to students who do not move through assignments as quickly as their classmates do. A change in the rotational format to schedule homework earlier would obviate an occasional parent conference.

STAR has one of the most extensive academic enrichment programs among the district’s ASPs, offering 45 minutes of math, 45 minutes of language arts and a variety of science and animal studies classes. Eco-Station, an element begun by STAR’s founder, brings endangered animals to the ASP and encourages discussions about conservation, habitats, care, government involvement, and personal responsibility. Mr. Urbina said the animals are very popular.

Sports are basic and sufficient, Mr. Urbina said, with group games, soccer, and tennis. He believes that STAR may have added more sports time this year at the suggestion of several coordinators. He hired the STAR athletic program leader to work with his regular pupils twice a week, freeing teachers for staff development and boosting his school’s fitness test scores from 20 percent to more than 80 percent. This success reflects the quality of STAR’s staff. Youth Services is available for students who want more competition and leagues that are organized.

STAR has extensive fine and performing arts programs, including drumming, art, and music classes that allow students to create their own performing groups. STAR hires music experts to develop students’ skills and expose them to a variety of musical genres. Artists who live in the surrounding Hollywood community also give local businesses an opportunity to get involved. There is an annual Extravaganza featuring students from all neighboring STAR programs performed at the Wiltern Theater. Students, leaders, parents and the coordinator work for weeks on this impressive program. Mr. Urbina is pleased with this element.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers like the variety and “well-roundedness” of STAR. The faculty also liked the ease of bringing concerns to the coordinator, who communicated with parents when they could not stay late. Teachers said they found seeing their pupils at the Extravaganza an enlightening experience and enjoyed viewing their talents, not often seen in the classroom. Many personally attend, another example of integration of STAR.
Parents have very few complaints about the ASP, but they do ask for more academic help, particularly with tutoring. They like the enrichment classes, the variety, the music, the format, and the free childcare for three hours every day. Mr. Urbina says parents like almost everything about STAR, except for a few who have to take their children home early and miss some program offerings.

**Agency and District Support**
Katya Bozzi, the very active and committed founder of STAR, leads the agency. She keeps a close watch on STAR sites to ensure they do not vary from the format, add or detract from the STAR schedule. She is available whenever there is a problem and she organizes extensive training for coordinators and program leaders. She and Mr. Urbina had to solve an enrollment error made by a new coordinator this year. It was a difficult time but, together, they eased parent concerns. Mr. Urbina and Ms. Bozzi now have “détente.”

Hiring and retaining good leaders is the biggest issue. Mr. Urbina contributes to the interview process. He wants the agency to do a better job filling vacancies. The principal says he has almost nothing to do with Beyond the Bell. He points out that STAR was there far longer and earlier. He is concerned about unfamiliar Beyond the Bell officials monitoring classes and he is not sure who his contact is. In any case, Mr. Urbina prefers to settle disputes himself.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Such a high-powered and impressive ASP creates responsibilities and takes administrative time---and STAR’s needs must be balanced after school with Youth Services, District intervention and another ASP, AVIVA---but Mr. Urbina says he is happy to have the problem.
Case Study Observations
Science, Theatre, Arts, and Recreation (STAR)
Gardner Elementary School

Introduction
Science, Theatre, Arts and Recreation (STAR) takes place at Gardner Elementary School (a K-6 school), located in the heart of Hollywood. STAR Education is the sponsor and Christina Balbenko is the site coordinator.

Highlights
One hundred eighty schools in 40 districts in California have STAR programs. According to the company website, STAR was “selected as a ‘Model Program’ by the White House and the U.S. Department of Education.” It also says former vice-president Al Gore used STAR as a consultant for his 1998 Town Hall Meeting on after-school education. The program at Gardner does not disappoint. It has many highlights and few flaws. Altogether, it is an exemplary program.

A rotating schedule limits activities to 40 minutes, an ideal interval for elementary children, and exposes all participants to four daily sections: homework assistance, literacy, the STAR math program, and an enrichment section that changes every day of the week. This section includes sports, drama, dancing, chess, science, drumming, art projects, and Eco-Station, another hallmark of STAR. This activity was developed with the Environmental Science Museum and the Exotic Wildlife Rescue Center. Trained personnel bring reptiles, unique species, and child-friendly animals weekly for discussions about their needs, care, habitats, and characteristics. Ms. Balbenko said it is a favorite of the students.

There is also an annual extravaganza evening program, generally held in late May, at the Wadsworth Theatre where STAR participants display their talents. Children rehearse for weeks and professional personnel, regular and volunteer, create costumes, dance and musical numbers, drumming demonstrations, and solo and group drama acts. Staffers record a CD of the performance that is for sale to parents. There is also a rock band competition each year with elementary student rock bands performing original and popular songs.

Another positive feature of STAR is its integration into the life of Gardner. Ms. Balbenko has cultivated ongoing and productive communication with school staff and teachers, as well as fruitful community partnerships and a network of parents to enhance this robust program.

Ms. Balbenko, who is also a fifth-grade teacher at the school, is energetic and hands-on with every component of the ASP. She exerts a positive influence as she walks from room to room, greeting students by name. She has considerable faith in the talents and commitment of her staff. Students face high expectations in a friendly, supportive, and upbeat atmosphere.

Homework
STAR participants are divided into four grade-level groups identified by primary colors: first; second and third; fourth; and fifth and sixth. Each group meets with the homework specialist for 40 minutes four times each week. The program leader responsible for homework assistance follows the same routine with all groups: they enter and move immediately to their usual spots, take out materials, ask for extra copies of textbooks if they need them, listen to a few encouraging words and get to work with a minimum of conversations, distractions, or time-wasting activities.
“The leader is an engaging young man who has high energy and the respect of the class,” wrote one observer watching the fifth- and sixth-grade group. “He moves from child to child, asking if anyone needs help. He gets the group started on time and keeps them on task.” Observations at this site occurred during late spring, and this allowed an observation of the extravaganza. All sections, all pupils, all staffers, volunteer parents and community groups participated. An observer watching a rehearsal with fourth-graders wrote:

They start by singing a song with words provided on a handout, and they have a CD player for musical backup. It is not a very impressive first try, but they will no doubt improve. …The program leader’s commitment shows in his sincere effort to tackle this song. The students respect him, but they also have fun. Rehearsal takes eight minutes of the homework time. Afterward, they focus on their work. They help each other if needed.

Ms. Balbenko trusts the abilities of the homework program leader. “The homework specialist does an excellent job…as he works with groups no larger than 20 in specific grade levels,” she said. “Because he does nothing else, he becomes very familiar with what teachers assign and what the coursework is.”

“I am looking at the fifth- and sixth-grade homework class,” wrote another observer watching homework. “They are bright, verbal, and mature, listen to the leader and work on homework pleasantly. They all have assignments, but one boy has to borrow a book. He may not leave the room, so another student lends him the book. This agency takes great care with safety.”

Another observer saw some problems:

Today the regular literacy program leader has taken over homework and has extra children because two leaders are out. He does his best to get the kids into groups. There is less focused energy on the assignments than I have seen in past visits. It is the end of the year and there are more worksheets than textbook activities. There is also more noise. The students know the drill, so they cooperate somewhat.

Ms. Balbenko has a high regard for this leader, who is a screenwriter. He is tall and broad, and one would expect his size to command immediate attention from the students, but that is not always the case. He accepts a higher level of noise than is appropriate. He also looks at his watch often and seems bored. He does have a warm relationship with the children. It may be too much to expect the students to concentrate when there is only one week left of school and students just had snow cones.

**Academics**

Three of four daily rotations for all participants are strictly academic: homework, math, and literacy. STAR math is perhaps the strongest component and makes use of a copyrighted program of assessment, paced materials, and exercises tailored to student needs and progress. There are occasional tests. This part of the program reinforces and builds on the math skills students learn during the day. Because the program is for organization-wide use, its design does not specifically conform to LAUSD content standards. However, this does not seem to be a detriment.

During one observation day, Ms. Balbenko substituted for an absent leader during the fourth-grade math class meeting. The observer noted she followed the STAR math program and excelled in presentation. “She is caring, animated, and interested in pupil progress,” the observer wrote. “Students do exercises that parallel the regular curriculum based on assessment. Thus, they fill in gaps in skills.”
Because the program leader for math had an extended absent, observers could not watch him in action. However, Ms. Balbenko kept the same focused pace. Another substitute also did well:

The fifth- and sixth-graders are in math. A substitute who normally teaches drama enrichment on Mondays is in charge. He is very capable. He conducts an appropriate and challenging math game and keeps the attention of the whole group. For correct answers, pupils receive points and “STAR dollars.”

The literacy rotation provides activities that build vocabulary, strengthen written expression, and encourage public speaking. The compressed field study schedule resulted in only a few observations in May, when literacy activities amounted to making Mother’s Day cards. Observers had little chance to see other activities, and they were not impressed with what they saw. An observer wrote:

The only concession to literacy reinforcement during this fourth-grade group meeting is an attempt by the leader to get the children to come up with descriptive words like “punctual” and “formidable.” The young leader takes too much time to organize the students in lines in the lunch area and outside the classroom. He has trouble keeping them on-task.

Later, the observer wrote:

This group of second- and third-graders is meeting for literacy. The lesson is Mother’s Day cards. The leader tries to get the children to make more than one card for their mother or for other relatives, anything to keep them busy. The leader encourages the students to come up with words to describe their mothers. I hoped to see more engagement with actual literacy development than occurred with a prior group, but the leader is not up to the task. He is satisfied with low activity, high volume, and too much time spent organizing the class. A high level of noise, and a great deal of lining up time, cautions about talking, etc. He also shows no interest in providing alternative activities to keep the kids occupied. They are tired of the Mother’s Day card activity.

Other supplemental academic activities take place during the enrichment rotation and include a science class, which Ms. Balbenko said is one of the children’s favorite activities. An observer wrote:

The specialist wears a lab coat and talks to a small group in a room at the rear of a small auditorium about evolution and adaptation. The session concludes with the participants making dinosaurs out of clay. The students point out the differences between the various types. It is clear that the fascination with natural processes, with the phenomena of physical and biological science, is a draw with elementary pupils. The specialist is also very pleasant and professional, conveying a respect for science, for accuracy, and for keen observation. It is an excellent activity.

The students also participate in Eco-Station, which was not a part of this observation round.

**Arts**

STAR at Gardner is rich in fine performing arts activities offered both during the enrichment rotation and in almost all rotations during the weeks prior to the spring extravaganza. Observers saw drama activities, dance lessons, a drumming class, music classes that included flutes, electric guitars and keyboards, drawing, coloring, and cartooning. Observers wrote the following:
This third-grade group plays band instruments, drums, and electric guitars. The instructor also plays an electric guitar. The students play very well. Ms. Balbenko said the instructor has been at STAR four years. Last year, his students won the instruments in a contest.

Students are doing theater with a professional chorus teacher. A staff member guides them in playing actors and actresses.

Each Wednesday, the drum specialist teaches kids about various drum types. She has met with this group before. She restricts actual playing to 15 minutes. No one child gets very long on the drums. There is a lot of unnecessary talking.

The drum specialist has considerable difficulty gaining the attention of these first-grade pupils. She does not let them even touch her mid-Eastern drums until the last five minutes. I am told she was out for a week with the flu. She seems to have some neck stiffness. She shows little patience with the class. Ms. Balbenko has to take over while she sets up. She is 20 minutes late for a 40-minute session.

The second- and third-graders are drawing, coloring, and painting. It appears to be creative arts. The leader asks them to clean up their area so they can move to the next activity. They are not happy to do it.

The leader resumes the students’ super hero cartooning project. He reads what they wrote about the characters they drew. The students laugh at the cartoons.

**Sports and Games**

Outdoor games occur weekly, not daily, during the enrichment rotation. The lack of a regular sports component is an issue for Ms. Balbenko. However, when program leaders are absent or as the school year ends, STAR participants receive more outdoor time. Observers saw varied and well-organized activities, and the students showed high interest. There was handball and relay races. Observers wrote:

The leader is doing a good job organizing two teams at opposite ends of a grassy field. They play ‘sharks and minnows’ (changed from ‘sharks and dolphins’ for eco-sensitivity.) It is an elaborate game of tag. The students enjoy themselves.

A leader told the students to take their artwork off the walls because the school year was about to end. They took a vote as to where to rotate in the next 40 minutes. They voted to play on the playground.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Leaders work hard to maintain high levels of student engagement. Homework sections reflect consistent and strong pupil attention, at least for the first half of the period. Engagement was also high in math and science classes and in preparing for the annual extravaganza.

Even in supplemental activities like game time for first-graders, leaders strive to make children think and be creative. They do not waste time with filler activities. “Leaders encouraged the first-graders in the ‘Zoom Tool’ class to engage in creative play,” one observer wrote. “Some played with tops; others put wheels on mini-skateboards of their choice. A group of boys built a Ferris wheel with the leaders. One boy made a pretend wand from the zoom tool kit and cast a spell on his friends. He pretended to be the tooth fairy and tried to make my teeth whiter. This is the last class of the year.”
Children at Gardner benefit from an excellent program design that emphasizes quality after-school activities delivered by staff trained in specialties. Expectations are uniformly high. Each 40-minute rotation should offer an interesting activity that stretches the imagination, exposes pupils to natural phenomena, teaches a musical instrument or performing arts skill, or builds academic skills. Engagement is naturally high. Not surprisingly, standardized test scores improved for STAR participants last year.

Consistent routines enhance class management. Ms. Balbenko, who teaches sections, also monitors staffers and helps them keep control of high-energy elementary students. She is a calming influence. An observer wrote: “Staffers have established a procedure that helps keep students under control. Every time a leader raises his hand making an okay sign, students must be silent. If they start to get rowdy, he says, ‘I have the silent sign up.’ Students immediately quite down.”

**Staff**

Ms. Balbenko said STAR programs have a site coordinator and three program directors for math, literacy, and homework. They earn $12.00 to $14.00 per hour. Specialists for the fourth rotation earn $30 per hour. There is little turnover. Middle school volunteers help occasionally. There was a program once that allowed Hollywood and Fairfax high school students to earn a community service credit for two weeks of work.

Training is a critical component at STAR programs. Program leaders receive training in STAR math and in math reinforcement techniques like math games. Leaders get one week of training in the summer, plus the district’s required training in safety procedures. The site coordinators get monthly training in strategies like twilight activities, classroom management, spirit building, and brainteasers. Leaders and coordinators get paid to attend the training sessions. The math specialist receives training in assessing and scoring students for STAR Math. She also attends math game training. The literacy program leader also gets training. There are weekend sessions for directors and program leaders. Ms. Balbenko said the training is excellent but a little relentless.

“The [coordinator] gets invited to a few regular teacher staff development sessions,” Ms. Balbenko said. “There is no training from the district or the agency in student coursework or how to support homework. STAR covers working with children and their class assignments.” She believes STAR training is more than adequate. She believes it keeps turnover low and gives good people more tools to succeed with children.

Ms. Balbenko said there have been no difficulties finding specialized staff and program leaders. The agency brings in trained substitutes when necessary. One is a regular classroom aide on campus during the day. He knows students and teachers. Ms. Balbenko refers qualified candidates, but the agency makes the final hiring decisions.

**Material Resources**

The ASP has the use of a very nicely laid out core of bungalows. They are in a semi-circle in a somewhat protected area of campus, adjacent to a grassy field and to another bungalow used exclusively for math. One of the bungalows is dedicated space. A classroom on the second floor of the main building serves for literacy rotations “We have access to the library, but there is no time to use it during the program,” Ms. Balbenko said. The ASP also has use of the computer lab, but there is no time within the program to use it, either. The rigid format of the program is a source of some frustration for her.

Ms. Balbenko said she has plenty of supplies but she would like access to the copy machine. She is satisfied with custodial services. She is less happy with the snacks, which she does consider very healthy.
or appetizing. She said the children like the crackers and string cheese but prefer the apples, kiwis, oranges and bananas they get much less often. “They like the good stuff,” she said.

Ms. Balbenko has not reached agreement with the principal on one facilities issue. He allows the Youth Services (YS) leader to use the auditorium for homework assistance, which means STAR leaders cannot use it for performing arts activities. She says the space is not suited for its use now. The YS program leader has trouble monitoring her students from there, and they bother STAR students. On the other hand, the auditorium would be perfect for STAR performing arts, she said. There is no resolution yet.

**Relationship with the School**

STAR’s relationship with the day school has been excellent. The fact that Ms. Balbenko stepped in to replace a fifth-grade teacher with a long-term absence helps. Her primary contact is the principal, who is knowledgeable and supportive. She has open access to him, and they talk face-to-face about scheduling, events, activities, and difficult children. Occasionally, they leave each other notes.

Ms. Balbenko talks to teachers all day long, so communication is excellent, perhaps the strongest feature of the relationship. They talk about academic performance, behavior, and homework completion. Teachers know and trust the program, so STAR is an extension of the regular school day.

Some jointly planned activities have occurred Teachers and staff cooperated on book distribution through RIF, and they work together on fundraisers for the regular school. Ms. Balbenko said they call the school and the ASP “Gardnerville” because everybody works together.

The school shares group standardized test scores for STAR pupils with ASP leaders, and Ms. Balbenko tracks and analyzes the information.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Relationships with parents seem equally positive. Staffers talk to parents when they pick up their children. Occasionally, a child with a behavior problem will go home with a note from the leader. Ms. Balbenko occasionally calls parents at home regarding behavior or attendance issues. Flyers notify parents about evening events STAR’s open and frequent communication with parents is a strong point of the ASP. Parents who pick up their children early and do not come to the evening events dismay her. She believes they should consider STAR a privilege.

Because Gardner is located near Hollywood studios and tourist attractions, community connections revolve around show business. Ms. Balbenko said teachers and many parents have connections to the industry and donate both time and resources to projects. Sam Ashe and Guitar Center provided a full rock band setup with instruments and amplifiers that students use for the annual extravaganza. Also, the Hard Rock Café allows rock band competitions to take place there. A parent who works in a law firm donated 40 computers to STAR last year, and a few came to her site.

Ms. Balbenko wants more community alliances but has no time to cultivate them. She learned that because Gardner is a Title I school, it prohibits fundraising on campus after school. However, she complained, “Youth Services does it all the time.”

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

STAR staffers see Beyond the Bell and YS as interchangeable. Ms. Balbenko has a good relationship with YS leaders, despite the auditorium problem. She does see an observer about once a month who comes around with a clipboard and a check sheet. She does not know exactly who he is. When YS could
not keep a drill team going, she integrated those students into the dance group and rock band, even though they were not in STAR.

**Attendance**

Program leaders take attendance by checking off lists with the names of enrolled students. When parents pick up the children, they sign these same lists. Ms. Balbenko tallies these sheets and sends them weekly to the agency, which double-checks them. This seems to work well and she has no suggestions.

The annual extravaganza always boosts attendance. After vacation periods, attendance drops slightly and then returns. Most children attend regularly. Some have been in the program for five years. Nobody drops out. YS does not compete with STAR. A second program, called AVIVA, also does not draw students away.

There is a waiting list of fifteen pupils. They can join the program if a student moves away, but Ms. Balbenko does not recall any students voluntarily dropping out of the program.

Ms. Balbenko calls parents when attendance drops. High-interest activities and the periodic performances of singers, drummers, and a rock band encourage students to participate.

**Safety and Security**

Ms. Balbenko is happy with front-gate security at the school. Visitors must be buzzed in to the campus. However, there is no one at the back gate. She said sometimes she has to go home in the dark, and a guard there would help her feel safer. There have been no problems with the security of her materials and other property. She did have a theft problem, but it was with the program’s own students. One child was suspended, but returned and had a good experience the rest of the year.

**Conclusions and Comments**

STAR certainly is one of the very best, most comprehensive, conscientious, and successful programs in the district. The universal emphasis on academic and supplemental experiences, the excellent safety and security, the rigorous training, and the meaningful engagement from students all help to make this an enviable ASP.

Some staffers appear to coast, and there are some minor issues with facilities, but the program has no major weaknesses. Ms. Balbenko wishes the schedule were more flexible. She wants routine computer access for students, not just the smattering provided through enrichment. She also believes more outdoor activities would be a positive change. The steady diet of classroom exercises, while beneficial and responsible for measurable academic gains, challenge both students and staff when it comes to maintaining intensity day after day.

Ms. Balbenko said her biggest challenge is the very active, sometimes combative, student populations of bright children that mix in this ASP. There are recent Russian immigrants and other Eastern and middle-eastern ethnicities. It is an eclectic group that poses occasional behavior problems. However, these multicultural experiences likely benefit the program, the school, and the community.
Site Profile
Science, Theatre, Art Recreation Education (STAR)
Sterry Elementary School

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<td>Freida Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katya Bozzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:starincorp@earthlink.net">starincorp@earthlink.net</a></td>
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Ms. Smith is new this year to Sterry Elementary so Assistant Principal Joy Lewis helped with the interview. Both administrators cited many concerns with last year’s Science, Theatre, Art, Recreation (STAR) ASP and made many suggestions for improvement.

District officials respect STAR for its training, rotational schedule, enrichment, and high-caliber personnel. However, Ms. Lewis said the Sterry ASP has suffered from significant limitations caused by sub-standard facilities, a questionable site staff, and an inexperienced coordinator who has not interacted well with administrators. The coordinator was unable at times to exert leadership, permitting operational decisions to be made by the staff e.g., scheduling the nutritional break at a time convenient for employees, not children. This combination has resulted in an ASP without distinction where visiting specialists faced poor student behavior, where school equipment suffered damage, and where poor leadership diminished the value of academic enrichment.

“We got through the year,” Ms. Lewis said. She maintains a positive attitude and sees potential for several elements to improve.

**Components**

Ms. Lewis said homework assistance should occur in a quiet location, with a small ratio of pupils to staff. The leader should give support when asked, review assignments and check student comprehension. The leader should schedule periodic meetings with teachers. Staffers should know the curriculum, the expectations, and the grade level standards, all of which would improve the quality of homework help. Ms. Lewis and Ms. Smith want STAR to launch a tutoring component with UCLA volunteers.

For academic enrichment, they want activities that support language arts and math-based problem-solving lessons. Activities need a better design that stimulates thinking and writing. Last year, the weakest program leader was responsible for language arts. Ms. Lewis could not recall anything positive about his work. He had no control over or rapport with students and allowed significant damage in the room where he worked. STAR math was mildly successful, with a popular computer class that featured laptops. There is also an Animal Planet class that pupils like.

Both administrators are under the impression that STAR has augmented their format to include more sports and athletics. Last year, sports and games were only a once-a-week feature, unless (as happened many times) children were taken outside for a “break” language arts, math or homework time. Even so, Ms. Lewis said staffers did a good job with structured, organized games and worked collaboratively with Youth Services to provide soccer, handball, basketball, and other sports. Both administrators believe YS supervision is very poor.

Well-run fine and performing arts activities gave participants good chances for creative expression. This year, STAR continues to offer a once-a-week dance and a drumming class taught by professionals. Highly qualified, capable community teachers make these classes successful. The excellent annual Extravaganza evening performance involves participants from all STAR programs who dance, drum, play rock music and perform dramatic plays.
**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers told Ms. Lewis very little about any perceived impact in their classes from student participation in STAR. Even the homework help made little difference. There has been no routine communication between teachers and ASP staffers regarding academic issues. Teachers do not have strong opinions about STAR, but in general, they support supervised activities for their students after school.

Ms. Smith said perceptions of STAR are improving this year. Last year, parents were glad to have childcare and a safe, supervised location. But they were not happy with the lack of curricular support and complained that, despite homework help, children still had to finish assignments at home. Student behavior problems caused disruptions with which the coordinator struggled. This year, Ms. Lewis helped in that area, and the problems have diminished. She believes the coordinator now is more able to take a stronger stand with difficult students.

**Agency and District Support**

Behavior problems and damage to facilities resulted in conferences at the school with STAR staffers. However, they did not lead to the replacement of the language arts teacher. Ms. Lewis said the agency was otherwise responsive and willing to listen to her opinions. She said agency officials are pleasant and caring. Sterry administrators have had very little contact with Beyond the Bell. Ms. Lewis wants more guidance from the organization regarding the responsibilities of all ASPs, the available funding for custodial time, and information on other resources.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

Last year, two ASP leaders shared a large, noisy cafeteria with only a drape between the groups. This damaged the entire program. This year, the program no longer uses that facility, and it has benefitted. In a school with declining enrollment, the quality of the ASP can make a dramatic impact. Everyone here is working to improve the ASP this year.
Case Study Observations
Sports, Theater, Arts, and Recreation (STAR)
Nora Sterry Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Nora Sterry Elementary School (a K-5 school) in West Los Angeles. STAR Education is the sponsor. Ms. Xenia Muñoz is the site coordinator.

Highlights
STAR at Sterry Elementary reflects the efforts of a capable, young, caring site coordinator faced with significant obstacles within one of the best designed and strongest agency-supported after-school programs in LAUSD. STAR has a good reputation across the district and the state for its ambitious rotational schedule, many and varied enrichment opportunities, comprehensive training, highly compensated specialists, and strong focus on quality math, literacy, and homework programs.

However, the positive features and the impressive reputation of STAR fall short at Sterry because all the elements needed for a successful ASP do not always exist. This ultimately hurts participants. This ASP is plagued with weak personnel, poor facilities, lack of local school support, and significant staff turnover.

At its best, STAR offers a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including dance, art, drumming, computers, and Eco-Station, which features weekly visits by reptile and exotic animal handlers. Attendance is good, and Ms. Muñoz indicates that parents support the ASP. There are two strong program leaders and the facilities are located close to one another. Ms. Muñoz has worked for the addition of a kindergarten component next year.

Longstanding weaknesses in staffing become pronounced near the end of the school year, when both program leaders and day teachers face more hurdles keeping students’ attention. Most observations occurred at this time, and the report may seem bleaker than normal. However, systemic problems abound.

Homework
STAR uses a homework specialist that sees all groups for 40 minutes every day except Friday. Program leaders group students by grade level. Ms. Muñoz said Star training prepares staff members well for homework assistance. However, parents have complained that one 40-minute rotation is not enough time for students to complete homework. Program leaders sometimes allow students to complete homework during math and literacy rotations if they finish their activities early.

Observers concluded the homework program leader is capable and patient, with a pleasant and disciplined demeanor. “The leader is by far the best of the group,” one observer wrote. “She is young but clear in her directions. She has made a good, independent decision to take the whole group on a ‘field trip’ to the restroom area and to let them run around and play. They are out of the room for almost twenty minutes, but when they return, they are willing and eager to work on their assignments.”

The most distressing feature of STAR homework is its physical location on one side of the student cafeteria, divided from the rest of the room by a thin drape. On the other side is the math section. Several observers have noted the problems with this large and echoing facility. Various site reports note the difficulties with this large and echoing facility. When one side is noisy, so is the other, Ms. Muñoz said. An observer watched several students get out of their seats to peek through the curtain. The daily inability of either program leader to insist on quiet has resulted in a loud, distracting, casual, and even play-like
period that inhibits quality concentration and clear directions from the leaders. The homework specialist
does her best and the students do not even realize the din in which they work. “These second-graders
actually have homework,” one observer wrote. “For most it’s math and for others it’s putting spelling
words in alphabetical order. I help several children or check their math worksheet. By the time I am ready
to leave, four children are lined up for me to look at their work.

The standardized testing schedule complicates matters. Because of the exams, sometimes as many as six
in a row, teachers curtail homework assignments. Everyone scrambles to find appropriate activities. One
observer wrote:

Ms. Muñoz said the kids this week are much more restless than usual. Most do not have
homework because of testing. This is first-grade homework and the leader has handouts
to keep them busy with shapes, colors, and pictures. The class is loud but manageable.
They are tired and waiting for the snack break.

Another observer wrote:

Today, only a few third-graders have homework. The rest look through a large box full of
board games like Connect 4 and Life. They seem to enjoy these games, especially with
the encouragement and involvement of the homework program leader.

Ms. Muñoz said staff members elected to place the snack period at 4:30 p.m., rather than at the start of
activities, where most STAR programs schedule it. This choice might be the result of an adult-driven
agenda: delaying the free time until late in the afternoon forces them to spend much less time trying to get
students’ attention toward the end of the program. Besides, there are fewer students as the afternoon
wears on.

**Academics**

Two rotations, literacy and math, stress reinforcement of academic skills. The math teacher will leave at
the end of the year to get a master’s degree, and Ms. Muñoz said she will miss her most, because she is
the strongest member of her staff. “She is my brick,” she said. Observers had little chance to see academic
interactions of program leaders with children. Yet, in these less-than-ideal circumstances, the strengths
and weaknesses of staff members emerged more clearly. One observer watched the math specialist at
work:

The noisy double-classroom cafeteria is actually not a bad place for this activity: the
fourth-grade math group is decorating a gift for a long-time volunteer. It is a white
wooden container with some very nice houseplants. The kids dip their thumbs in colored
paint and make bugs out of the prints, adding little legs, wings, feelers and antennae. The
kids are enjoying themselves and it is very messy. This is a cute project where everyone
can contribute to a present for someone special. It is so much better at this time of year
than sitting around getting restless and receiving constant reprimands from the leader.
This is a well thought-out activity for the last week.

On the other hand, other observations of the math section suggest the level of engagement is low, and the
activities demand little focus. Some observer comments follow:

The third-graders are not working on math. They are completing a STAR survey. They
work sporadically and chatter. The leader promises quarters if they can make it through
the period without disasters.
In second-grade math, a few children still have to complete annual assessments. Half the kids are talking and half-heartedly doing worksheets. It is the last Monday of the year.

I understand that STAR features extensive training for math leaders, including sections on math games tied to skill building. Today might be a good day to play them in order to extract some value of the time spent here. However, anything verbal is a challenge because of the constant noise from this group and that on the other side of the drape.

As rambunctious as the math rotation is, the literacy experience is even less impressive. An observer wrote:

Fifth-graders gather for the literacy rotation. The activity is to write an article for a newspaper about an event. These dispirited children are difficult and uncooperative, entirely unwilling to get started. Some ask silly questions while others sit holding their heads in their hands. The program leader is a slight, young man with no presence. He moves between the tables answering meaningless questions. A few students make a stab at starting, but I doubt the product today will be worthy of the 40 minutes spent here. A word game might work better.

This observer tried to see this leader with a younger group, because fifth-grade students can be demanding and defiant with adults they perceive as vulnerable. The observer noted:

The third-graders are in literacy with a young man who is not very comfortable as a program leader. He has more success with this group than an earlier group of fifth-graders. As with the previous group, he assigns them a news article to write. There is a lot of talking and laughing, but he is able to suggest ideas.

The newspaper activity was representative not of the creativity of the leader, but of the materials provided by the agency. A talented leader with better rapport with children could succeed in this project. Ms. Muñoz did not suggest more classroom management training. She said only that the literacy training covers some LAUSD curriculum issues. She believes the current training leaders get is enough.

**Arts**

Observation of arts activities took place after the annual extravaganza, which provided a showcase for all STAR programs. Ms. Muñoz believes the students did a good job singing, dancing, and performing the drama portions. Apparently, there are no rock bands or instrumental music classes. Observers who visited in June saw dance, drumming, and various arts and crafts groups, particularly during the final days of the school year. Ms. Muñoz said dance is very popular. One observer noted:

The fourth-grade group in dance class is fun to watch. They move around and try to follow the instructor. They are more challenging than usual today, but they follow instructions and appear to enjoy themselves. The instructor guides them through a warm-up routine and then moves into the same routine she used with the fifth-graders. It works fine for both.

During a similar session of this leader with fifth-graders, the observer said she had to work harder to keep them interested. Ms. Muñoz watched from the back of the class. It was a tough 40 minutes, but the instructor did a good job and remained undaunted by rowdy, difficult kids who were rude, talkative and unpleasant.
The daily enrichment rotation offered bongo drums, computer classes and a variety of arts and crafts activities. In drums, the staff member played a rhythm on his drum and the students followed suit. Observations of this activity involved both first- and fourth-grade children. They appeared to enjoy the class.

The favorite activity at Sterry is the computer section of the enrichment rotation, which occurs on Thursdays. An observer noted:

The enrichment offering today is computers, taught by a young man who has set up eight laptop computers for 14 first-graders. They play a variety of games: Memory, Neverball, and jigsaw puzzles. They work in pairs. They show enthusiasm and know their way around these machines well. The teacher says they usually work on keyboarding, but because this is the last session of the year, games are OK.

The observer saw an orderly class of engaged students that were a pleasure to watch. The specialist has good class management skills and rapport. He works in the teachers’ lounge. It is small but sufficient, air-conditioned and insulated from the noise of the cafeteria groups next-door.

Observers watched several sessions in which students colored, used markers, construction paper and glitter, and prepared decorations for Hawaiian Day at year’s end. All arts and crafts exercises were routine and unremarkable, but the children enjoyed them. Students were happy to be involved in painting and other creative activities. There were always ample materials for the activities.

Sports and Games
Outdoor exercises and games are not a significant component of this program—a circumstance lamented by Ms. Muñoz who would like to see outdoor games become a regular element in her program. As previously mentioned, there is no regular outdoor program and leaders from time to time schedule exercise and time on the playground when conditions allow.

Such was the case during the final week of the year when the literacy leader assumed a more comfortable role. An observer noted:

In place of literacy…the program leader is taking kids outside for various unorganized games…basketball, sort of, and a game played on the handball courts…The kids are having a good time—they don’t get a regular physical activity rotation and sometimes the four sections…become a little hard to sell day after day. When the director can integrate outdoor games, she does.

According to Ms. Muñoz, “This program leader ‘does better outdoors’ than in. He is making an effort to try to keep an eye on the group, scattered in different areas.”

Engagement and Classroom Management
Engagement in the many activities at Sterry varies markedly with the caliber of the program leader and the attractiveness of the activity. It also wanes as the afternoon wears on and students lose energy. Concluding rotations are much more difficult to conduct than those that come before the snack.

The highest level of engagement—where students concentrated, where connections took place, where interest sparked and remained for extended periods—occurred in a few homework rotations, in the computer enrichment class, and in some primary elementary dance and drumming sections.
Engagement flagged in the math rotation. Although STAR has developed a comprehensive math program, and although Ms. Muñoz has great faith in a math leader that observers concur is bright, friendly, and energetic, this rotation did not reach an effective, or even an acceptable, level of student engagement. The literacy rotation also failed to generate student interest.

Class management was not a strong suit during the observation period. Noise, high levels of restlessness, and inattention were common as observers watched rotations. Ms. Muñoz does take referrals from staff for individual problems, and leaders use a process called a behavior journal with students that have significant behavior problems. Youth Services (YS) also cooperates by transferring students who create a disturbance in its program for the day. STAR reciprocates.

The homework leader did not have difficulties in the face of constant noise in the cafeteria, but math activities suffered. Art, music, outdoor games, and dance for the earlier grades held student interest, and resulted in few discipline problems. One observer of a math exercise wrote:

> The leader has put one boy in a corner across the room by himself, and he admits he was naughty. I help him with the survey. To the question, ‘Your parents want the best for you in your school experience’ he answers, ‘Never.’ We talk about the question, and he reconsiders.

**Staff**

Three program leaders at Sterry earn $12.00 per hour; Ms. Muñoz is salaried; specialists in dance, computers, Eco-Station, drama, and drumming receive $30 per hour. There is considerable turnover at this STAR site, particularly in the coming year: all three program leaders are leaving to return to college. The agency will make the hiring decisions, but Ms. Muñoz can refer candidates. Volunteers include some students who return from middle school and a well-loved woman who has given her time to the school and the ASP for more than 20 years. No volunteers serve from the business community, except for a special program in which 30 lawyers from a local firm come every Tuesday to tutor individual students. Ms. Muñoz is happy to have their help.

Among ASPs, STAR excels for its abundant training for site coordinators and program leaders. There is an eight-hour summer training for program leaders, which includes class and behavior management. Site coordinators receive training every two weeks on various topics and train for two weeks in the summer. All staff members take the Beyond the Bell safety training. Ms. Muñoz does not believe there is any training on LAUSD curricula or homework, but she is sure STAR’s preparation covers homework assistance. Math and literacy specialists take additional STAR courses for their specialty.

Several specialists teach STAR fine and performing arts, computer classes, dance, drama, drumming, and Eco-Station. Of all staffing needs, this one appears to present the fewest issues. The compensation probably helps.

STAR substitutes, which coordinators can obtain with one day’s notice, are excellent, Ms. Muñoz said. “The coordinator has told me that this dance instructor is a substitute today,” one observer noted. “I think she is doing a very good job. She moves through the exercises undaunted by moments of nuttiness with the class.” Ms. Muñoz said she covers staff absences often and relieves staffers in class from time to time. The agency decides whom to hire among specialized staff for its fairly rigid activity format.

**Material Resources**

Facilities are not adequate to support a thriving STAR program. There is sufficient space in the rooms, but in the student cafeteria, there is only a drape between two rotations, and the arrangement hurts student
performance in each. There is a large, dedicated classroom for the program. STAR uses the dedicated classroom, the two sections of the cafeteria and the faculty lounge. The last is quiet, cool and sufficiently large. There is no access to a computer lab, but STAR has its own laptop program. There is also no place in the schedule to visit the library although Ms. Muñoz likes the idea.

Ms. Muñoz said that discussions about facilities have occurred with no success. She was given an empty classroom early in the year, but the next day, the school added a second-grade class and kicked her out with one day’s notice. The ASP may not use the auditorium even when rehearsing for annual performances. The principal, who retired in June, also told her he would not force teachers to share classrooms. She said she receives all the materials she needs from STAR.

Snacks are acceptable, but they bore the students, Ms. Muñoz said. She said favorites are cereal and banana bread, and they never get fruit. She does not know the cafeteria manager, who orders the snacks.

Ms. Muñoz said the day and night plant managers at the school are two of her most loyal helpers. However, she is not entirely happy with the custodial service. She says the cleanliness of the areas the ASP uses is not pristine, and she has to clean up the dedicated room herself except for one trash can that gets emptied. An observer also noted the cleanliness issue:

The dance instructor…works in a spacious but untidy room that is dedicated space for the program. Teachers sometimes use the room during the day for special testing, conferences, and temporary storage.

**Relationship with the School**

Ms. Muñoz said her primary contacts at the school are not administrators, but support personnel: the office manager, the day plant manager, and the night plant manager. The principal helps when she asks, she said, but not with questions of facilities. The assistant principal is available, but she does not believe she has a strong relationship here.

Ms. Muñoz is not happy having to beg for space. However, her success with launching next year’s kindergarten program has given her a feeling of empowerment. She said she has a good relationship with the administration, but there is some doubt. She seems to want to put a good face on what, at best, is tenuous support. She said communication is not a problem, even though she rarely gets everything she needs. She talks with the clerical and custodial staff almost every day, but only as needed with the administration. Topics include scheduling, facilities, special events, problem students, STAR performance. Ms. Muñoz can walk into the office to talk with administrators or make an appointment. Sometimes, they use mailboxes.

“There is a little communication with teachers,” Ms. Muñoz said. Teachers and staff organized a joint field trip for students to the beach for World Ocean Day in January. STAR handled parent permission slips. Occasionally, she speaks with a teacher about homework or behavior issues. Staffers and teachers do very little joint planning or reviews of student performance. Teachers do not share standardized test scores with ASP staff, but she wants to know how her students do. Knowing assignments does not seem to be a problem. Students keep leaders informed.

The decision to add a kindergarten group next year has prompted good exchanges. The kindergarten teachers were eager to share their classrooms with the STAR kindergarten program.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
They see a parent bulletin board that they see at sign-in and sign-out. It has information about schedules, activities, summer camps, and special events. Flyers notify parents of events and evening performances. If there is misbehavior, leaders enter it in the behavior journal. After three entries, a student runs the risk of suspension. It happened one time. Staffers call home when necessary for questions and support relative to attendance, minor injuries and occasional misbehavior.

Ms. Muñoz said her strong attendance is a reflection of good parent support. She gets very good numbers of parents at the evening events and at monthly parent meetings. She received some donations from parents for special activities.

A parent with four children in the ASP said his children are taken care of, fed a snack, given help with homework, supported with math and literacy, and entertained with arts, music and computers—for three hours, every day, at no charge.

The law firm tutoring is the sole connection with business or the larger community. Ms. Muñoz said there is no apparent interest from STAR in learning about the surrounding community. STAR works with the PTA on fundraisers

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Muñoz says the relationship with the agency is good, but not ideal. The prospect of training three new program leaders next year, plus her lack of success in convincing the agency to incorporate more outdoor time in activities, tempers her enthusiasm.

Beyond The Bell is interchangeable with YS to Ms. Muñoz. There is a cooperative relationship, as demonstrated by the exchange of children with behavior problems. She has seen an observer from downtown once.

**Attendance**

Each of three program leaders and Ms. Muñoz has a sign-in sheet at the locations of the first rotations. Parents sign them out when they pick them up in the cafeteria. If the child is not there, staffers radio to find him or her. The forms go to the agency once a week.

High attendance rates are not difficult to achieve Ms. Muñoz said. A contract signed by the parents commits the children to attend a minimum of two hours, five days a week. Children heed the contract. Parents let STAR know when there will be an absence. A wait list is another incentive. Twenty students are on it. Five joined the program this year when others moved away.

Attendance routinely increases as the annual extravaganza approaches. Other programs do not draw students away from STAR. The only competition comes from YS, and it is rare. One student went to YS this year.

**Safety and Security**

Ms. Muñoz sees security as an issue related to keeping her children on campus. Early this year, several kids left the campus to go to a local Burger King. She called the parents and resolved the issue. She has had no problem with strangers on campus.

Ms. Muñoz said she lost a number of items from the dedicated room. She believes several teachers and others have keys to it and help themselves to her supplies. No one has offered to help her replace the items.

**Conclusions and Comments**
Ms. Muñoz wants more outdoor activities from STAR. Sterry’s program has none now. She said she has no reason to believe from her interaction with the agency that it is taking her suggestion seriously.

Ms. Muñoz is an able administrator that optimizes STAR elements she can control: attendance, relations with parents, planning for future programs, communication, and support for her staff. However, extra-organizational elements are weak: staff turnover, poor facilities, lack of trust in her program from the administration, and ideas that fall on deaf ears at the agency. Two of the three program leaders are not strong, and this makes for more work.

Homework and math rotations will remain marginal, so long as they share the cavernous cafeteria. If a new administration fixes this, the program has great promise. Solid staffing, local school support, parent involvement, agency help, appropriate facilities and site coordinator leadership are all needed to ensure a viable, energetic, feature-rich program, operated in a safe, clean environment. This program should be included in another series of observations.
# South Bay Center for Counseling (SBCC)
## 186th Street Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site Profile</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Site</strong></td>
<td><strong>186th Street Elementary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardena, CA 90248</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Marcia Reed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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<tr>
<td>.9% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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**English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment**

**43.0%**

**English Language Learners**

Total: 339

- 315 Spanish
- 10 Pilipino
- 5 Others
- 3 Korean
- 3 Vietnamese
- 1 Cantonese
- 1 Farsi
- 1 Russian

## After-School Program Profile

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>After-School Program Provider Agency</th>
<th><strong>South Bay Center For Counseling</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>(central office location)</td>
<td>Jane Tokubo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:jitokubo@aol.com">jitokubo@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>310-324-2306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **# ASP Students**: 218
- **Average Days of Attendance**: 89
  - % < 36 Days: 39%
  - % 36-71 Days: 11%
  - %72-107 Days: 6%
  - % > 107 Days: 43%
  - % of Capacity: 72%

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 813 |
| API – 2007 | 798 |
Ms. Reed said South Bay Center for Counseling (SBCC) at 186th Street School is an outstanding example of a fully integrated ASP that takes into account district instructional initiatives. Students use their time in the ASP to review and practice material learned during the regular school day, thus ensuring the ASP gives them daily academic support in core curricular areas.

SBCC staff trained for a month during the summer in a program Ms. Reed designed with the literacy coach and the lead math teacher. Staff members learned positive discipline, fluency, math skills, reading support and spelling. Because the site coordinator is also a school employee, the ASP works hand-in-hand with the day school to advance instructional and adjunct activities.

SBCC serves children in the afternoon alongside District intervention programs, Youth Services, and teacher and community volunteer tutoring. SBCC also flourishes due to a comprehensive and conscientious application of Title 1 and community funds. The principal has allocated funds to extend the hours of the librarian and computer teacher and has paid for staff training. A brief review of program components shows how a dedicated principal can design the academic elements of an ASP to extend the work of the regular school into the late afternoon.

Components
Homework assistance moves seamlessly from guidance with assignments to many specialized reinforcement activities, such as a five-minute basic math facts sheet, book discussions, reading practice, and vocabulary development. Ms. Reed says paraeducators and ASP staff have received training in the use of sound spelling cards and fluency reads as well as math interventions.

Trained leaders deliver academic enrichment each day to ensure the after school program is aligned, coherent and connected to the morning core program. Monthly professional development meetings for the ASP staff further clarify and promote school instructional goals. Topics include techniques on book discussions, reviews of culturally relevant/responsive education activities, Book of the Month and Poem of the Month.

Ms. Reed says YS takes care of sports skill development in football, soccer, and basketball. She also wants track and field. SBCC should promote physical fitness activities that meet district goals and should encourage competitive sports and games so pupils learn team spirit, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Ms. Reed wants unrestricted funds to take students to see professional sports competitions.

In fine and performing arts, SBCC offers classes in drama, guitar, and dance. Art and vocal activities also take place. Ms. Reed wants to use the creative arts to develop talents the children can use in culminating events for the school and parents. SBCC prepares children for several annual fine arts events like lip-synch competitions, literacy fairs and the Concert in the Park. There are also other activities, like community clean-up days, career fairs, and college awareness weeks.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers report that participants complete homework and reading logs. Ms. Reed said the teachers value the program as a whole, but want better supervision to keep students on-task, in a safe place and to prevent their wandering off. “Poorly behaved students tend to disrupt sessions for many,” Ms. Reed said.
“More supervision to minimize these disruptions could also lessen the concerns shared by parents with morning teachers.”

Ms. Reed said room sharing is not a problem because staffers make sure rooms are neat when they leave for the day.

Parents also like the many ASP activities. Attendance at culminating events is always excellent. They have voiced no specific concerns or complaints, though they worry about general supervision. Mrs. Reed wants to address parent anxiety about middle school transition. She has proposed a joint meeting of the ASPs involved. There is a long wait list for this program.

**Agency and District Support**
An outstanding site coordinator maintains excellent communication between the day and ASP programs and between the school and the agency. Following Ms. Reed’s collaborative approach, all after school programs meet once a month and plan together. Program staffers work together to map out goals and establish a master calendar. Ms. Reed said she regularly voices her concerns and gets prompt responses from Beyond the Bell. She likes the job it is doing.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
SBCC has been cooperative in constructing its program to advance school instructional goals. It is an active partner in numerous daytime, community and after school events. The ASP also gets support from the school adopter, Toyota, and from city and county officials. This helps SBCC fit into the productive, instructional support network Ms. Reed has built at this school.
Case Study Observations
South Bay Counseling Center (SBCC)
186th Street Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at 186th Street Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Gardena. The South Bay Counseling Center (SBCC) is the sponsor and the site coordinator is Ms. Jane Tokubo.

Highlights
Ms. Tokubo has a firm grasp of this program and has the respect of the staff. She also has close connections with the school and the community. She fills many daily roles. In addition to leading this ASP, she obtains grant money and solicits support from businesses.

Staffers are committed and knowledgeable, and they know the children very well. They offer a variety of activities to keep students interested and learning beyond homework completion. They also connect respectfully and warmly with the students, correcting them gently when necessary.

Ms. Tokubo wants a reward system that allows students to earn coins they can redeem for prizes if they behave well, clean up, and cooperate.

Homework & Academics
Observers watched homework assistance and academic enrichment activities. Staffers helped students and were attentive to them during a homework session for second- and third-graders in a classroom. In a first-grade session, two staffers helped the students. They, in turn, were helpful, polite, and interacted frequently with each other. “Students are all interacting with each other about academics and are helping each other so much,” Ms. Tokubo said. “It's a very lively and enjoyable environment.”

A tutor paid through Title I funding comes to the school library to help students for an hour four days a week.

An observer watched first- and second-graders learning to count through audio tapes and exercises with the teacher. Meanwhile, some older students read quietly inside and outside. At times, students socialized, but their focus and enjoyment during activities was evident.

An observer watched a Bingo game played with words to improve language and spelling. The staff member provided the word and a sentence for each word. For example: "The first word is 'love'. I 'love' the way the garden looks," the staff member said.

During another activity, fourth- and fifth-graders wrote letters to Marines. A sample letter on a board acted as a template for them.

Sports and Recreation
Sports and exercise consists mostly of outdoor exercises and stretches. Students generally cooperated with leaders and behaved. However, during one session, one child yelled, “I don't want to lose weight.” However, the overall environment during the activity was very harmonious and everyone was cooperating.

After the snack period, fourth- and fifth-graders engaged in fitness activities. They gathered on the yard to do jumping jacks, push-ups, and sit-ups, counting aloud to keep time. They also ran on the track.
During another observation, some students played basketball while others played jump rope. Most students had already left for the day, and only a few remained. More than half of the students had gone home earlier in a bus.

Another day, an observer watched children playing jump rope, hula hoops and basketball after most of the students had left. “At this time, these are the only kids left, due to a bus picking up the children at 4:15 p.m.,” the observer wrote.

Other Enrichment
Ms. Tokubo said students most enjoy cooking, science projects, sports, gardening, and painting. Recently, they did some clay work for Fathers’ Day.

A guest speaker came to the school during one observation day. He taught the children about what happens when young people commit crimes and a judge sends them to juvenile hall. He told them what happens when one gets in trouble and why they should try not to do so. The group was fourth- and fifth-grade boys. There were approximately 30 students in the classroom, plus two staff members and the speaker. "Your job is school," the speaker said. Children asked about the food at camp vs. juvenile hall. He told them camp food is better than juvenile hall food. "If you're bad, you only get bread and milk,” he said. Children asked about visits. He told them about the weekly schedule and the obstacles some families have to visiting their loved ones in jail. "Take responsibility for your actions,” he said. “If you're acting up, don't blame others.”

Craft activities included using water colors to decorate a kite from a handout. The staff member demonstrated how to do the project. “Do it like this,” he said. “Don't put on too much color because then your water color won’t work.”

An observer watched a group of third-graders get their instructions on a Mothers’ Day project. They were to paint flowerpots, put plants in them, and make cards. "Do not mistreat the brushes,” the staffer said. “Do not mix the colors. Use a color, put the brush in the water to clean it off, and then use another paint.”

During another observation, a staff member taught peace skills. She spoke of what being a good friend is and how to complement each other.

Ms. Tokubo said she wants soon to train boys on respecting girls. She is searching for someone to conduct this session.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Both the students and the staff appeared highly engaged in this program. The staff member who played word Bingo with the students addressed them affectionately and appropriately. She was animated and interacted extensively with them, providing relevant examples and making the game fun.

Another staff member who played jump rope with the students evidently enjoyed it. She interacted with them and laughed a lot.

Students had a chance to demonstrate leadership during sports activities.

Staff
Ms. Tokubo said most positions are program advisors and pay $9.00 to $11.00 per hour. A part-time position of assistant site coordinator pays $12.00 per hour. Ms. Tokubo said keeping positions filled isn’t
difficult. “To be quite honest, the staff does such a great job,” she said. “Each of them is also getting underpaid for their performance.”

Ms. Tokubo said the best staff members are trained tutors. She said she can’t hire teachers because she would have to pay them $25.00 per hour. Recruiting volunteers is a constant challenge. They help with events such as Halloween, carnivals, and holiday events. She does not have problems with recruiting specialized staff and substitutes. Her program has more control of staffing than do those at the high school level, which may have a more difficult time finding specialists, Ms. Tokubo said she has subbed for staffers when they have had to leave early.

Ms. Tokubo said new staffers go through the Beyond the Bell mandatory training on procedures. Both new and experienced staff members learn positive classroom management. She encourages staffers to go to training at the Venice High School gardening program.

The staff participates in monthly “SOAR” meetings, where they discuss classroom management and new initiatives. Ms. Tokubo said her staff knows what she expects. She also reports to them from meetings with school personnel.

Ms. Tokubo plans to do more targeted training this summer. She wants to focus on student behavior management, classroom management, understanding of LAUSD curricula, and homework assistance. She plans to have a literacy coach and a math coach speak to the group.

**Material Resources**

Ms. Tokubo said she budgets every month for materials and equipment. The ASP has access to the school library, but not the computer lab. Students use the library when the tutor comes to the school.

Ms. Tokubo said the program pays for one dedicated room out of its own budget, so administrators can’t repurpose it. On rainy days, Youth Services (YS) students have to go to the cafeteria. Thanks to this arrangement, SBCC students have their own facility.

During an observation of first- and second-graders, a teacher said one-half of the class was outside playing, while the other half worked on homework. Later, they switched. This may be an indication that the program needs more space.

Ms. Tokubo said snacks are very basic. She wants more variety and healthier snacks. During one snack session, a group of first-graders listened to an audio book as a staff member showed illustrations.

Ms. Tokubo said she is very strict about cleanliness. She said problems arise when YS students use bathrooms designated for this ASP. Many times, her staff has had to lock them and take students in six-person groups.

**Relationship with the School**

The primary contact for this ASP is the principal. Ms. Tokubo said they have a very good relationship. Most contact is during daily conversations about ASP issues, discipline, rewards for students, and the summer program.

Ms. Tokubo acknowledges the ASP needs to communicate better with day teachers. She suggested an interactive journal where both staffs can write about students or other concerns. Ms. Tokubo said that her staff learns of homework from packets the students bring with them. They also pay attention to students’ assignments during homework time. The staff knows “which group is working
on [spelling] words and which group is doing algebra.” she said. In addition, many staffers also work at the school during the day, so they know the students.

Ms. Tokubo said there is no joint planning with teachers to coordinate after-school activities. While the school’s administration does not share students’ CST and assessment scores with ASP staff, they do share general grade level information. The principal also shares information about some teachers, but Ms. Tokubo did not go into detail. She wants to improve this aspect of the relationship.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Ms. Tokubo and her staff talk to parents every day as they pick up their children. In addition, they have parent meetings to discuss rules and suspension procedures. She is satisfied with the staff’s interactions with parents, even though newer staff members express some discomfort about this. She wants them monitored.

Ms. Tokubo has a strong relationship with the community. Local business donors include a Toyota dealership, Girls Inc., and The Harbor Gateway South. The U.S. Department of Justice, Weed and Seed, and Beyond the Bell have provided grant money to hire a chorus teacher and a psychomotor skills specialist. The South Bay Classic gives the ASP $2,000 for a yearly art contest. Toyota underwrites a summer afternoon program to let the children do crafts, play table and water games, compete in sports, paint, and garden. One community member volunteers to maintain program equipment and furniture.

Ms. Tokubo lives in this community and conducts meetings for the neighbors as well as the parents.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Tokubo has a very close relationship with her agency, but operates very independently. She turns in payroll at the agency’s El Segundo office and takes that opportunity to discuss problems with officials. She said Beyond the Bell is very collaborative, but sometimes lacks consistency in its contact with this ASP. She complains of short-notice meetings with Beyond the Bell officials.

**Attendance**

The staff collects attendance in a black book. At the end of each week, one staff member consolidates that information into a list. This data is then input into the computer.

Staffers distributed flyers to attract students in the fall. Ms. Tokubo made sure teachers knew about the program, even though she had no formal meeting to inform them or answer their questions.

About 65 students attend this ASP. There is a small wait list of five students. Participants have to attend the homework help session. That may discourage some students from enrolling.

Ms. Tokubo said no events interfered this year with attendance. However, one bus that leaves at 4:15 p.m. every day takes half of the children and cuts into the program’s time and attendance, making it difficult to meet state and federal time guidelines. This bus drops the children off at another bus stop 1.5 miles away, where they wait for parents to pick them up.

**Safety and Security**

Ms. Tokubo is happy with the site’s security, though playground monitoring of students could improve. She also worries about YS students she sees gathering behind the buildings without supervision. She said the principal is looking into improved security. The fact that the program has its own room makes it possible to keep equipment secure, though the school had an issue with a robbery.
Conclusions and Comments
Ms. Tokubo is enthusiastic and committed to getting resources for her program. She plays multiple roles: as site coordinator at the school and as agency director, writing grants and working with the Healthy Start program.

Ms. Tokubo said she and her staff faced a major challenge when the program moved from learning centers. The parent sign-out requirement has also been an adjustment.

She praises volunteers and wants more of them. Most of her staffers began as volunteers. The early busing situation causes this program to lose many children in mid-afternoon and warrants examination.
# Site Profile

**Team Prime Time (TPT)**  
**Westside Leadership Magnet**

*Source: LAUSD*

## School Site Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
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### Principal

Cyril Baird

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.7% Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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## After-School Program Profile

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Straus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:peter@teamprimetime.org">peter@teamprimetime.org</a></td>
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| % of Capacity | 42% |

## Academic Performance Index Change

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<td>684</td>
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</table>
Mr. Baird describes an ASP rich with fine and performing arts activities that is evolving through an enhanced partnership between the agency, the parents, the ASP and the day school. Mr. Baird has been critical to fostering this relationship.

As a K-8 magnet site, Westside Leadership has special challenges, among them yearly competition for students. As the pool of available, motivated pupils diminishes with the proliferation of charter schools, new magnets, schools for advanced studies and neighborhood private and parochial schools, a vibrant, colorful, and engaging ASP can serve as a critical tool to attract them to Westside.

He hopes to appeal to both neighborhood and traveling students with a program that functions as a specialized extension of the magnet experience. He has launched creative recruiting strategies and seized on new Team Prime Time projects to catch the attention of potential pupils. “Schools without a strong after school program are going to lose enrollment,” he said.

Central to his plans are: (1) an ongoing collaboration that has resulted in a new computer lab for academic support; (2) more dual hires, teachers and aides who work for both the regular school and ASP programs; and (3) a list of promising new classes added to an already robust creative arts component. This is an ASP in transition that benefits from an enthusiastic, engaged principal and a highly responsive agency.

Components
Mr. Baird believes homework assistance works best in small learning groups. Teachers and ASP staff should consult with each other about appropriate methods. Training in content is not necessary for program leaders nor is training for behavior management because, according to the principal, the student-teacher ratio during homework assistance is 8-to-1. Overall, he is satisfied with homework help.

Academic enrichment at Westside Leadership this year will involve those opportunities supported through the new computer lab purchased as a joint project between the school and the ASP. Team Prime Time bought eight PCs; the school purchased 22, plus software, to help students improve their test-taking skills. Mr. Baird hopes the impact of these new computers will be evident in next spring’s CST exam results. One of the school’s teachers will teach the computer class. In addition to supporting academic achievement through increased reinforcement with technology, Mr. Baird thinks the ASP should upgrade staff training to help students most at risk.

Mr. Baird thinks sports should include not only soccer, football, volleyball, and basketball but also surfing--there is a surfing beach within walking distance. The principal would also like to see intramural competitions with neighboring middle schools and a course taught through the Los Angeles Harbor Lifeguard program. Mr. Baird can also see including sailing and kayaking, which reflects his broad thinking.

Fine and Performing Arts is the ASP’s strongest feature, with offerings Mr. Baird terms “exhaustive.” For example, he has requested, and seen added, a filmmaking class. Increased skill development and additional performances in all areas of creative expression are among Mr. Baird’s goals, as are more sections of drama, dance, art, and photography. According to Mr. Baird, the program last year produced a “fantastic art show, photography display of students work, and a step-dancing performance (taught by a former student).”

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers tell Mr. Baird they want to see more emphasis that is academic and more computer-related activities. They are pleased the ASP wants to hear their views. They appreciate that more homework is
being done, that there is better coordination and communication, and that the dual hiring saves room-sharing problems, among other benefits. Parents ask for more opportunities to be involved. They also want more performances and events featuring their children.

**Agency and District Support**
Mr. Baird has met two times with agency personnel, but the agency’s on-site coordinator acts as an effective liaison and is the normal point-of-contact. Mr. Baird has never had to bypass the on-site coordinator and bring problems to the agency’s attention himself. He feels he has significant influence with the structure and planning of his ASP as borne out by the joint computer program and large number of dual hires. Also, he believes he plays an ongoing role in ASP/parent contacts. Contact with Beyond the Bell has been minimal: he has not brought problems to their attention, has not asked for interventions or assistance, and has no suggestions at this time for improved management.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Mr. Baird believes he has helped put the ASP on the same path as the magnet school through recruiting with imagination, using both routine methods and personal telephone calls. He hosted a special recruiting event for twenty families with incoming elementary children to highlight not only the K-8 Magnet, but also the after-school program. “We sell it,” he says. He is hopeful and committed.
Case Study Observations  
Team Prime Time (TPT)  
Westside Leadership Magnet School

Introduction  
This program takes place at Westside Leadership Magnet School (a K-8 school) in Marina del Rey. Team Prime Time is the sponsor. Mr. Ryan Kenney, program director, and Ms. Sally Araceli are co-site coordinators. Most students attending this school and program are bused in, predominantly from Venice.

Highlights  
A highlight here is the mutual commitment from the teachers, the administrators and the after-school staff to helping students achieve academically.

The school staff’s support is evident, as is the strong communication between these two teams. The school obviously welcomes TPT. Mr. Kenney and Ms. Araceli appear to have strong and effective relationships with the principal and the teachers. Ms. Araceli initiates contact with the teachers and administrators, arranges prepared for discussions with them, and is considered an asset to the school. TPT staffers respect her leadership and communications skills.

The academic collaboration may warrant further observation to see if it yields higher academic achievement.

Homework and Academics  
Homework takes place in one room with approximately 30 students from grade K-8. Staffers move around the room asking who needs help. They work one-on-one with students providing coaching/tutoring. The students respond well to the staffers and each other. Evaluators noted that one staff member remained fairly uninvolved, only briefly working with or teaching the students. Everyone interacted pleasantly. Some students worked quietly. One student worked on a computer.

This room is not big enough to accommodate all students. The room rug looks dirty, with black spots all over it. There are no posters or student works on the walls. The room looks messy and disorganized.

There was too much noise effectively to conduct homework because of the crowding. Additionally, there were distractions and moments of commotion. During one observation, some students did not focus on their task, math intervention. During another observation, staffers told students to settle down, get to work, and lower their voices, but the students did not listen.

An observation of homework period occurred on a CST testing day, so there was no homework. Instead, leaders distributed booklets with word games and other activities. Some students were interested in the materials while others socialized quietly. One student read his own book and the leader encouraged him to do so. It was hard to say how engrossed students were with materials; they did use them, but with no apparent enthusiasm. The leader provided encouragement and assistance in the few instances where it was requested or needed. More challenging academic activities could have been provided.

During CST testing week, another observation of a primary grade’s homework session occurred. Again, there was no homework due to the testing. Instead, the students worked on academic game sheets distributed by the leader. There were two staff members and seven children working together. The staff provided both assistance and encouragement to the students as they completed their assignments.
Both site leaders said they believed the staff was “pretty efficient in helping the kids.” Both leaders said there were times when the staff didn’t understand something. When they didn’t understand a math problem, they took the problem to a teacher. Staff members were good at knowing when they needed help to support a student’s work. The site leaders agreed that though one-on-one work between student and staff was the best form of support, they had a ratio of about 10 students for each staff member during homework.

One observation occurred of a time that was supposed to be devoted to homework. However, the observer noted:

- The site coordinator tells me the teacher in this room is a math teacher who is supposed to be providing math intervention. Students, however, are not doing homework or anything near that. They are having hamburgers bought at a nearby stand and browsing through the Internet or taking a look at the video of a girl's 15th birthday celebration being played on a laptop computer. All students cheer on.

**Arts**

An observation occurred of a photography class. Students were offered photography during the entire week at this site. The instructor was a full-time arts specialist. She spent one week of every three at each Team Prime Time site. During her time onsite, she focused on photography, visual arts, or drama.

She took students around the school to shoot pictures with eight digital cameras. The day after our observation, she planned to bring in three PCs and show students how to download their pictures. By the end of the week, the goal was for the students to have a gallery of their best shots. The student work was very impressive and the observer was told that they hold at least one art show at each campus, plus one for donors, in June.

All students enjoyed the activity and all students who wanted to participate were able to do so. The activity lasted for about 30 minutes per student group, and after one group ended she started with the next.

**Sports and Games**

The evaluator observed a variety of sports activities during the field study period. They included football, baseball, soccer, kickball, jump-rope, and a “step program.” Some sample observations follow:

- Students are outside playing football. A total of six sixth graders are with the staff as the staff leads them. The staffer is encouraging and empathetic with them as she observes them. "Careful over there," she says to a student.

- Students are outside playing kickball. Altogether there are about nine students with one staffer. He is very encouraging as he leads and coaches them. "Get ready, get ready, here we go," he says to the students.

- Students here are doing an activity which they call the "step program," where students stomp their feet to produce sound and a dance. The co-site coordinator said the students are practicing for an event to perform these dances in the school's auditorium.

- Students here are playing soccer with one staff member. The director of the agency has been here since the program started and is now also joining the kids to play soccer.
Students are now playing baseball. The agency director joins in and helps organize this play. Two other staffers join in with the kids and play baseball together. Kids love it.

Students are playing an informal soccer game with the coach playing goal keeper on one side and giving an unending stream of encouragement, coaching and suggestions. Students are having a wonderful time and are playing in a cooperative, non-competitive manner. Although there is no grass to play soccer and other field games in an optimal manner, the school is only one block from Venice Beach and students sometimes go over there on Fridays for surfing and other beach games.

It should be noted that there was no grassy space on this campus, so many games were played on a blacktop area. This fact bothers a coach, and he commented to an observer, “…that it isn't right to deprive the children of soccer.”

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

Students seemed minimally engaged during homework at this field study period. This contrasted with the program director’s and co-site coordinator’s view that one focus area at this site was homework and academic achievement. It was difficult to say if this might be typical or was more related to the fact that observations occurring toward the end of the academic year. Students showed a high level of engagement in both the arts and sports activities held during this program.

Staff members showed high interest in the students, knew them well, and had warm, caring relationships with them. Classroom management was difficult to assess. It did not appear to be strong during the homework observations, but was better as students engaged in the enrichment activities. Students involved in the latter activities listened, followed direction, and asked or answered questions.

**Staff**

Counselors for this program earned $15.00 per hour and the co-site coordinator earned $18.00 per hour. There was no problem in keeping these positions filled. Volunteers at the site included a dance instructor and some high school students who provided tutoring for the program. Substitutes came from the agency if they were needed. The co-site coordinator noted that they were “fine” with their staffing level and “don’t have a lack of staff.”

There was training at the beginning of each year for new staff members. Staff members were trained in the use of office materials and handouts from the agency. Additionally, they reviewed district policies. On site, staff received CPR and general first-aid training. Experienced staff who returned for the new academic year received training in anything that was particularly challenging the year before. Additionally, directors’ meetings occurred every week, as well as staff meetings.

There was no formal training in classroom management or understanding the LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. In terms of behavior management, staff sought guidance from each other in dealing with a behavior issue. Behavior management would have been a topic of discussion for a directors’ meeting. Both the program director and co-site coordinator believed that staff would benefit from classroom management training.

**Material Resources**

This after-school program had the use of three rooms. There was a computer in one of the classrooms which the program used in the afternoons. The program director noted that the agency had been working with the school to get use of a computer lab. There was no word of resolution on this request. There was no comment related to this program’s use of the library. Both the program director and the co-site
coordinator said there were no problems with needing more space. They said the school welcomed this after-school program. The program director considers himself lucky in this regard.

The leaders of this program noted that they had enough materials and equipment to support the activities offered. The co-site coordinator called the central TPT office when she needed supplies and received them. The program director stressed the good communication between the field sites and the office and said they regularly monitored the material and equipment needs for each location.

The program director said the snacks offered are “good, healthy.” “We can’t complain,” the co-site coordinator said. “They get their carbs and fruit.” It was unclear, based on this discussion, if students might prefer more snacks at the site each day.

Leaders said the parts of the school that the students use in this program are clean. “[The janitorial staff] are good and we also help by keeping everything clean,” the co-site coordinator said. The program director said the bathroom is always very clean. “Right now, they are doing great,” he said.

**Relationship with the School**

The primary school contact for the co-site coordinator was the principal. She said he was new to the school, but was very supportive and was interested in the details of the program. The most common formal method of communication between the two of them was a meeting in the principal’s office after the co-site coordinator e-mailed him an agenda of her priorities. They also communicated informally every day. Typical topics were student issues, even if not related to Team Prime Time.

The co-site coordinator said communication between the classroom teachers and the after-school program staff was good. She said all she had to do was walk into the teachers’ classrooms to talk with them or put a note in their boxes. She said the school is so small that they often met over nutrition or lunch. A planner and an agenda that each student received at the beginning of the academic year helped the after-school staff to know what homework was required.

There was no formal joint planning to coordinate the activities of the after-school program with the classroom teachers. After-school staff was informally aware of student assignments because they asked the teacher for the class work. School staff was invited to some after-school events and could help plan them in the future. The program director and co-site coordinator said the relationship between the school teachers, administration and the after-school staff was collegial and collaborative.

Administrators and teachers shared student CST and assessment scores with the staff of the after-school program. They also gave them progress reports. The staff used these to help tutor and coach students in some of the areas in which they lagged academically.

The strongest part of the relationship between the program and the school was in both staffs’ commitment to academics. “Our students know that we are there and we will help them accomplish what they need to do,” the co-site coordinator said.

The weakest point of the relationship of the program with the school was the busing, which negatively affected attendance and participation in the program. The program director said 75 percent of the school was bused in and that the students cannot stay until the 6 p.m. program end time. A small number of students uses city buses to get to and from school and their schedules are more flexible in terms of program participation. But this is a small percentage of the overall after-school population in this program.
Relationships with Parents and the Community
Communication occurred with parents in person, via telephone, letters, and flyers. Teachers sent written information home with the students weekly, because busing prevented many parents from coming to the school. If something warranted an individual discussion with a parent and he/she did not come to the school in person, staffers called or sent a note home. The co-site coordinator said this communication is crucial, especially when staffers need to let parents know that a student is not attending the program.

The co-site coordinator believed there was very good communication with parents. She noted that during individual conferences, parents often asked about how a particular child was doing. The only weak point mentioned by the co-site coordinator did not relate to current students in the program, but rather to the students and parents who lost the chance to attend due to the transportation situation.

The co-site coordinator has worked at this location for four years and so knew the community fairly well. But she noted that most students in the local community did not attend this school. Local business involvement appeared to consist of vendors providing discounts on purchases by students. Students in this program also went into the local community as it is very close to the ocean. They sometimes took trips to the beach. Venice High School sometimes contacts this after-school program to see if their students can volunteer.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The relationship between this site and its agency was strong. They communicated on a regular basis. The two teams talked regularly, used e-mail, and participated in staff meetings together. The co-site coordinator said she can get anything that she needs right away once she requests it of the agency. She noted this site was farthest from the Team Prime Time office, but that did not appear to have any negative impact to this relationship.

Communication with Beyond the Bell occurred at the agency level, not the site level. Any Beyond the Bell communication the site received was via the TPT central office.

Attendance
A sign-in sheet recorded daily attendance. This sheet was then faxed to the central office at the end of each week. This system worked well for all. The students understood when and how they needed to sign in and out. The co-site coordinator did a good job of getting the sheets in every week. The agency then kept originals of all attendance sheets for its records. There was no waiting list for this program.

The co-site coordinator said “fun stuff” encouraged attendance. She specifically noted activities such as water day, soccer, tournaments, and anything to do with art and the art academy. She said they had an art event on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The art academy director rotated and worked on projects with students.

The co-site coordinator’s personal relationship with the students also appeared to promote attendance. She knew them well, understood why and when they were having issues, and worked with them and the school staff to fix problems. Of particular note was the work that the co-site coordinator did when students were getting bad grades, the program director said. The program staff worked directly with the students, the parents and teachers. If a student does not attend the program for more than one day, a call is made to their home to discuss the matter.

Attendance may have been affected this year by students choosing to go to the beach rather than attend the program (again, this program was one block from the ocean). Fridays were also days of lower-than-average attendance.
Safety and Security
The co-site coordinator said greater security could be achieved by closing doors leading to the site at 4:30 p.m. The program director said the area inside of the school where the program operated was monitored well. However, if incidents occurred just outside of the premises, the staff had no ability to control them.

The site staff and agency were satisfied with the security of physical property of both the school and the after-school program. The co-site coordinator did say she would like to have more storage bins for sports equipment, but it did not sound as if she had made a formal request of her agency.

Conclusions and Comments
The program director and co-site coordinator described an after-school program that was well integrated into the school. The school seemed to welcome the after-school program and both staffs shared a strong desire to work together.

In the future, the leadership team would like to offer media arts, to let students work on computers and do their own editing. They also said that they are looking into other activities in the visual and performing arts. The co-site coordinator said she wished there were grass on the site because it would benefit some activities. But she said she enjoyed the proximity to the beach. The program director also mentioned he wants a gym.

The main challenge facing the leadership staff of this after-school program was busing. “Even if it was until 4:30 p.m., that would be better,” the co-site coordinator said. “However, right after school, they leave. There is not enough time to help them with their academics.” “Kids from far away can’t take [full] advantage of the program,” the program director added.

The co-site coordinator ended the interview with the following comment:

The kids really like [the program], and the kids that come, they are my regulars. They come every time; they really enjoy it, and not because the parents make them. They really like it. They have fun and get their homework done.
## School Site Profile

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<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>International Studies Learning Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>2560 Tweedy Blvd.</td>
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### Principal
Guillermina Jauregui

### School Demographics (2007-08) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<th>English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment</th>
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<td>20.4%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total: 143</td>
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<tr>
<td>143 Spanish</td>
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## After-School Program Profile

### After School Program Provider Agency
Woodcraft Rangers
Cathie Mostovoy
cmostovy@woodcraftrangers.org
213-249-9293

<table>
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<th># ASP Students</th>
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| % of Capacity | 59% |

## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 653 |
| API – 2007 | 652 |
International Studies Learning Center (ISLC) is a district span school serving grades 6-12. Middle school students at ISLC have a choice of ASPs: Woodcraft Rangers (WR), which serves ISLC exclusively, or After School All Stars, which may take students from ISLC and from South East Middle School, the campus both use.

Mr. Huang works with the middle school program and with Woodcraft Rangers. He provided the interview. He says WC, limited to attracting participants only from enrollees of the much smaller ISLC, is working hard this year to recruit more members and to expand offerings. The site coordinator is a teaching assistant at the school, easing communication between WR and teachers. The program needs better supervision, tighter security policies, more enrichment offerings, and more monitoring of classroom cleanliness.

Mr. Huang has suggestions for how the ASP could further the focus of the Learning Center---international studies---and become an integral part of the “school within the school.” He wants more support from Beyond the Bell to fund field trips that fit in with the school’s study focus.

**Components**

During homework assistance, students receive guided practice and some individual assistance. Mr. Huang said leaders need training in adolescent behavior, recognizing the limitations of slower learners, helping English language learners, positive reinforcement and feedback, and middle school content areas. They should review students’ homework agenda forms each day and encourage students to complete assignments.

Academic enrichment should include activities that apply concepts learned in class to real life. For example, WR could use computer programs and games to build skills and broaden analytical thinking. The ASP has begun literacy and math sessions. Mr. Huang wants more emphasis on math skills, math games, creative writing, increased computer use, and robotics.

WR sports and athletics should offer organized games that students enjoy, such as soccer for boys and girls, football, softball and volleyball. Intramural contests should be an objective. When students compete, their motivation increases and they are more willing to spend time with drills and skill development. Mr. Huang said WR should capitalize on ISLC’s focus by offering and teaching sports and games from other countries. Leaders could learn about international sports like feather kicking through videos and then apply them. This meets three goals: keeping students fit, increasing knowledge of geography, and learning about other cultures. WR and Youth Services have arranged competitions at a local park.

In fine and performing arts, WR offers hip-hop dance, drama, drill team, and theater. Mr. Huang wants WR to offer musical instrument instruction, musical performances, art exhibits, and field trips.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers said the homework help encourages students to complete assignments. The teachers like the variety of activities that channels student energy positively and improves self-discipline. They also want WR to add tutoring provided by parent or teacher volunteers. “There is a need to correlate the skills that students must learn and integrate them into the activities planned for them by the afternoon program,” Mr.
Huang said. “After-school tutoring done by volunteers at least one day a week in the study hall session can bring about greater student improvement.”

Parents have no complaints except to say that concluding sign-out procedures are lax. They also want more music classes.

**Agency and District Support**
Mr. Huang finds the agency responsive and helpful. Having a site coordinator who also works at the school makes it easier to communicate issues and concerns to the agency. These include expanding offerings according to the interests of students.

School officials contacted Beyond the Bell last year about student supervision concerns with YS. Requests for field trip funding have been denied. Mr. Huang wants more transparency from Beyond the Bell regarding budgeting.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
WR tripled offerings this year from two to six. The agency clearly wants to make this small program viable. Enrollment also grew. Mr. Huang hopes to see some staff changes in the future.
# Site Profile

## Woodcraft Rangers (WR)

### International Studies Learning Center

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|                     |       | South Gate, CA 90280 |

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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 20.4% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 143  
|                     | 143 Spanish |

### After-School Program Profile

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|                                                               | Cathie Mostovoy  
|                                                               | cmostovy@woodcraftrangers.org  
|                                                               | 213-249-9293 |

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</tbody>
</table>
Mr. Miranda has directly involved himself in shaping Woodcraft Rangers (WR) into what he considers an extension of Middleton Elementary School. In particular, he has built an outstanding music program through the ASP that performs at venues like the Hollywood Bowl, Mariachi USA and other district schools. Members of these groups also help recruit program participants at spring assemblies. Mr. Miranda has made this possible by involving himself in many operational features of the ASP such as hiring and extending the hours of his regular music teacher into the afternoon.

The notion of a principal creating a successful ASP design is not unique, but it would be difficult to find another elementary site with such a strong performing arts component. This achievement reflects Mr. Miranda’s dedication and WR’s flexibility and willingness to collaborate.

Mr. Miranda wants quality instruction for his students through activities like the music program that build skills, self-esteem and pride in accomplishment. Students learn more than just to dance or play an instrument: they learn life skills such as the value of practice, teamwork, and discipline. Mr. Miranda is satisfied with most of the operational elements of WR, but he has some ideas for improvement.

**Components**

Students get help in the homework assistance hour but could use additional direct and individual attention. A good homework program gives students a chance to apply skills they have learned during the day, Mr. Miranda said. Program leaders should get training in tutoring methods and should communicate more with teachers. They should learn about Open Court and math strategies that complement the day program.

**Academic enrichment** should include time on language arts, with exercises in writing stories and essays. To provide this instruction, leaders need training in grade-level language arts, reading expectations and creating motivational reading programs. Mr. Miranda said the school could provide such training if funds and authority were given.

Successful **sports and games** “are developmental in nature,” with build one skill building upon another, Mr. Miranda said. A quality program would have leaders trained to recognize skill development in children. He wants students to build skills to the point where they might compete in intramural contests. Students should have scheduled exposure to all sports, including soccer, softball, basketball, and track and field. Youth Services is a separate program, and there are no issues with it.

WR offers a robust and impressive array of **fine and performing arts**, including guitar and other instrumental instruction, choral groups, a drum corps and performing mariachi and ballet folklorico groups. Folklorico has improved this year. Mr. Miranda wants it and all other performing and music groups to expand. Transportation to performances is very difficult to arrange. The principal would appreciate assistance with field trips and support for his performances.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers appreciate the performing arts program but believe learning supports need more structure. They do not see any academic benefit in their classrooms from program participation. They believe WR has many good features, but want more consistent academic enrichment and motivational activities.
Facility sharing is not a problem. The program uses the multi-purpose room, student cafeteria, faculty cafeteria, lunch pavilion, parent center, auditorium and some classrooms. Mr. Miranda says his teachers are very tolerant.

Parents are enthusiastic about the performing arts program and want further expansion. Mr. Miranda says there is a long waiting list for places in the folklorico and music groups.

**Agency and District Support**
Mr. Miranda credits the success of WR to his own high expectations and an excellent site coordinator. Communication has improved this year: the agency has responded quickly to the very few problems that arose. Mr. Miranda has very clear opinions on ASPs and his role in them. He believes ASPs would be more successful if interested principals could create programs themselves and receive the funding for them. He would then hire and train staffers to align the program to best suit his population’s needs and goals. “Our program is interactive because we have a good site coordinator,” he said. “The program organizers are not concerned with quality. They are only interested in the numbers.” There are times, he said, when bypassing the agency would be the easiest way to effect change.

Beyond the Bell has been very helpful when contacted. He wants it to set up an advisory committee of principals who would provide input on a wide variety of ASP issues. He also believes Beyond the Bell should provide funds for field trips and be more diligent in monitoring programs.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Mr. Miranda believes principals should be more involved and show more interest in what goes on with their ASPs. These three hours can be a significant benefit for many children if quality is demanded and support given. Principals should be actively engaged in ASP staffing and training; he is involved with hiring for his program. He hopes for more funding for transportation this year and wants to see his highly successful music program grow. “It does wonderful things for children,” he said.
Case Study Observations
Woodcraft Rangers (WR)
Middleton Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at Middleton Elementary School (a 1-6 school) located in Huntington Park. Woodcraft Rangers is the sponsor. Ms. Luz Lopez is the site coordinator.

Highlights
This ASP is noteworthy for its enrichment offerings. During the May/June observation period, WR offered a broad array of clubs: computers, soccer and fitness, folklorico, drum line, chorus, guitar, contemporary dance, and crafts. Each offered organized activities and enrichment. The children learned new skills and demonstrated them through practice. Observers saw the children take pride and satisfaction in the activities.

A strong staff and good materials support the activities. The program has indoor space, musical instruments, sports equipment, dance costumes, CD players, board games, and extensive materials for crafts. The program has a close and positive relationship with the school. Several attentive staff members and volunteers supervise the students and engage them in activities. The program uses good planning and routines to keep children safe, active, engaged, and happy.

Homework
Homework assistance takes place in a large, covered, lighted, semi-outdoor lunch area that promotes security for children and materials. This is pursuant to an agreement with the principal. “It’s just easier to have all the kids in one place at the beginning of each session,” Ms. Lopez said.

Staff members divide children into activity groups like chorus and dance team for homework time. Leaders monitor homework through logs and direct conversations with the teachers.

An observer watched staff members help children with their homework. They moved among them, answering questions and clarifying assignments. Some comments follow:

A boy asked a question about his homework and a staff member gave him leads to guide him to the answer. This allowed the boy to figure out the answer on his own. Many children listened while the staff member assisted other children with their homework. At times, they helped each other with their work.

A girl asked the instructor a question about homework. “Remember what I told you yesterday?” the staff member answered. “You have to put on your thinking cap. It’s your special hat to figure things out.” The staff member told the girl to let her know when she thought she might have the answer, so the staff member could check it.

Five staff members supervised a group of about 55 children. Those children who finished their work played games, talked and colored. Those doing homework worked quietly. The noise does not seem to bother the children doing homework.

A girl in the dance group told the staff member that she was ready to dance. The staff member said to do her homework first. “Ah! O.K.,” the girl said. “I’m going to finish it quick. Watch me! You guys hurry up and finish your work!” A different girl complained that she didn’t want to do homework. The instructor responded, “Well, the choice is
yours, do you want to get an F or do you want to do well?” Then another child chimed in, “Come on! Just finish it. You don't want an F. Just do your homework, and then we can dance!”

Ms. Lopez’s is satisfied with resources for homework assistance. Staffers are capable, she said. However, it might help to have an extra staffer to help with each group. This site is one of the few observed that provide effective homework programs in a single central area.

**Academics**

Ms. Lopez said one of the activities that students like most is computers. The staff member leading the computer group is also a teacher at the school. He integrates academic content into the children’s use of the computer lab.

One day, 10 to 12 children worked in the computer lab, on a website with math problems. Children completed a path with correct answers. The teacher rewarded those who finished with candy. The teacher and a high school worker provided assistance and encouragement. One boy didn't seem to understand how the software worked. The aide told him what to do to answer the questions. “I didn’t know!” the boy said. “Now you know,” the aide replied, mockingly. The teacher sharply called her attention to let her know that was inappropriate behavior. The computer club ended at 4:30 p.m. because parents were already coming for their children.

Another day, children did a variety of activities in the computer lab. Most played a video game that simulates a car race. A few others asked to visit the lego.com website. He helped them find it. He actively watched the children, making sure they were at appropriate websites and helping them navigate the web. A group of three children tried to find their houses on the Google Earth map. An observer wrote that they seemed intrigued and engaged in the activity. The teacher periodically taught them different functions. A group of four researched endangered species for a homework project. They found the information on sites such as National Geographic and Wikipedia.

The staff member told an observer that most kids do not have computers at home, so he enjoys helping them research different topics and learn as much as they can here. He is a Middleton alumnus and has spent his whole life in this community. He said he works with the ASP not so much for the pay, but because he enjoys working with the kids.

**Sports & Recreation**

Soccer is a popular activity with boys. Observers saw them play soccer often. They also observed a relay race during a special day of “water games.”

Boys played soccer amiably at different times Staff members supervised and got involved.

At the end of one day, children from another club joined the Fitness/Sports Club on the soccer field. There were about 20 players, of varying ages and skill levels. It was more of a playground game than a learning activity. Although the more skilled players kept the game going, there wasn’t much structure. The children spent about half of the time standing and waiting. The staff member for this club participated more as a player than as a supervisor.

Another day there were soccer drills. A group of 11 boys practiced kicking the ball to each other. Next, they stretched and warmed up. Later, they stood in a circle with the staff member at the center, and he kicked the ball to each of them for a return. After a full round, the staff member called on one boy to be the center kicker and the round started over again. Each boy had a turn at the center. Next, they began
kicking drills again, but he called on each boy to try to take the ball away from another. The staff member was very involved and very encouraging to the players. He coached them and acknowledged them when they did something well. They appeared to be having a great time. The boys began a game, and a teacher joined them.

A special Water Games day occurred on a Friday in late May. Staffers required parent permission slips and went over safety guidelines before the event began. Children without permission slips did supervised activities in the computer lab.

One major activity was a relay race. The objective was for each child to run across the yard with a sponge under her or his chin to a teammate with a bottle tied to his or her head. The child with the sponge must squeeze as much water as possible into the bottle. Each player got a chance at squeezing the sponge and holding the bottle. The team that filled its bottle first won the game. The children enjoyed this game. The staff also got involved, cheering and cautioning the children. An observer watched a while, and then briefly checked in on the computer lab. Upon her return, she noted, “The students are still very engaged and having a lot of fun.”

Ms. Lopez said the children had been asking to play this game for a while, but the weather had been too cold. But they were so eager that they let her know they were monitoring the weather on the afternoon newscast.

**Arts**
This ASP offered extensive opportunities for arts enrichment. Ms. Lopez said folklorico and drum line are two favorites. Observers also noted chorus, guitar, contemporary dance, and crafts activities.

The site has two folklorico groups: one for beginners and one advanced. The advanced group has performed on KCET at a countywide event. Between 26 and 40 children participated during observations. This club has abundant supplies. The girls wore flowing skirts and dance shoes, and the boys wore boots. An engaged and attentive instructor leads each session. He explained and modeled each new step and then had students practice it. Often, he chose a volunteer to demonstrate a step. As the children practiced steps to recorded music, the instructor kept the beat on a small drum. He was gentle and encouraging with the students. For example, whenever a student demonstrated a step, he called for a round of applause. He called for another after the entire group successfully completed a routine. The children practiced in groups that changed with the steps. For example, they first stepped across the room in rows of four. Later they did the same steps in columns of eight. The children danced on the beat and did the movements in unison. They stayed focused and engaged. They enjoyed themselves. The group continued practicing well into sign-out time; many parents and younger siblings sat in and watched them practice.

Another impressive arts enrichment opportunity is the Drum Line Club. Between nine and 13 students practiced outdoors under some trees. Each participant had his or her own drum and the drums appeared to be in good condition. The group practiced a series of cadences, some with separate parts for different drummers. The drummers had no sheet music and the staff member provided little direction, but the players knew the material. One boy started each new cadence and the others joined in. The drummers stayed consistently on the beat. The staff member occasionally signaled some drummers into the middle of the circle to play solos. The students seemed proud of how they played together. “Students do an excellent job playing the drums,” wrote one observer. “You can tell they have been practicing. They synchronize and sound good. They even twirl the drumsticks between their fingers.” Toward the end of one session, several parents arrived for sign-out. They waited and watched for at least 10 minutes, applauding when the group stopped playing.
Observers watched chorus and guitar classes in different parts of the large faculty lounge. Between 12 and 20 children, both girls and boys, participated. After warm-up exercises, they practiced songs they knew and learned new songs. They sang “La Bamba” and a contemporary pop song recorded by an American Idol winner. The staff member taught them a new song. He passed out lyric sheets and read them with the students. He taught them that lyrics sometimes use slang and ungrammatical spelling. The children enjoyed themselves and were energetic, dancing, hugging the staff member, making gestures that coincided with the song, and jumping around. At times, this physical activity distracted the children. The guitar club included five students. Each had her or his own guitar and sheet music. They practiced keys, building on what they had already learned. The staff member played along and corrected them. The children stayed focused and on-task.

The dance club practiced on the stage and floor of the school’s auditorium. One day, 19 girls participated, divided by grade level into three groups. Another day there were two groups. One staff member and a high school worker led the group. The groups rotated through a reggaeton routine. No group was off stage for more than a few minutes at a time. Even when their group was not on stage, many girls jumped and danced to the music on their own. The staff member counted the beat, called out steps, and modeled the movements. The girls knew the routine but stayed in step only about half the time. Next, they performed steps that imitated boxing moves. The girls called it boxing, but the staff member said boxing involves putting on gloves and going into a ring and hitting someone. To begin, the staff member had the girls make sure they had enough room to step and swing. She also had them stretch beforehand. She called out the movements with a positive and energetic attitude.

Children also participated in crafts activities. Staff members gave them materials and the freedom to create what they wanted. A group of 18 girls sculpted with clay while two staff members supervised and showed them samples. The students had buttons, beads, and feathers to decorate the artwork. Most girls painted their creations with hearts or volcanoes. An observer said the girls looked satisfied and proud of their work.

On a day when the computer teacher was ill, another staff member led the computer club in a crafts activity. They had construction paper, scissors, glue, buttons, wire, glitter, crayons, markers, pencils, tape, and felt. The children made various creations, including Cat in the Hat hats, greeting cards for their parents, a superhero figurine of wire, and a construction paper telescope.

**Other Enrichment**

When they do not have scheduled activities, children color and play board games, as when standardized tests preempt homework. The children stayed energetic, excited, and on-task. At the end of the day, the groups returned to the lunch area and continued playing until sign-out time. Some played handball against a nearby wall. Staff members watched and talked with the children.

Ms. Lopez said the principal wants a drill team, and she wants to add the activity. The challenge is finding an instructor.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

The program keeps the children busy and safe. They usually have something constructive to do. They enjoy themselves and seem to appreciate their staff members, who know them as individuals.

Snack distribution provided insight into classroom management methods. The children knew the routine for snack time. Each club lined up with their staff member and relied on that person for its turn to pick up a snack. Two by two, children came forward and chose their snacks from a table in the middle of the lunch area. Ms. Lopez took attendance during this time. Another staff member directed the children to
their assigned tables. This day's snack was chocolate milk and cookies. An observer said the children seemed energetic and happy.

Staff members rarely resorted to classroom management tactics. Children stayed generally attentive and engaged. Staff members focused on keeping them on-task to manage them.

Problems in this area were rare. One soccer game had as many students standing and waiting as playing. Players rushed on and off the soccer field. One day, the chorus group had trouble getting organized. Another day, they had trouble focusing because of other activities in the room. These problems were minor given the high quality of activities.

**Staff**

BGC has plenty of quality staff. One observer noted that 16 staff members had their rooms and activities ready about 20 minutes before the program started. Another said multiple staff members, including some high school workers, led most activities.

> “Our staff has been good,” Ms. Lopez said. “We don’t have a problem with them leaving. Volunteers help with homework or they help supervise or work one-on-one with the kids if they need help with something.”

She said she has not had difficulties securing substitutes and specialized staff, except perhaps the drill team instructor. And she does have issues with the hiring process. “It is hard to interview and find people,” she said. “There is so much paperwork and time that goes into hiring one person.”

Ms. Lopez said staffers attend monthly training sessions in topics like talking to students and motivation. She said staffers receive training in classroom management, student behavior management, LAUSD curricula, and homework assignments. She believes staffers could benefit from more communication training. Staff members engage the children from the beginning to the end of the afternoon.

An observer noted their readiness and preparation on an observation day:

> As the 125 children arrived, staff members called them by name. One student who arrived about 10 minutes early arrives about 10 minutes before the rest. An instructor suggested practicing his breathing exercises, and they both set to work. They did them and then hummed a D scale the instructor strummed on a guitar. The instructor told another girl he listened to a CD of the Buena Vista Social Club she had given him. They worked on a song from the CD, but couldn’t quite get it. He promised to teach her the song.

The observer also watched homework assistance:

> As the students finish their homework and move to other activities, a few appear to struggle with their assignments. Several staff members stay back and work with these students individually.

Another observer offered a similar description of activities at the end of the day:

> All groups (except folklorico) gathered in the sheltered lunch area. As parents arrived, children played board games, handball, cards, and foosball. The kids stayed active, instead of just sitting and waiting. The sign-out procedures were well organized. All
staffers remained on the premises, engaging with the students or supervising. The choir leader demonstrated songs on his guitar. The folklorico group continued practicing with most of its members. The lunch area was full of materials to use.

**Material Resources**
This ASP has no access to classrooms. Even so, it has good material resources. An observer said:

> I don't think I've ever seen an ASP with so many resources (people, space, materials). Many activities involve more than one staff member. Most have high school helpers. The program has dedicated space for its activities, including the faculty lounge and an extended stage in the auditorium. They have access to a locker full of drums for the drum line. There is a cart with board games and other materials for leisure activities.

Ms. Lopez said the program has enough materials and equipment. Indoor activities take place in the faculty lounge and multi-purpose room, as well as the other dedicated spaces. Although the ASP has no access to the library, it uses the computer lab daily.

Ms. Lopez’s comments on the snacks and school cleanliness were positive, but not overwhelmingly favorable. She is satisfied with the snacks but craves more variety. She said janitorial services are adequate.

**Relationship with the School**
Ms. Lopez said the ASP has a strong relationship with the school. Her primary contact person is the principal. “We have an excellent relationship and very good communication,” she said. “I work in the office in the morning, so I see him all the time and we talk.” She said they talk about program progress, safety issues, and restroom supervision. She also praised communication with the office staff and the teachers. During one observation, the principal visited the folklorico group and spoke with the leader. Ms. Lopez remarked on his interest and support. Her role as a regular school day employee promotes the ASP’s good relationship with the school.

The ASP currently does not engage in joint planning with teachers, but two of them also work as staffers. The school does not share standardized test or assessment scores with the ASP.

Ms. Lopez explained that the homework arrangement with the principal came about because of friction with teachers over classroom use. ”The teachers did not want us going in their classes because the students touch things and use supplies,” she said. “I talked with the principal and we just decided it would be better if we were outside.”

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Ms. Lopez said WR has a strong relationship with parents, but none with community groups. She said parents are very supportive and help with special events. Daily communication is also strong. “We see them every day and every day the staff talks to them,” she said. “I talk to them; we send letters, flyers. I give them notices well in advance if we have events or something is going on. We usually talk about how their kids are behaving.”

Observers saw parents who came to pick up their children stay and watch practices and rehearsals.

However, community relationships are another story. Ms. Lopez said that, even though she grew up here and her staff members live nearby, local groups have no contact with the ASP.
Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
The ASP has a positive relationship with its agency. Ms. Lopez said she gets the support she needs and cites no weak points. Observers confirmed the support. As for the relationship with Beyond the Bell, she said she is aware of one, but she has not interacted very much with the organization.

Attendance
The ASP encourages student attendance in many ways. “We keep them motivated,” Ms. Lopez said. “We get them involved; we have reading logs, raffles, and prizes for those students who finish their homework and behave well. They get a ticket and as they accumulate tickets, they can get stuff like books or candy.”

The program has a wait list of more than 100 children. Should a child leave the program, Ms. Lopez contacts the next person on the list. WR has no competition from other programs. The addition of a drum line group “really improved our attendance because a lot of the kids want to be in it. It’s new and the kids like it.”

Safety & Security
Many attentive adults and high school workers supervise the clubs. Most activities are indoors, in well-contained areas. Children stay in their groups and do not wander off. Most of the time, they stay so engaged in what they are doing that they have no interest in leaving their group.

Clubs return to the lunch area for sign-out. The folklorico group often remains practicing in the multipurpose room nearby. Some children play in the space between. Parents come to the lunch area to sign their children out.

As with many after-school activities, some here pose minor safety risks. Staffers had mixed success handling them during observations. For example, the folklorico instructor noticed that two girls who are much shorter than the rest wore skirts that were much too long for them. He asked another staff member for help to prevent an accident. The staff member tied the skirts higher on the girls’ torsos to provide clearance. The girls continued dancing.

The drum line leader had breaks every 10 minutes to prevent blisters on the drummers’ hands. However, it was very loud. Ms. Lopez and staff member had to speak directly into each other’s ears.

One soccer game sometimes got out of hand. Boys raced each other to the drinking fountain and back many times. Exuberant players pushed each other while running. One boy went down on the blacktop and had to leave the game, holding his wrist. The sports coach participated in the game instead of managing the students. Ms. Lopez called him to the sidelines after the injury for a talk.

Ms. Lopez said she is satisfied with security for children and property. She said earlier in the year there was an issue with kids that used the campus to ride their bikes and skateboards. “We had to make a rule that no one except for our kids could be on campus,” she said. “We closed and locked the gates and parents could only come in through the front. We don’t have that issue now.”

Conclusions and Comments
WR at Middleton has many advantages, including an abundance of resources, homework assistance, enrichment offerings, and security. Observers saw many instances where students engaged in safe and constructive activities. Staff members stayed involved and made the most of the children’s time. The relationships with parents and school are strong.

Challenges for the coming year, gaining more community support and starting a drill team, seem manageable.
## Site Profile
### Woodcraft Rangers (WR)
#### San Antonio Elementary School

### School Site Profile

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huntington Park, CA 90255</td>
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#### Principal
Mark Browning

#### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.2% Asian</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>.2% Black</td>
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| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 47.9% |
| English Language Learners | Total: 277 |
|                          | 277 Spanish |

### After-School Program Profile

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cathie Mostovoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:cmmostovy@woodcraftrangers.org">cmmostovy@woodcraftrangers.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-249-9293</td>
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| # ASP Students | 357 |
| Average Days of Attendance |
| % < 36 Days | 43% |
| % 36-71 Days | 16% |
| % 72-107 Days | 11% |
| % > 107 Days | 31% |
| % of Capacity | 85% |

### Academic Performance Index Change

- API – 2008: 743
- API – 2007: 737

*Source: LAUSD*
Mr. Browning is working hard to shape Woodcraft Rangers (WR) into a fully integrated part of San Antonio Elementary. He calls WR a partner organization. He believes he has total control to put his ideas in place and to make WR an extension of the regular school. He is generally very pleased with the program, its current offerings and with agency interest in developing and improving the program along his conceptual lines.

Mr. Browning has established a strong line of communication between his school staff, the site coordinator (a former teaching assistant at San Antonio), an appointed liaison who is the school’s literacy coach, and area representatives. He visits the ASP three times a week. Each month at faculty meetings, WR is on the agenda for an update. Mr. Browning wants faculty to see the program in action and has asked WR for compensation funds to allow this. In a bold move, the principal has met with Beyond the Bell administrators to change the homework assistance program completely. A review of WR components will detail Mr. Browning’s impact, his suggestions for additional change, and the scope of activities WC schedules to assist children with learning supports throughout the afternoon.

**Components**

**Homework assistance** is now a reading program along the lines of Accelerated Reader. Pupils get an initial assessment and then read books at their level, moving to higher levels as they improve. Mr. Browning believes program leaders previously were not equipped truly to assist with homework assignments at multiple levels from different teachers in different subjects. He wants more training for WR staffers in Accelerated Reader and hopes eventually to enhance this program with computerized progress assessment. The literacy coach has provided crucial help to implement and monitor this program.

**WR academic enrichment** is limited to minimal use of school computers and some science projects. “Students need a seamless transition to motivational and fun activities that focus on English language development,” Mr. Browning said. He especially wants to clear future WR vacancies for more English Language Learners.

Mr. Browning likes WR’s **sports and games** approach. The program emphasizes physical conditioning and skill building, including physical preparation for a rock-climbing wall. He wants to see discussions about nutrition, healthy eating, and healthy living. He also wants to add biking, roller-skating, and hockey, all sports that are unavailable during the day. Pupils should also learn defensive and offensive roles in basketball, football, and soccer.

In **fine and performing arts**, WR has a dance program, a cheerleading group, some drama activities, and a drum class. Mr. Browning is pleased with these offerings. He wants more play production and more culminating events. WR already prepares participants for presentations in seasonal events such as Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, and Presidents Day. He likes the language development and the self-esteem such events promote. Dance elements can help kinesthetic learners gain confidence, he said.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Teachers like the variety of activities at WR, particularly the Accelerated Reader, music and drum classes. They also like that the physical conditioning. “Teachers don’t see the program strongly connected to classroom success yet,” Mr. Browning said. “But some students who have trouble during the day shine in
the after-school activities.” Mr. Browning believes special education pupils can flourish in ASPs because they get more chances to socialize and belong. ASP staffers participate in IEP and SST meetings.

Parents like the variety of activities WR offers, with what they call “quality time and quality people.” They appreciate a safe, productive learning environment. Even so, some are not happy with what they see as restrictive hour requirements. WR at San Antonio wants to keep children for at least two hours to give them the best chance to flourish in their specialized programs; many parents want to pick up their children at any time, even just 30 minutes after the ASP begins. It is an on-going problem.

**Agency and District Support**

Mr. Browning says his efforts to maintain a sound communication line have paid dividends. The agency is reactive and easy to reach. Minor problems are solved quickly. They quickly provided money for walkie-talkies so WR staffers could stay in touch with Youth Services personnel.

Beyond the Bell supported Mr. Browning’s changes to homework assistance. However, he finds them far less effective with YS problems. YS has significant turnover and often loses staff to ASPs. Other supports Mr. Browning would like from Beyond the Bell include funds to provide computers, more books, a morning program, and custodial time.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

WR has been so successful that representatives from other schools and programs have visited the campus to see it in action. Mr. Browning is pleased with this success and wants the ASP to continue to evolve with more and better experiences for students.
Case Study Observations
Woodcraft Rangers (WR)
San Antonio Elementary

Introduction
This program takes place at San Antonio Elementary School (a K-5 school) located in Huntington Park. The sponsor is Woodcraft Rangers. The site coordinator is Ms. Veronica Perez.

Highlights
The backbone of this after-school program is its organization and routines. The staff and children follow a clear schedule and procedures to get from one room to another. This means students spend more time on the activities themselves. Children manage themselves in class, following well-learned patterns. Even when distracted, they rarely disrupt others.

Observers saw that as the day progressed and parents picked up children, those that remained played organized games with staff members. From beginning to end, the children stayed busy with appropriate activities.

Homework
Three groups have classrooms for homework assistance. The others do homework in the outdoor lunch pavilion or the multi-purpose room. Although covered, the area was chilly and breezy during one observation day, forcing them to contend with weather as well as school work. The three groups in the multi-purpose room sat at tables, some end to end, around the room. The arrangement interfered somewhat with homework assistance as the dedicated staff members struggled with keeping students’ attention. Even so, many students stayed busy reading books, writing, doing math exercises, or completing handouts. Two staff members and one volunteer went around helping those who requested it. Those who finished early could pick a book from a basket.

Even though the groups in the classrooms had better spaces, they did not necessarily get better homework support. Students continued to trickle into one room where a staff member conducted homework assistance for upper grades. A few worked on homework, while others read. The staff member did paperwork and chatted amiably with the students but provided no homework assistance. In another class, three adults circulated and helped middle-grade students with homework. Even so, some socialized and became distracted.

Ms. Perez said finding and keeping staff qualified for homework assistance is not a challenge. Classroom management at homework time, however, can be. A lower student-staff ratio could help. The staff members learn of homework assignments from an agenda the students get at the beginning of the term. If a student forgets theirs, the staff member finds another child from the same class who brought his or her agenda.

Academics
Academic enrichment activities, although not as common as arts and sports activities, show creativity and challenge students. The following are some examples:

In a science group for children in grades three through five, the children drew and described an animal that might live on another planet. They had to use planet characteristics like temperature, gravity, and atmosphere composition to design their animals. The program leader had written important characteristics of different planets on the board. He also asked guiding questions to help the children think about the
characteristics necessary for life on another planet. This staff member showed extensive science knowledge.

Younger children sat at desks with pencil and paper, writing letters of the alphabet. Three adults circulated, helping those who needed it. Sometimes, they also gave instruction to the whole class. The adults applied rhythms and mnemonic devices to help the children memorize the letters. Groups of kindergarteners rotated through several activities, like writing and sentence completion, measuring with links, playing cubes, and completing activity pages.

Groups of four mixed-grade children studied the Aztec civilization in the library. A student in each group read aloud from a book while the others took notes. The children eventually would create models of Aztec temples. Children had trouble reading the books, so staff members read portions and asked questions.

These activities addressed academic content in language arts, math, science, and social studies, and some allowed the students to express their learning through creative arts. Staff members actively worked with the children, and engagement in the activities was generally high.

Ms. Perez said the students most like science, dance, and sports. She said she plans to offer a geography class in the future.

**Sports and Recreation**

The ASP offers many chances for physical activity, both in non-competitive movement and traditional sports. Observers wrote:

Fitness time followed homework near the beginning of the afternoon. All students did exercises on the playground according to their grade levels. One day, these included hopscotch, relay races, and calisthenics. While doing these, the children counted out the repetitions with English, Spanish, and Japanese numbers, as well as the letters of the English alphabet. The children were highly engaged.

Older children spread out mats in the multi-purpose room and practiced “Synergy,” a yoga-like activity. A staff member used a poster to exhibit poses, demonstrated in front of the group, and coached the children as they attempted them.

In the martial arts class, a large group of children followed an activity leader through a series of motions. They had learned various kicks and arm motions in the class. They often shouted in unison as part of a movement.

Students played baseball and soccer on the playground. The activity leaders kept close watch on the games. They provided skills coaching and encouragement to the players. One staff member helped a girl bat after she missed the ball twice. The children enjoyed themselves.

First-graders had time for free play on the playground. Some climbed on the jungle gym, others played with a ball, and some just socialized. The staff supervised to ensure safety.

The site provided many well-organized options for physical activity. The classes offered diverse choices for physical activity. Staff members supervised and coached all the children across groups. Ms. Perez
hopes to expand this area next year. “I would like to hire a fitness/health professional to get students ready for a marathon or Olympics,” she said.

**Arts**

Students have many chances for arts enrichment. Ms. Perez said dance is among the favorites. Observers’ comments follow:

Children visited the on-site gardens and the activity leader asked questions about the texture, shape, and size of roses and cacti. Then, the children used construction paper to make a flower and glue it to a paper plate.

A staff member began the Quetzal arts and crafts group by reviewing Nahuatl words on the board and having the children point to the Nahuatl word that matched a given English word. Later, children worked on making Quetzal pottery and tambourines.

The gardening class painted a mural in the school’s cafeteria. They painted various types of vegetables under a heading “Five-a-day.”

First graders practiced a dance routine that incorporated pictures they had painted.

There were many dance activities. These included groups practicing Aztec and folklorico dances. Staff members demonstrated steps, counted out the beat, coached students on technique, and gave encouragement. Children enjoyed themselves and danced in time with the music.

Children in a drum line class learned about using drumsticks and different types of drums. They practiced rhythms and tried to synchronize with children playing other types of drums. Although only about half of the children had drum pads for practice, they followed along and remained on-task.

Staff members incorporated academic subject areas like science, history, and language arts into arts activities. Children worked hard, enjoyed themselves, and had many chances to show what they learned. Activities varied with the groups. For example, the gardening club consisted of mostly of girls and the drum line consisted of almost all boys.

**Engagement and Classroom Management**

The site generally featured high levels of organization and student engagement. One observer wrote:

Students followed the schedule and knew the routine. They maintained straight lines as they moved from [homework] time to fitness time, then to snack time and finally to club time.

These routines promoted efficient transitions between activities and staff supervision of children in transit. One observer noticed the high level of activity and engagement during fitness time. The children did calisthenics, running, hopscotch, and other physical activities.

They went through the activities with little need for management or direction from staff. The children also exhibited high levels of engagement in academic enrichment, sports, and the arts.
Although Ms. Perez said the staff could benefit from classroom management training, the ASP already engages the children in highly productive activities. Even when children did talk out of turn or became distracted, there was minimal interference with lessons and activities. Staff members exhibited positive relationships with the children.

**Staff**

The ASP has a stable and dedicated staff of activity leaders. Ms. Perez said wages are as follows:

- music/arts and crafts instructor at $11.50 per hour;
- folklorico/drama instructor at $11.00 per hour;
- science instructor at $11.50 per hour;
- martial arts instructor at $12.00 per hour;
- recreation instructor at $11.50 per hour;
- and sports instructor at $12.50 per hour. Ms. Perez earns $16.50 per hour. She said volunteers help with every club, but are never alone with the students.

Ms. Perez said staff members get training from the district and the agency. New staff members receive a three-day orientation as required by LAUSD. All staff members receive training from the agency’s activity consultants on specific topics like music and dance. The activity coordinators also work with individual staff members as necessary. In addition, staff members receive workshops on topics such as team building, how to manage students, and literacy. Ms. Perez said staffers might benefit from classroom management training, a topic addressed in activity consultant meetings. She did not mention training in LAUSD curricula and homework assignments.

The ASP has no difficulty obtaining substitutes, but does have some with obtaining specialized staff members. The program has “floaters” to fill in when there is a staff absence. Ms. Perez identified art as a problem staffing area.

**Material Resources**

Ms. Perez told said the site is clean and secure. She said WR has adequate space. WR has access to three classrooms, the multi-purpose room, the outdoor lunch area, and the school library, as well as its own computer lab. Observers also saw WR children and staffers using three gardens and a large playground on campus.

Observers noted that limited classroom space required multiple groups of students to do homework in the multi-purpose room and pavilion. This shortage interfered with homework time and did not provide an adequate context for academic enrichment. Space for sports and the arts is also limited. Shouting from a martial arts group meeting in the multi-purpose room interfered with a nearby yoga class. Meanwhile another staff member led a folklorico dance class on a small concrete area outside. Many children bumped into each other in this tight space.

Ms. Perez said the ASP has enough materials and equipment. Observers saw plenty of books, art materials and sports equipment for most activities. However, in academic enrichment, the Aztec temples activity did not include books for most of the children. The children drawing animals on other planets only had white paper and black pencils. In the drum line group, only about half of the children had drums to participate fully. In each case, additional materials could have made the activity more educational and interesting.

**Relationship with the School**

Ms. Perez said the ASP has a positive relationship with the school. She described the principal and the teacher liaison as “very supportive” and said they communicate almost every day. She said she feels comfortable walking into the principal’s office to talk or make requests. The teacher liaison approached an observer in the pavilion and had questions about Beyond the Bell. She spoke of WR staffers as if she knew them well.
In addition to these primary contact persons, the program also engages teachers. There is joint planning in weekly meetings and the literacy coach helps plan literacy activities. Teachers and staff also approach each other informally regarding homework and other needs. The school provided standardized test scores to the ASP, and this year, school administrators congratulated WR for contributing to the school’s rising scores.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
ASP staffers communicate with parents through flyers, in person, on the phone, and in meetings. Ms. Perez said meetings occur before culminations and every six weeks. During the latter, club leaders meet with parents to review activities and expectations and encourage involvement, Ms. Perez said. Usual topics for parents include Fun Fridays and supplies that the program needs. She is happy that parents help and come to meetings. She noted that strong points in parent involvement were that parents help and “they come to meetings.” She offered no weak points in relationships with parents.

Community relationships are also positive. Ms. Perez spoke of field trips to Home Depot, the post office, the library, and other schools. The program received aprons from Home Depot and coloring books from the post office. Ms. Perez said the fact that the school is in an industrial area poses a challenge in building partnerships with businesses. Ms. Perez said staff members live in the community and are familiar with it.

Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell
WR appears to have a positive relationship with Beyond the Bell. The agency provides activity consultants and substitute workers who were a great help. Ms. Perez said communication and support characterize the agency’s relationship with the ASP. However, she said one weakness is that the main offices are far away. She also mentioned the need for “a stable person at Youth Services.” She complained that YS leaders are always changing at this school, and that has meant a weak relationship between the two ASPs.

Attendance
Ms. Perez spoke of actively recruiting children to participate in the program:

We have fun Fridays. Students get raffle tickets, and we do the raffles on Fridays. Afterwards, we remind them to be here every day. We recruit new students during lunchtime. We have a teacher liaison. We send brochures to the students.

The program also removes students with excessive absences, encouraging enrolled children to attend. At the time of the interview, the program had no wait list.

Some factors have affected attendance, including a three-day camp for fifth-graders. Also, attendance suffered when track A and Magnet students went off track at about the same time. No other ASPs compete for children with this program.

Safety and Security
Ms. Perez reported no need to improve the ASP’s security for both the children and the program’s property. Staff members closely supervised the children at all times. Whether inside or outside, the children remained with their groups and did not wander off.

Observers saw some potential for avoidable injuries during physical activity. For example, when a martial arts class lined up in rows to practice stepping, kicking, and punching, they got out of step and often
bumped into each other (apparently not kicking or punching each other by accident). Using more space in the multi-purpose room would have fixed this problem.

A folklorico group practiced dancing on a concrete area near the pavilion. The space provided electricity to play the music, but was too small for the number of children participating. The children avoided concrete pillars in the area, but often bumped into each other. A drain grate in the center and low planters less than six inches above the concrete at either end presented obstacles that could have caused the children to trip and fall.

**Conclusions and Comments**

WR at San Antonio Elementary School shows a clear sense of organization and a strong set of enrichment activities. Overall, the children were active and enjoyed themselves. The staff actively engaged the children in a positive manner. Staff members modeled good behavior, coached, encouraged, questioned, and supervised the children. Routines kept the site running smoothly, especially during transitions.

The children had homework time each day and the opportunity to participate in academic clubs. Some of the spaces available were much more conducive to completing homework than others. The quality of homework support varied across groups. Although observers did not see as much academic programming as arts enrichment and physical activity, the program did offer opportunities to learn more about academic subjects such as language arts and math.

Enrichment activities in the visual and performing arts incorporated core academic content areas. This is “disguised learning” in an after-school setting. Students enjoyed and demonstrated learning in various visual arts, dance, and music. A variety of required and optional physical activity sessions provided children with important opportunities for exercise.

The program staff actively engaged the school, parents, and community. There was evidence of strong support from the school and access to many parts of the campus (including the library, a computer lab, and gardens). Despite this positive relationship with the school, the program did not have enough classrooms, and this interfered with the effectiveness of activities (especially homework assistance) and presented potential safety hazards.
## School Site Profile

<table>
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<th>School Site (location)</th>
<th>Marina del Rey Middle School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12500 Braddock Dr.</td>
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<td>Los Angeles, CA 90066</td>
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### Principal

- **Name:** Erik Mata

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<tr>
<td>15.0% Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5% White</td>
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<tr>
<td>239 Spanish</td>
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<td>3 Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Cantonese</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Korean</td>
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<td>1 Farsi</td>
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## After-School Program Profile

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<th>YWCA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon Shelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:sharon.shelton@ywcagla.org">sharon.shelton@ywcagla.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>213-365-2991</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
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<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of Capacity</td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 671 |
| API – 2007 | 645 |
Mr. Mata is generally satisfied with the YWCA of Greater Los Angeles (YWCA), ASP at Marina del Rey Middle School. The staff is almost exclusively Marina del Rey teachers, special education aides and building and grounds workers. Mr. Mata welcomes any improvements, but he believes this cross hiring feature lends considerable strength to the operation of the ASP. Problems solved or significantly reduced include student behavior issues, sharing of facilities, the need for program leader training in class management, and communication with the day school. Even so, Mr. Mata said improvement is always possible. Hiring Marina staff has also provided two additional bonuses: a reduced need for the principal or other administrator to deal with personnel or student problems, and expert extra help available to special education participants.

Mr. Mata suggested improved course offerings. Otherwise, the ASP runs smoothly and serves middle school students in ways only a certificated and classified staff can offer.

**Components**

Mr. Mata did not call for changes to the homework assistance element. He says program leaders provide guidance with individual homework assignments. If necessary, the leader moves to skill development. Homework leaders get training through weekly professional development sessions in the regular school program. Mr. Mata believes the agency should be responsible for training non-school employees.

Academic enrichment could expand and should offer experiences not available to students during the day. In the past, YWCA has scheduled classes on campus like cooking and identifying plant species.

Sports and athletic activities are offered through a collaboration of YWCA and Youth Services. YS does a good job on campus during the day, with noon leagues and intramural competitions. Many Marina teachers also participate in YS activities. Mr. Mata also believes “ASP sports should complement what YS does,” and he feels between both entities all sports popular with middle school students are covered. Mr. Mata wants to add skateboarding, but worries about liability issues.

Fine and performing arts classes occur in abundance during the day in the Marina Performing Arts Magnet School, but regular school students have limited chances to enroll. YWCA offers only dance, cheerleading, and arts and crafts. Mr. Mata would like to see more classes in drama, art, and music. Expanding ASP classes in this area would make it possible for magnet students to reinforce creative experiences they participate in during the day.

**Teacher and Parent Perceptions**

Mr. Mata says YWCA is so integrated with the school that teachers take it for granted as part of the school landscape. He hears few comments about the ASP, either in favor or against. Teachers would probably like to know more about their own students’ progress, as well as news about ASP special activities. A roster of students that participate in the program might also help.

Room sharing is not an issue for Marina teachers. Declining enrollment has freed several bungalows close to P.E. fields as well as a dedicated building with two computers, a small library, and a lounge available to ASP students.
Parents value the after-school control and the close relationship between the YWCA and the day school. They were very appreciative a few years ago when a shooting took place during ASP time. Certified staff worked on campus in the program and addressed all safety matters quickly and professionally. “It’s a parent-friendly program,” Mr. Mata said.

**Agency and District Support**

Agency relationships are now excellent. A few years ago, administrators were very dissatisfied; the principal worked with the YWCA and achieved a total employee turnover. Even the site coordinator is a Marina del Rey aide. Mr. Mata leaves all planning to the agency but stays involved with hiring. He wants periodic briefings from senior agency staff to further discussions about mutual concerns. Beyond the Bell was active while Mr. Mata worked to improve the ASP, but its involvement is no longer necessary. Mr. Mata knows whom to call and knows that Beyond the Bell responds.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**

“There should be improved articulation between teachers and ASP staff, school administration and agency managers, and school administration and Beyond the Bell administrators, concluded Mr. Mata.
Case Study Observations
YWCA of Greater Los Angeles (YWCA)
Marina del Rey Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Marina del Rey Middle School (a 6-8 school) on the west side of Los Angeles. YWCA of Greater Los Angeles is the sponsor. Ms. Mariachi Murphy is the site coordinator.

Highlights
One hallmark of this program is its level of organization. It showed in everything, from the neatness of the classroom to the friendliness of the staff.

Homework and Academics
At the beginning of the homework period, students split into two groups: those with and those without homework. They then go to separate rooms. The students with no homework do worksheets. Homework is a friendly and productive time for students and staff. For 30 minutes, students focus on quietly doing their homework by themselves. A staff tutor works with individual students as she walks around the room.

During an observation session, Ms. Murphy was in the room doing paperwork. The entire experience was organized, with the students concentrating on their work. They behaved well and were comfortable asking for help when they needed it. Those who did not have homework drew, read books, or gathered around a computer Photo Shop program.

Ms. Murphy said providing high-quality homework assistance to students is not a problem. She said that section has a well-defined structure. She said if students want to continue with their homework after the allotted time, they can do so. If they choose to take the homework home, they go to other activities.

Arts
Observers saw students making clay from scratch in a grassy area, editing photos on a computer, learning to be DJs, and reviewing fashion magazines. Leaders at times had insufficient materials for everyone, but students willingly shared. During an observation of photography, students worked in pairs. They walked around taking photos. Then they downloaded them and used the Photo Shop program to make changes. An art show on June 11 was set to exhibit the students’ work for parents.

In another activity, students learned to be DJs through the Youth Edutainment League. They learned to use some of the music equipment. The Youth Edutainment League also worked with another group in the same room going through fashion magazines and discussing with students what they saw. The observer learned this takes place every Wednesday.

Sports and Games
Observers saw some organized sports and recreation activities during the field study period. In one activity, students practiced dance in the gym. They rehearsed for a performance. Ms. Murphy mentioned an entire calendar of scheduled student performances.

In a soccer game, an observer saw student ages 9-13 wearing uniforms. The teacher coached them, giving them tips to improve performance. Everyone appeared to be learning and having fun.
An observer saw a student and a staff member throwing a Frisbee on a very clean and green grassy field. Not a lot of students were there.

Later in the day, students played board games. The students laughed and enjoyed themselves. The games engaged them until it was time to leave for the day. Only 13 students remained at the time of this observation. Others had taken the school bus home or had left on their own. Some planned to return for a 7 p.m. dance performance.

Several observers noted periods of free play. Staffers supervised the children closely and properly, but did not teach the students skills. One observer wrote:

> This was a free play day. The ASP room was closed for the summer. Students played hula hoops and nought-hockey, signed yearbooks, and talked quietly in small groups. Supervision was close and personal, and students and staff clearly enjoyed and respected each other. However, staffers made no effort to challenge them or improve their skills. The number of students ebbed and flowed from about 30 during sign-in and snack, to 20, to eight, and back to 22.

The observer noted staff members’ work with special-needs students:

> One student, a mentally challenged girl, was enjoying looking through her yearbook at pictures of other kids. At first, other students crowded around her and engaged her, but when they tired of it, one of the two staff members took over and interacted with her for 30 more minutes. Even so, the staff member kept a close eye on the other students.

### Other

A representative of Young Entrepreneurs Works (YEW) came to the school to chat with students about starting their own businesses. Following this activity, the students worked business plans. The YEW representative walked around the class asking the students to introduce themselves and to tell her if they had any cooking or work experience. Then the speaker put a 99 Cent Only Store thinking map on the board. She asked students to tell her what they liked about the 99 Cent Only stores. She then discussed what made a good business and encouraged the students to start thinking about businesses and what made businesses successful. All three YWCA staff members were present. They kept the students focused and respectful and encouraged them to speak up.

A day that had been set for outside play and sports turned cold and windy, so students came inside and gathered in a classroom. Two staff members engaged them in conversation about travel and friends. It was a friendly and thoughtful exchange.

During another session, an observer noticed that Latino and African American students were in separate areas of the room. While the African American students played board games, the Latino students chatted. The atmosphere seemed friendly.

Ms. Murphy said students especially like Youth Edutainment League and Youth Entrepreneur Works activities. She said they also like Fun Fridays, when they bring money for staffers to get them food from the café.
Engagement and Classroom Management
Overall, students stayed on-task and engaged in their activities during the homework and the enrichment periods. It was clear that the outside speakers the ASP sponsored stimulated their minds. They encouraged students to think beyond their current situations to what might be possible in the future.

The staff interacted comfortably with the students and knew them well. They were encouraging, warm, attentive, and respectful, and the students reciprocated. The only times when staff did not appear engaged with students was during free play observations.

Staff
Ms. Murphy said this ASP does not have problems recruiting specialized staff and substitutes. Of the three staff members in the program, two are longtime employees of the day school, even though they have worked for the ASP only a few months. One has worked here for 14 years, and the other for seven.

The site coordinator starts at $13.00-$15.00 per hour, and program leaders start at $10.00-$12.00 per hour. Ms. Murphy could not say how this salary might influence the ability to keep positions filled. No volunteers work with the program.

Staff members receive training three times per semester, for 2½ hours, scheduled on Saturdays. It is hands-on and covers policies, procedures, and after-school snacks. The agency offers site coordinator training once a month, but Ms. Murphy did not elaborate on the topics. Additionally, a site overview occurs periodically to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Ms. Murphy did not say whether staff members get training in student behavior strategies, classroom management, or LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. She said the ASP has something called The 10 Pros of Strength. It sounded as if this program aims to keep students focused. Ms. Murphy said staff members might benefit most from training based on their individual needs. She seemed ready to provide it.

Material Resources
When asked about access to classrooms, the library, and the computer lab, Ms. Murphy said the ASP has access “when it’s open.” What this meant was not clear. She said she has no problems working with administrators to improve space allocations.

Ms. Murphy has enough materials and equipment to support current activities. She is satisfied with the appeal, quality, and quantity of the snacks provided. She is also very happy with the level of cleanliness of the school areas the ASP uses and the quality of janitorial services.

Relationship with the School
The primary contact for this ASP is an assistant principal, and the relationship between him and Ms. Murphy is very good. Because Ms. Murphy is an aide at the school, they talk daily “I see him all the time,” she said. “We sometimes pass each other throughout the day.” The administration supports the program in many ways, providing space for performances and encouraging an article about the ASP in the school newspaper.

This ASP has good communication with classroom teachers, Ms. Murphy said. The teachers ask the after-school staff how the students are doing and recommend some students to join the ASP.

There is no joint planning between after-school staff and classroom teachers to coordinate activities. Administrators do not share students’ CST and assessment scores with ASP staff.
Ms. Murphy said she has been at this ASP since 2006. Since then, she has developed strong personal relationships with many administrators. The school has even given her an office.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Parents communicate with ASP staffers through face-to-face conversations. Staffers greet them when they arrive to pick up their children. Topics include misbehavior and homework completion, which staffers address in private conversations. Other topics, like event planning, activities, and safety, come up in conversations that are more general. “We like to let them know that we are here,” Ms. Murphy said. Additionally, periodic flyers keep them informed of events such as Back to School Night, which occurs twice a semester.

Parents are great supporters of this ASP. The only challenge is occasional lateness to pick up children. Ms. Murphy said this is rare.

Ms. Murphy and her staff know the community because of their longtime employment with the school. The ASP receives support from the community in the form of tutors from UCLA who come help the students. She noted that strong communication between the groups is crucial to outreach work.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The relationship between this program and its agency is good, Ms. Murphy said, but not great. She wants more activities and field trips, and more incentives.

Ms. Murphy does not believe a relationship exists between the ASP and Beyond the Bell. “The only thing that I can think of is that YS gets to do the basketball league on Saturday, and we can’t,” she said. “The kids want to do it but they can’t be involved in both programs.”

**Attendance**

Staff members take attendance through sign-in sheets on a clipboard. Twice a month, Ms. Murphy reports tallies to her supervisor. She said the agency has directed staffers to use three different sign-in forms this year. The second have been the best, and the one they use now is the worst because it requires students to fill in three columns.

Special event days and incentive days, when students receive tokens if they comply with certain rules, promote attendance. There is no wait list for this program.

Ms. Murphy said the days following standardized testing in May negatively affected attendance, even though the program was open. Instead of the usual 45 students, only about nine attended. She also mentioned a YS field trip to Magic Mountain. “That is where we have competition,” she said “And they also go on special trips to the hotel.”

**Safety and Security**

Ms. Murphy seemed somewhat uncomfortable with the security at the school. “So far, we haven’t had incidents, but we don’t have security that patrols at our school,” she said. “Maybe the YWCA can hire a guard to come in at least two hours before the ASP ends, because at times it gets pretty dark during daylight savings time.”

The school staff closed and locked a gate that was routinely left open, and that improved security. However, parents who did not know of the change complained. They have to come through the front gate
and walk all the way to the back of the school to pick up their children. The parents found this inconvenient and did not seem to appreciate the additional security.

Ms. Murphy is satisfied with the security of both school property and the property belonging to the ASP. She gets two storage bins with master locks.

**Conclusions and Comments**

Ms. Murphy is a resourceful, caring, responsible, and committed site coordinator at this school. She enjoys putting events together as well as bringing in outside organizations such as the Youth Edutainment League. She appreciates the school support and the amount of materials that she receives. This contrasted with one observer’s comment about a shortage of supplies.

Ms. Murphy more than once expressed the desire for more student field trips. She is happy with the funds she receives for celebrations, but would rather use the money for the field trips. She said the ASP had one trip to a Dodgers game quite some time ago. It appeared that she got an offer to conduct a field trip the day before the interview, but opted against it because it was too close to the end of the school year and she had no time to plan it. She believes more field trips might improve attendance. She wants to do them twice a semester, perhaps to a local park or facility, to reward the children.

Ms. Murphy wants more collaboration and advance planning. She believes that might improve the ASP’s offerings and benefit the students. She cited opportunities she readily would make available to students if she had more funding. It was not clear if what she really needs is more flexibility with her budget...

This ASP suffers from early busing issues. Ms. Murphy said a bus that leaves at 3:15 p.m. takes many students that could attend.
## School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
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<th>96th Street Elementary School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA 90002</td>
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### Principal

- Luis Heckmuller

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.1% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 52.6% |
| English Language Learners                      |
| Total: 482                                     |
| 482 Spanish                                   |

## After-School Program Profile

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<th>Youth Development Program</th>
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<td>Isaure Blandin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Isaure.blandin@lausd.net">Isaure.blandin@lausd.net</a></td>
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<td>% of Capacity</td>
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## Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 741 |
| API – 2007 | 711 |
Mr. Franco, former principal at 96th Street Elementary School in 2007-2008, provided the interview. Because of his direct knowledge and involvement with YDP, Mr. Franco was able to assess the program’s weaknesses.

These begin with poor student supervision and a lack of staff training in class management. Program leaders leave messy facilities and are about to lose use of the library for this reason. Staff repeatedly failed to monitor behavior or to exert sufficient influence to see that children cleaned up after themselves. The ASP shared the indoor and outdoor eating area and the library, when the librarian was present. “The teachers and I were opposed to room sharing and kept it to a minimum. There was a prevalent feeling that YDP staff didn’t understand kids or the school program,” Mr. Franco said. “When YDP came in, I lost three children to private schools.”

The program also needs to provide better academic support. The earlier ASP used cross hiring of daytime teachers and had tighter coordination and communications with the school’s faculty, allowing teachers who worked in both program to support instructional goals after school. This ended when YDP was placed at 96th Street. “YDP staff is not sufficiently skilled in setting goals, establishing consequences and reward structures, and behavior management,” Mr. Franco said. “They need training in something like assertive discipline or Harry Wong’s approaches to discipline. This had led to teacher reluctance to share their rooms and truly respect the program.”

**Components**

Mr. Franco said homework assistance should include both reinforcement and support of academic concepts learned in the day program. Teachers hired in the earlier ASP had the background to provide this help. The agency should train staff with the help of certificated teachers.

For academic enrichment, the former principal would like to see YDP offer computer literacy activities, book clubs, and more language development activities. He would also like to have basic skills support (e.g., multiplication bingo) and see students practicing previously taught skills. Here, again, employing teachers in instead of youthful program leaders permits an ASP to make after-school time an extension of the day school. Information on what activities are currently in place was not offered.

Sports should be left to the Youth Services program, Mr. Franco said. He wants YDP or YS to emphasize skills instruction. He wants more soccer and sports geared to girls, like track, volleyball, and softball.

In fine and performing arts, YDP should teach more art. “It should be done by specialists brought into the school to teach specific topics and activities,” he said. “There should be more project-based art, music, dance, and dramatic activities that result in exhibitions and performances to which parents can be invited.” Mr. Franco did not specify current offerings.

**Teacher and Parent Perspectives**

Teachers say they appreciate the program because students have somewhere constructive to go. But they believe YDP could improve with better training or by hiring the school’s teachers as supplemental staff. Program leaders at this time do not have the skills needed to help students with homework. They also need more training in class management.
Parents appreciate that their children have a supervised place to go and they say they like the enrichment provided. However, they miss having regular teachers to help with homework support. The previous leaders knew the school’s program, they said.

Agency and District Support
Mr. Franco said the agency was supportive, responsive and quickly addressed concerns brought to it. He said he contacted the agency once a month with parent concerns, some petty and some more serious having to do with supervision. The agency should provide stronger support with broader hiring practices, providing appropriate training and by establishing more interaction with the principal.

Mr. Franco had very little contact with Beyond the Bell and said only that it should more closely monitor programs and staff issues.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
Youth Development Program currently functions as an adjunct entity not closely integrated with 96th Street School. The program has a waiting list but needs significant upgrades to establish a viable, comprehensive ASP; YDP could improve their performance with more experience, trained staff, and cross hiring.
Case Study Observations
Youth Development Program (YDP)
96th Street Elementary School

Introduction
This program takes place at 96th Street Elementary School (a K-5 school) in Los Angeles. Youth Development Program (YDP) is the sponsor. Ms. Neadra Byrd is the site coordinator and she has been with the program about five months.

Highlights
Observers watched two groups of students involved in a moviemaking activity. One group was of primary grade students. The activity was very popular.

Homework and Academics
The quality of homework assistance at this ASP varies with the level of staff involvement and student engagement. Observers watched two sessions in which staffers interacted intensely with students. In another session, students did not need adult supervision to remain highly engaged in their study. Observers wrote:

Students are doing homework. One staffer oversees the group and at times helps the students. The staffer is direct and firm and has a good management of the students.

Some students are back inside the cafeteria to finish their homework. These children are mostly fifth-graders. One staff member is very involved in helping them.

This small group of five older students is doing homework on its own without any staff member to supervise. The students are in the cafeteria, separate from everyone else. They are very quiet and concentrate on their work. They look like a study group.

During one observation of fourth- and fifth-grade homework groups, the students were keenly aware of the presence of the observer, who wrote:

As I walk through the door, the students begin to whisper, saying, "There she is. She's going to watch us today." They appear to be on their best behavior because I am there. Some of the students do worksheets. Others flip through their textbooks. Some chat. The instructor separates them and tells them that if they have finished their homework, they should grab a book and write a book report for her.

One observer said homework assistance appeared to have limited value and did not comply with the legally mandated 20-to-1 student/staff ratio. The group had 30 kindergarteners and first-graders to the one staff member. The staff member walked around helping the students. However, only about half focused on their work. Several wandered around the classroom. Others ran outside and returned. “These students are unsupervised,” the observer wrote.

Sometimes, staffers became distracted from their charges when they talked to other staffers. An observer watching a group of second- and third-graders doing homework numerically said they did not appear to enjoy themselves, focus on their task, or listen to instructions. Most students did not work on homework assignments or any assignments whatever. This occurred more than once. Observers wrote:
The staff member in charge of this group was not present. Another staff watched them and seemed to have trouble controlling them. Students ran in and out of the cafeteria. Others talked loudly and chased each other. Still others sat waiting for something to do. The staff member complained that this was not her group and she was not sure what they should do. The staff member in charge stood outside the cafeteria talking to Ms. Byrd for more than 20 minutes.

Students are on their own doing whatever they can with their homework. They are not being challenged. A staff member walks around minding the students but not helping them with homework. This person is very withdrawn from them.

Ms. Byrd expressed concern about the student/staff ratios, which she said run to 35-to-1. This may partly explain the low quality of homework assistance, but other factors are present, like the staff distractions.

Arts
Perhaps observers arrived at a time when moviemaking was a focus, or perhaps the moviemaking was an activity that made this ASP stand out. Below are observers’ comments of two different sessions where students made movies under adult supervision:

Kindergarteners and first-graders are making a movie. The instructor provides a camera, tripod, and microphone. The movie is about one student who becomes invisible and plays tricks on the rest of the students. There are approximately 20 students present, but only seven participate. One first-grader works the camera; another works the microphone; the other is the director who shouts out, "Five, four, three, two, one. Action!" Three staff members direct the students. The group is very engaged.

Fourth and fifth-graders film the last scene of a movie they have been working on. Two staff members help with the camera and the technical details. The movie is about a group of kids that wish there were no adults. As time goes on, they find that their food is running out, they have no bus drivers, no way to get around, no money, and no new clothes. They realize that having adults around is not such a bad thing. After the filming, the students watch the scene and comment on the performances. The staff member tells the students they should finish tomorrow and should start thinking about ideas for their next project. He asks for a review of what they have learned. They call out film terms. All students participate. The staff member tells the students they did a great job.

One challenge of this segment of the program may be the number of students who can participate at any one time. One observer wrote:

The other students watch the group making the movie, talk to each other, or run around. Most do not focus on the activity. One staff member tries to control them by keeping them seated on the bench, but it is clear that those students are bored and frustrated.

Another arts activity involved a group of third-graders painting pictures and making thank-you cards for their teachers. Teachers were to receive these cards on the last day of school. The students glued glitter and other objects, and drew pictures on the card. They talked and chattered. This was obviously a very happy group of students.
Sports and Games
Observers watched sports activities, but they were not highly organized. The leaders did not have much expertise in the sports. Sometimes, students played on their own with no direct supervision. Observers wrote:

Students play baseball and kickball. They are all boys and one girl with one staff member. The staffer mostly watches the students, who play roughly with each other. This group of students plays basketball and no staff member supervises them. There are staff members nearby, but they are busy with other kids and ignoring this group.

The second- and third-grade groups play the red/green light game. Several children sit off to the side. One student paints. The others are chasing each other around the tables. This group is unsupervised. The staff member is occupied with the other group playing the game. She periodically turns to the group and tells them to stop running.

Kids of all ages wait on the yard to be picked up. About six girls are playing jump rope. Two girls sing a song while the girls jump in and out. Six kids are playing on the monkey bars. Others are playing handball.

Ms. Byrd said kickball is the favorite sport among all students. The younger ones love the jungle gym.

Other Enrichment
Ms. Byrd said another favorite activity of students is the traveling enrichment program. She did not describe it. She said the students do many holiday projects that keep them interested and engaged.

Ms. Byrd said she wants more field trips tailored to her ASP. She students went to Six Flags once, with students from the entire agency.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Students did not appear to be highly engaged in their homework activities during observations. They were often off-task. This may be the result of the staff’s lack of involvement rather than the students’ own opinions of their homework. Some students got their work done with little staff support. Others simply sat around, not knowing what to do with themselves.
Some staff members did not manage their students or help them with homework. They chatted among themselves instead of watching their student groups. Some were simply not in the room at all.

Some students’ behavior on the playground warranted intervention from staff members. However, observers did not see them do this. One wrote:

Students are messing around. They are not engaged in the game. Their play is too rough and violent. Two boys hit each other while they struggled on the floor for a basketball. Students are not respectful to each other at all. They yell and push each other on the court.

Staff
Ms. Byrd said that new staff members earn $13.00 per hour. After three months, they move up to $15.00 per hour. Ms. Byrd earns $17.47 per hour. “Staff stays with us for a long time,” she said. Parents often bring things if there is a party, but otherwise, it was not clear whether volunteers contribute to the program.
Ms. Byrd said the ASP never asks for substitutes. “My staff is really never out,” she said. “If we do have someone out, we have enough people that can at least cover a group, but we don’t really have that problem where we need a substitute.” However, she wants more permanent staff members hired so she can lower the student/staff ratio.

When asked what training new staff members get, Ms. Byrd initially said she has not worked with anyone new since she arrived. Then she remembered one. She showed her around the premises, showed her where sign-in and sign-out occurred, talked with her about academic enrichment (stressing that this is one of the staff members’ primary jobs), and went over procedures. As for experienced staff members, Ms. Byrd said she teaches them “new things that they don’t know about and I know about that they can teach their students, like a new book—things like that.”

Ms. Byrd said there is no training in student behavior management, classroom management, or understanding LAUSD curricula and homework assignments. Staffers might benefit from training in disciplinary practices and procedures. She said staff members should know what they can and cannot say or do when children misbehave. “We don’t know [what to do] when kids run away,” she said. “Should we grab them? Is that bad?”

**Material Resources**

Ms. Byrd said the ASP has no access to classrooms or the computer lab. “We had the library and they kicked us out,” she said. “They told us that they had the testing materials in there and that it was going to be for a couple of days. Then I went back and they still didn’t let us in the library. This happened around the end of April.”

Ms. Byrd said she asked her supervisor for the use of a classroom, but never heard back. She talked to the assistant principal and he said he’d see what he can do. “I stopped asking about two months ago,” she said.

Ms. Byrd said there is adequate equipment for recreation. But she said she put in a supply order for crayons, pencils, and paper about three months ago, and still has not received anything. “I have to divide everything that I do have and have them share,” she said, “or I go buy it myself.”

Ms. Byrd said she, her staff, and the agency believe the cleanliness of the parts of the school that the ASP uses are good. “It’s always clean here,” she said. “The janitor doesn’t mop until we leave and it’s still very clean. The janitors are here right away.” She does not have suggestions for improvement.

However, Ms. Byrd does not like the snacks at all. “She wants more fruit and vegetables like celery sticks. They give [the students] cookies, juice, or milk every day,” she said. “They only provide fruits once a week. I know other schools get sandwiches, but we don’t get that at all …. There is nothing healthy about cookies and milk.”

**Relationship with the School**

The primary contact at the school for Ms. Byrd is the assistant principal. She said they have a good relationship. He let her know not to hesitate if she needs anything. They communicate at least twice a week through face-to-face conversations, mostly about individual students’ behavior issues.

Ms. Byrd said staff and classroom teachers talk, “but not about the kids.” She said none offered the use of a classroom. And communication about homework is rare.
“Only maybe two teachers will come and leave us lesson plans to get us to help their kids,” she said. “We know [what homework there is] because we ask them to take their homework out. If they say that they don’t have any, we ask what classroom they are in, or I ask them to take out their papers from their backpacks. Teachers ask us to check their backpacks.”

Ms. Byrd said there is no joint planning with classroom teachers to coordinate program activities, and school administrators do not share students’ CST and assessment scores with the ASP.

Ms. Byrd could list few strong points about this relationship. She said the principal has often threatened to drop the program. She did not say whether she has discussed this matter with either the assistant principal or her agency. “Just let us have the ASP here,” she pleaded.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**

Ms. Byrd said she and the staff have good communication and a very good relationship with parents. Most of it occurs in face-to-face conversations when parents pick up their children. She noted that some parents stay until 6 p.m. to talk with the staff. They ask about their children’s progress and tell them to use discipline if they need to do so. Some parents came to “just talk to us about their own problems and they want to make sure that their kids are doing good.” Ms. Byrd said all parents have cell numbers of ASP staff. Parents appreciate the program and like that it is free.

Ms. Byrd admitted some parents are in denial about their children’s behavior, and that is a weak point of the relationship. One parent told her that she gets paid “so her daughter can give me attitude.” Two other parents have confronted her forcefully on different occasions. On still another, one student threw a chair at another student in the presence of his parent, and the parent was “not supportive” of the way she dealt with the student.

Ms. Byrd said she wants a meeting for parents to discuss homework, procedures, absences, reasons for children to be in the program, and the syllabus. She believes this could help parents understand the ASP better. She did not indicate when this meeting might occur. This was still in the concept stage at the time of the interview.

Ms. Byrd said the ASP has no relationships with community organizations or local businesses. “I have never had or experienced anything like that before,” she said.

Ms. Byrd does not have much familiarity with the community. Only two staff members live in the area. Otherwise, staffers only know what is going on in the community from announcements.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

Ms. Byrd said the ASP has a good relationship with the agency. “They are really good to me,” she said. She does not communicate with Beyond the Bell.

**Attendance**

There is an attendance list for each group in the program. Ms. Byrd copies the data in a sign-in book. She enters it into the computer system monthly, and her supervisor collects attendance sheets monthly. Ms. Byrd has no problem with this method and finds it easy.

To minimize absences and encourage students to attend more days each week, Ms. Byrd tells parents that the ASP must have 80 percent attendance. If students are not on probation, they can come to enrichment programs. She said the ASP has “fun games…things that we talk about…and they all see that we are all nice and we make them feel comfortable.”
The ASP has no wait list. “I put them on the program right away and they don’t have to wait,” she said. “The child can start the very next day, just as long as our cap has not been reached.”

One observer noted low attendance on one day. Staff members said this was because of a four-day field trip students took to San Francisco. However, earlier in the day, the observer had heard a staff member say that only eight students from the ASP went on the trip. The reason for the low attendance remained unclear.

Ms. Byrd said the school sponsors tutoring on Mondays and Wednesdays, and that might interfere with attendance. On those days, parents pick up their children at 4 p.m. Also, some of the boys have soccer practice, which also might interfere with the ASP “Some of my kids went to YS and got out of our program because in there they don’t have to follow directions and they [are allowed] to do anything they want to do,” she said. “They feel that they don’t want to listen to anyone.”

Safety and Security
Ms. Byrd is not completely happy with security at the school. She has reservations about the neighborhood. ”One day we were on lock-down,” he said. “Security did respond.”

Ms. Byrd said ASP property security is good. “We have two bins with locks, and I have the keys,” she said. She has no suggestions for improvements.

Two observers mentioned an open gate that led to a street that they believe threaten security. One said this gate directly faces the area where students play on the blacktop. “At times there is no supervision of students who play near this gate,” she wrote.

Conclusions and Comments
Ms. Byrd is enthusiastic, but somewhat inexperienced. She likely has much more to offer the program, but she could benefit from more guidance, direction, and support from her agency. She clearly likes her job and the program, and she appears to want what is best for it. But she does not seem to recognize deficiencies and does not know how to move the program forward.

While Ms. Byrd considers her relationship with the assistant principal a good one, she gets very little support from teachers and administrators. Threats from the principal to shut the program are unusually harsh. The agency also offers little support. Her requests for supplies go unanswered for months, and she now has to divide supplies to make them last longer, or buy her own.

Ms. Byrd may never realize her potential if she does not get direction, training, coaching, and support in the future. Her supervisor at her agency clearly needs to commit more time and interest to help her grow into or even beyond her role.
### School Site Profile

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### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

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<td>.2% Filipino</td>
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</table>

| English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment | 31.0% |
| English Language Learners                      |      |
| Total: 183                                     |      |
| 176 Spanish                                    |      |
| 7 Other                                        |      |

### After-School Program Profile

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### Academic Performance Index Change

| API - 2008 | 770 |
| API – 2007 | 772 |
Ms. Denan is disappointed, surprised, and dissatisfied with the Youth Development Program at Alexander Science Center. She said YDP misses opportunities each day to enlighten, instruct, and entertain students.

A lack of structure and a team of untrained young program leaders combine to produce a sub-standard elementary ASP. “Administration and teachers are very wary,” Ms. Denan said. “Rooms have been wrecked and teachers see the kids cutting up in the classroom. They are worried about cleanliness, supervision and theft.” Ms. Denan said staffers need training on student supervision and need to improve their efforts to maintain shared facilities. She blames behavior problems on the playground on the “loosey-goosey” nature of YDP.

Other areas of weakness include limited enrichment classes and a failure to organize activities, including athletics, appropriately. Ms. Denan said YDP and its agency have been inflexible, with a top-down design and a set program that allows no input from the school. She wants more decentralization and more willingness to involve administrators and teachers in planning. The district’s generic, one size fits all format for learning materials is not a successful approach at Alexander Science, an affiliated charter site.

Components
Homework assistance leaders need to provide timely help with what students need to complete their homework. Staffers need the knowledge to assist with whatever comes from the backpack for grades 1 through 5. “Students need more than rudimentary, unfortunate monitors; the staff need to provide actual assistance,” said Ms. Denan. Staffers need training in curriculum, standards, school initiatives, ELA, and ELD techniques. Beyond the Bell should create paid professional development for homework, she says.

Proper academic enrichment does not take place, Ms. Denan said. Students need games in math and language arts. “There’s a world of fun activities we can’t provide time for in the regular program,” she said. “They could read a story or watch a video, and ask questions.” She says when she visits the program, she sees students mostly socializing.

In sports and athletics, Ms. Denan says YDP staffers give students equipment and let them “do their own things.” YDP should teach skill building, games, and standard sports like volleyball, handball, and basketball.

Activities in fine and performing arts are also lacking. Ms. Denan said even if staffers consider art “too messy,” the multi-purpose room where the program meets has a piano. “The students could be singing with the piano or with a boom box,” she said. “Teachers know how to do this.” She also wants theatre and dance. Ms. Denan does not know why it is so hard for the AP staff to offer these basic experiences.

Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers are either indifferent to or unhappy with YDP. Ms. Denan said she knows of no teacher that values it. They say the ASP needs better supervision, more enrichment, adequate homework help, and quality academic support. Ms. Denan said YDP might begin to improve its image through better communication with teachers, who have no idea what students do in the program.

Parents like the homework help, but some complain there is no rigor in the program. They want enrich-
ment, science activities, and physical education. “Parents want it to be fun and educationally uplifting games that increase skills,” she said. “We don’t have time for that anymore during the regular program. It’s a missed opportunity.”

**Agency and District Support**
Ms. Denan makes no distinction between Beyond the Bell and the agency. She gives the former a mixed review, saying they respond quickly sometimes but mishandle problems on occasion, driving a wedge between her and the supervisor. She wants Beyond the Bell to involve principals in planning, fundamental decisions, and agency selection.

**Additional Observations and Recommendations**
Other issues include the failure of YDP to provide the principal with student rosters. She has no information on enrollment or attendance and worries about what might happen in an emergency.

Another issue is the cleanliness of shared facilities and the ASP’s overall low behavior expectations. “The MPR seems like a holding pen.” This year, she allowed YDP to use classrooms only on a trial basis.

Even with all the complaints, Ms. Denan said YDP has improved this year. Supervision and communication improved when staffers put in place a policy to inform her about incidents. This year, she is more aggressive about monitoring the ASP. She receives activity schedules, but complains that staffers do not follow them.
Case Study Observations
Youth Development Program
Alexander Science Center Elementary

Introduction
This program takes place at Alexander Science Center Elementary School (a K-5 school) located within Exposition Park in Los Angeles. The Youth Development Program is the sponsor. Mr. Carlos Hernandez is the site coordinator.

Highlights
The distinguishing characteristic of this program is its academic emphasis. During the time of observation, three of the program’s four 40-minute rotations focused on academics: homework, academic enrichment, and test prep. In these rotations, the children sit at tables to do school-related work. Specific tasks include doing homework, reading books, writing paragraphs, completing worksheets, and completing packets. Staff members read aloud from their own packets when leading lessons.

In many ways, the format of the program is similar to that of the regular school day. In addition to the three academic rotations, the children have recreation time on the school’s playground. This rotation is similar to recess during the school day. Children have access to a range of equipment, and generally engage in free play while staffers supervise. Generally, the efforts to extend the school day into the after-school environment define this program.

Homework and Academics
Homework time takes place at the multi-purpose room, in other large rooms and at the outside lunch area. Observers watched several groups gather in one area, making for a rather noisy atmosphere. The outdoor lunch tables are close to Figueroa Street, a major thoroughfare, and the traffic contributed to the noise.

The level of engagement varied with the activity during homework time. Many students did homework. In groups of older children, those without homework wrote a story or read. Some children chatted. Others just sat and looked around. Staff members usually circulated and, when not managing disruptive students, helped the children who asked. Those who were quiet, whether working or not, did not receive much attention from staff.

One day, the fifth-graders were supposed to do homework between 5:15 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. The group wrote paragraphs and then read them aloud. Five children were still working when staff ended the activity at 5:30 p.m. to move to the yard for sign-out. On this day, they only received 15 minutes of the 40-minute homework rotation.

Data collection occurred close to scheduled standardized testing and the end of the school year. Often, the students had no homework to complete. Staffers provided alternative activities like story writing, coloring Chinese masks, and crossword puzzles.

Mr. Hernandez said staff members get training in homework assistance and takes steps to ensure they know assignments. They visit teachers to ask about homework and check children’s homework logs. Also, he said three teachers usually stay after school to help. Observers noted that some staff members did not check homework. Mr. Hernandez said they help with homework, but do not check to see if it is completed. He said they should take the extra time to check homework.

In addition to Homework, the schedule lists the two academic rotations as “Academic Enrichment (Monthly Packet)” and “Traveling Enrichment/Test Prep.” The schedule notes test prep can include
“homework assistance and/or silent reading.” During the first observation, Mr. Hernandez said he had finished a traveling enrichment residency the previous week. Accordingly, observers watched test prep, rather than the traveling enrichment component.

**Academic Enrichment**

This rotation involved working through monthly packets of activities. The topics in May were Be-Kind-to-Animals and National Pet Week, and Military Appreciation Month. One day, the exercises focused on safety around dogs. For the K-1 group, the leader began by asking questions and reading from a packet. She was very animated in her presentation and expanded on correct answers provided by the children. The group of about 10 children was very involved in the discussion. As they transitioned into a coloring portion of the activity, the staff member told the children that they had broken some of her crayons last time and they would have to share colors today. She said to be more careful. During the coloring, she assured the children that they could use whatever color they wanted. The dog did not have to be brown. This group was consistently on-task and focused. The staff member had the group very engaged.

Other grades worked with a similar packet. The rotation for the second- and third- graders began with the staff member asking kids to put their heads down until they were quiet enough to start the lesson. The staff member then began reading from the packet, but had to leave to talk with a parent. Mr. Hernandez stepped in and read from the packet. The fifth-grade group was at a nearby table. Their leader introduced the same lesson. It sounded as though both of these groups received the same lesson as the K-1 group. The staff members seemed to be reading the same material to different grades.

During an observation day in late May, the focus was the armed forces. The observer noted that “each of four groups did the same activity: read information about the armed forces and then color an American flag and a hero symbol.” In the fourth-grade class, the staff member varied the activity by having different children read the section from the packet. There was a lot of noise in the room. It was difficult for the students to hear each other. The leader of this group did not speak loudly enough to be heard over the children’s conversations. Two of the groups worked actively and quietly. The staff member for the second-grade group seemed to struggle, reading the material silently, and then sharing the information with the children. She did ask questions to promote participation.

**Test Prep**

The Test Prep rotation took two different forms. One involved learning tips for successful test taking. On a mid-June observation day, the children received a package with tips on the basics of test taking. The staff member went over this package with the children so that they would understand how to take a test.

Other observations involved children practicing for tests. For science, children read silently and answered questions individually by filling in bubbles. In another group, the children took turns reading sentences from a paragraph. Then, the staff member asked questions and called on students to answer. For one math group, the staff member read multiple-choice questions to the children, who bubbled in their answers. The children bubbled in their answers quickly, even for complex problems.

There was little evidence of calculating or thinking. The children showed little interest in the activity and seemed to be going through the motions. When the parents of two boys came to pick them up, about five minutes apart, they exclaimed a relieved “Thank You!” in unison. The staff member told the second father that the boy had "been praying for you to come." She seemed aware of the children’s boredom. In another math group, the children did worksheets. The staff member told them which math problems to do and put a great deal of effort into keeping the children on task. Most of them followed along. Some talked or bothered neighbors. Neither the children nor the staff member seemed energized. Observers noted many test prep sessions had issues with noise that kept children from focusing.
Sports and Recreation
Each of the site’s four groups received a 40-minute recreation rotation daily on the playground. Some of the observers watched organized activities like basketball, dodge ball, and tap-and-slap. Others saw free play. One staff member joined the children’s basketball game. A group of second- and third-graders played tap-and-slap, a variant of Duck, Duck, Goose. The children appeared to have fun with this game. The observer noted that the fifth-grade students “were reluctant to get in a circle to play dodge ball. Some complained. One student got upset with another student and sat away from the group.” The children who did play did not take the game seriously.

Staff members walked a line of children out to the yard and then released them. The staff member and the Youth Services (YS) leader supervised. After their release, the YDP children’s activities were indistinguishable from the YS children’s. Most played handball or basketball. Others gathered in groups and talked. The staff member did not provide coaching or skill development.

The staff member for the K-1 group gave the children’s free play some structure. The six children in her group engaged in paired play. Two boys, sharing a ball, shot baskets on a low hoop. Two pairs of girls played handball on adjacent boards. The staff member stood in a place where she could see all three pairs. One pair of girls laughed each time one of them hit the ball. Sometimes they had to stop playing to laugh. "You guys are doing more laughing than playing,” the staff member said. They went back to playing. Generally, these children played vigorously and enjoyed the time. Through playing hard, they developed skills.

Other Enrichment
Mr. Hernandez said the students most like the enrichment activities. He said traveling staff members come to the site to lead activities like tap dancing, arts and crafts, computers, and music technology. During the observation period May 12-June 18 field study period, the observers saw no traveling enrichment activities. However, on June 18, the children did participate in recreational activities during homework time. They had no homework as year’s end approached.

Mr. Hernandez wants to offer painting in the future. He said all he needs is the paint.

Engagement and Classroom Management
Engagement and classroom management are substantial challenges for this ASP. When they have a child with a behavior problem, staff members send him or her to Mr. Hernandez rather than handling it themselves. Observers confirmed this. Sometimes, Mr. Hernandez moved from group to group, disciplining children. Mr. Hernandez and the Youth Services leader were better able to manage the children than were the assigned staff members.

Several observers noted that staff members had trouble maintaining order in noisy rooms. Activities took place at long tables in large areas with multiple groups. Loud conversations were common. Staff members either tried to talk over the children or directed them to put their heads down on the table until they quieted down.

Many of these challenges were evident during a test prep rotation. The session occurred at outdoor lunch tables in a walkway. Passers-by distracted the children. A few of the children stayed on-task doing worksheets. Most talked and looked around. Some drew. The staff member spent most of the time quieting the children down and moving those who were disruptive. Eventually, Mr. Hernandez arrived and dealt with the especially noisy children.
Despite systemic challenges in this area, there were times of relatively high engagement and on-task behavior. The K-1 group, with approximately half as many children as each of the other groups, was usually on task. Their staff member was animated and attentive; the children responded by engaging themselves in the activities. Most groups had some children engaged and working hard. Some children made an obvious effort to hear others despite the noise in their activity areas.

**Staff**

YDP is part of Beyond the Bell and is subject to LAUSD personnel policies and practices. Mr. Hernandez said playground workers earn $13.28 per hour, playground supervisors earn $15.56 per hour, and senior playground supervisors earn $17.85 per hour. He said the hiring process is long and cumbersome. He said he has no problem getting substitutes. YDP has a large staff and the agency sends workers as necessary.

Training is available for staff members. New staff members spend two weeks at a training site before assuming responsibility for a group at their assigned site. Experienced staff members receive training in meetings on leading activities and test prep. The staff also gets training on homework assistance. Mr. Hernandez wants more behavior management training for staffers.

The agency provides staff for traveling enrichment. Roving staff members come to sites and lead specialized enrichment activities.

**Material Resources**

Mr. Hernandez said the lack of space is the most significant problem the ASP faces. Noise is hard to control in the open areas the program uses now. This lack of space is also the biggest source of friction in the ASP’s relationship with the school. In addition, the program has no access to the library or the computer lab.

Observers confirmed Mr. Hernandez’s space concerns. They described two or more groups crowded into a single area, close enough to hear each other. The principal recently gave the ASP two rooms, but they did not seem to solve the problem. The situation was likely much worse before.

Mr. Hernandez reported having enough materials and equipment. He also is satisfied with the cleanliness of the school and the work of the custodians. He said students want more snacks. They do not like milk, but want juices.

**Relationship with the School**

Mr. Hernandez said teachers are willing to help and the principal is available. The school’s primary contact person for the ASP is the principal. Mr. Hernandez said their relationship is fair, and he can talk to the principal whenever he needs to. They talk about children’s behavior and upcoming activities. They also communicate by e-mail.

Staffers also talk with teachers. Mr. Hernandez said they talk about behavior issues. Staffers visit teachers if there are questions regarding homework. Three teachers come every day to help the ASP. The students’ homework logs are another way that teachers can communicate with the program. The ASP has not engaged in joint planning with the teachers and has not asked the school to share students’ CST or assessment scores.

The main challenge in the relationship with the school is the lack of space. A supervisor for the agency met with the principal, and he agreed to furnish two rooms, but they are still not enough.

**Relationships with Parents and the Community**
Alexander Science Center Elementary School shares space with the California Science Center. This influences relationships with parents and the community. Mr. Hernandez said parents complain about the long walk from the Science Center parking lot to the program’s sign-out area.

In terms of relationships with parents, Mr. Hernandez did not talk about proactive outreach. He calls parents for major problems, and other issues are broached in conversation during pick-up time. The usual topic is student behavior.

This new program is developing community relationships. Mr. Hernandez spoke of positive relationships with the museum staff and parking attendant, but did not indicate that the program had other relationships with the community. He said staff members live in the community.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The Youth Development Program (YDP) is a unit within Beyond the Bell. Mr. Hernandez said the ASP has a good relationship with the agency. He talks daily with the supervisor, who visits two to three times per week. The meeting with the principal regarding space allocation demonstrated the supervisor’s willingness to advocate for the program.

YDP has close connections here with Youth Services (YS). They share snack space and playground space. During recreation sessions, the YS staff member supervises both the YDP and YS participants. Mr. Hernandez appears to be thinking of YS when responding to questions about Beyond the Bell. He said he is not happy with having to watch YS students on days when the YS staff is absent, at least until a substitute arrives. He appreciates the programs’ close working relationship.

**Attendance**

YDP here has an attendance cap of 110. About 10 children were on a wait list at observation time. Graduating fifth-graders will make room for new students next year.

Mr. Hernandez said attendance dropped toward the end of the school year. Attendance by fourth- and fifth-graders decreased after the end-of-the-year camping trips. He said the walking distance between the parking lot and sign-out also affects attendance. Also, the program lost children to YS.

Mr. Hernandez wants more outdoor activities to encourage more students to attend the program. “Students get excited with more activities,” he said. “They tell their friends, and more students come to the program.” YDP also has good word-of-mouth through the school’s PTA.

**Safety and Security**

Mr. Hernandez expressed no worries about children’s safety or the security of property. He noted that because of museums, “state officers are around all the time.” There is a back area that anyone can access, so leaders guide students away from it. The program has a small locked room where staff members keep personal items.

Overall, observers saw good supervision and a staff that protected the safety of the children. There were times that children left the visible portion of the playground during recreation time. Mr. Hernandez or the Youth Services staff member brought them back. The dodge ball game was in violation of LAUSD safety regulations.

**Conclusions and Comments**
YDP at Alexander Science Center School is a highly structured program. Children have four 40-minutes rotations, plus snack time each day. At times when there is no traveling enrichment, three of the four rotations focus on academic areas.

Although the three academic rotations did not always have distinct activities, there were defining activities for academic enrichment and test prep. The first focused on monthly packets with lessons that staffers read aloud, and children completed activities within them. The packets did not appear to vary with grade level. Test Prep consisted of activities designed to promote success on standardized tests.

The Recreation rotation was the one in which the children had the opportunity to choose their activities. These activities included some organized games. In many ways, recreation time was similar to recess during the regular school day.

Two recurring challenges for the program were space and classroom management. Groups participated in their academic activities in large, noisy spaces, with other groups nearby. Three of the four groups had behavior management problems. The children often did not appear engaged. Staff members put much effort into classroom management, often to no avail. The material and activities simply did not hold the interest of most children.

YDP deserves credit for trying to extend the regular school day for three hours in the late afternoon. Unfortunately, it also suffers the downsides of the regular school day, including regimentation and emphasis on standardized testing, without corresponding benefits. Missing are two of the best opportunities that can be available to children in ASP: activities that interest them and that might not be available to them.
## Site Profile
### Youth Development Program (YDP)
#### Sepulveda Middle School

### School Site Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Site</th>
<th>Sepulveda Middle School</th>
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<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>15330 Plummer St.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Hills, CA 91343</td>
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### Principal
- Patricia Pelletier

### School Demographics (2007-08)*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Racial/Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.1% Hispanic</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.6% Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1% Filipino</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.1% American Indian/Alaskan</td>
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### English Language Learners as a % of Enrollment
- 42.7%

### English Language Learners
- Total: 704
  - 678 Spanish
  - 9 Other
  - 8 Pilipino
  - 5 Vietnamese
  - 4 Armenian

### After-School Program Profile

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<td>(central office location)</td>
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<table>
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<th>Youth Development Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isaure Blandin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Israue.blandin@lausd.net">Israue.blandin@lausd.net</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>818-587-4370</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>% &lt; 36 Days</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 36-71 Days</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%72-107 Days</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &gt; 107 Days</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### % of Capacity
- 20%

### Academic Performance Index Change

| API – 2008 | 697 |
| API – 2007 | 658 |
As a specialist in intervention and ASP monitoring (he is a former RLA administrator at Sepulveda), Mr. Wright has a clear vision for traditional Youth Services, Youth Development Program and Youth Services Plus programs. He believes YDP has potential but must overcome many deficits. “All of Youth Services needs a stronger hand, much better organization, better training, and a concept about how YS and YS-supported ASPs should operate on campuses,” Mr. Wright said. “They have not moved very far beyond the decades-old constructs of after school sports, competitions, [and] a place for kids to play and interact.”

Mr. Wright said running a three-hour after-school program with homework assistance, enrichment offerings, and the necessary discipline control of students has been a stretch for YDP. He praised some excellent additions, like art, music, and traveling programs, but complained that these are not a permanent feature, and again reflect the traditional scope of Youth Services programs.

**Components**

Mr. Wright believes the best homework assistance can only come from certificated teachers. They alone have the skills to help students puzzle out homework questions, and they have the critical experience necessary in class management, student behavior, and academic assistance. If good training were available, it would come from teacher consultants paid by the agency and should last at least one day. Mr. Wright believes the agency provides no quality homework assistance and treats the feature as merely as a “holding place” to put students. Mr. Wright would welcome a reading intervention element, but adding sections without the proper training for staff would be a waste of time and money.

YDP does not now offer academic enrichment, but will launch support programs with a mobile laptop lab this year. Mr. Wright suggested spelling bee classes to improve students’ vocabulary. He also wants higher-end offerings. “Ideally, an ASP could offer science, journalism, and math support,” Mr. Wright said. “These programs do not exist with YDP.”

Mr. Wright, a former physical education teacher, is happy with the well-established YS sports offerings: soccer, flag football, basketball, and track and field. There are plans for a drill team. Competition and skill development are the province of traditional YS. At Sepulveda, YDP and YS work together on these elements. Mr. Wright said this could improve with more structure. He suggested adding ultimate Frisbee, team handball and lacrosse.

Employee turnover is a problem in both programs.

Mr. Wright believes fine and performing arts offerings are one of the most positive aspects of YDP. Highlights are a new guitar class, the traveling DJ program, art and crafts experiences, last year’s drum class and dance. The program is properly developing student skills in this area. He believes these are well-run and positive places for Sepulveda students. There is no drama program, but last year’s dance group did compete in a district contest. Mr. Wright wants to extend co-curricular classes (dance, drama, music, etc.) into the ASP, but it would have to fund certificated teachers at an acceptable level for the idea to work.
Teacher and Parent Perceptions
Teachers see YDP as an independent adjunct. They do not know a great deal about it but generally support YDP as a supervised place where students are exposed to a variety of activities. Those who stay to work in their rooms after school say there is a lack of supervision. They mention a problem last year with students frequently pulling fire alarms. The problem has diminished, in part, because of better containment. Teachers want more enrichment that is academic.

Parents also want better supervision and more attention to security and safety from this ASP. Last year, there were some problems with fights, students threatening classmates and off-campus interlopers. Some parents said YDP needs a larger adult presence and better accounting of students: which students remain on campus, what program they are in, and who is free to come and go.

Agency and District Support
The YS supervisor comes to campus at least two times every week. She is supportive and open to suggestions. She may even be at Sepulveda during the day, although Mr. Wright says he has no physical space. Some believe this idea will improve communications between the day school and the ASP, but Mr. Wright disagrees. Mr. Wright mentioned Harry Talbot as a positive and helpful person at Beyond the Bell. He has visited the campus, researched its needs, and worked hard to fulfill them. Mr. Wright has not needed the organization’s help with discipline, staffing, facility or other problems. He said funds for expanded supervision and campus aides are needed. The day school usually must pay from its own limited budgets for supervisory personnel to stay after 4 p.m.

Additional Observations and Recommendations
The YDP program has improved this year, added Mr. Wright. It is located in a more contained physical location, a new site coordinator has brought consistency but she is, unfortunately leaving; he likes the new classes (guitar, drill team) and there is a better working relationship with the YS supervisor. This has made for fewer student behavior issues and other difficulties. The former coordinator, he said, exacerbated discipline problems last year. She was a very enthusiastic person, but did not know how to contact appropriate school personnel for assistance when she had problems with students, nonmembers, attitudes, and so forth.

Mr. Wright says YS needs to establish more structure for its programs and coordinators. A mandatory meeting at the beginning of the year to set behavior standards, program offerings and discipline procedures would get the program off to a better start. Students also would benefit from a better-organized program. They respond to organization, expectations and consequences set out ahead to time.

“More leadership is needed from Youth Services as they try to move into full ASP status, hopefully creating YS model programs,” Mr. Wright said. “These more complex and demanding programs are not yet a strength of YS. Their staff is still sports-oriented, trained only minimally, good at certain activities but noticeably weak in the homework and academic enrichment components.”
Case Study Observations
Youth Development Program (YDP)
Sepulveda Middle School

Introduction
This program takes place at Sepulveda Middle School (a 6-8 school) in North Hills. The sponsor is the Youth Development Program (YDP). The site coordinator is Nichole McClendon. Some have identified this program as Youth Services Plus. LAUSD’s Youth Service is developing and refining its ASPs, and these two terms are often used interchangeably.

Highlights
The Youth Development Program here is typical of middle-school ASPs observed during late May and June. This meant as many as two weeks of special schedules that accompanied annual standardized testing, the end-of-year absence of teacher-assigned homework, low ASP attendance, and upended routines. ASPs at this time have to contend with holes in their schedules filled by word searches, games, and worksheets. Interest in these low-key activities wanes and students opt out, pulling members away from dance troupes and sports teams. The entire program suffers.

At Sepulveda, the coaches and director did their best to keep attractive activities, expand sports offerings, and continue special interest classes with as few as four or five students. Observers noted that, when they showed up, students stayed engaged. They appeared happy to have a place where they could participate in games and classes with their friends.

Of particular interest was Sepulveda’s active sports agenda. Youth Services has been leading after school sports teams, leagues, and tournaments for decades, and it does a good job. As an organization running Beyond the Bell programs at selected sites, it has evolved and created new components during the year. While observers had a generally positive impression of the ASP, they did note instances of inappropriate language and some looseness in the structure. Ms. McClendon mentioned challenges with teenage behavior and staff management. Overall, YDP students took part in numerous enrichment and sports activities that should serve as a foundation for next year’s program.

Homework
Observations of homework proved challenging. Observers wrote:

Today was the last of seven or eight consecutive days of standardized testing. The impact on the regular school, teaching staff, ASPs, and students is considerable. This is homework assistance time, but nobody has any homework. The group of about 15 students is doing a word search. Attendance is way down today. One young man says, "I'm bored!" Although asked by Beyond the Bell to create special activities for the testing period, I have seen almost no evidence that anyone made an effort in that direction. The low attendance only compounds the problem.

Even on a Friday, students who want to be at this ASP find their way to the homework room. Very few teachers have assigned homework, yet twenty students show up for "academic assistance." A few have long-term projects. Others read books or do worksheets. This is a friendly group with a popular program leader. Several kids remain in the lunch area, waiting for the break and for other activities. Staff members have tried to carry on with the schedule despite extremely hot weather and a school field trip to Disneyland that subtracted 40 to 50 students.
Ms. McClendon rated the quality of homework assistance an 8 on a scale from 1 to 10. “There needs to be positive reinforcement for the students and for the coaches, too,” she said. She might have meant that YDP personnel, trained in running tournaments and in coaching teams, need additional preparation to conduct successful homework assistance.

**Enrichment and Supplemental Academic Activities**

ASP hours are a good time to expose teens to creative expression opportunities they do not get during the school day, like journalism and other extra-curricular activities. Observers saw none of this at Sepulveda. Part of the problem may be that students get permission from parents to leave whenever they wish, so drawing them is a hard sell.

**Arts**

Observers watched dance, music technology, and drumming classes. One attempt to view yoga was unsuccessful. Observer comments included the following:

This class is a DJ activity complete with dual turntables, computer monitor, and all the equipment needed to run a school dance. A student uses the equipment to lay down tracks and mix them for a recording. She works outside the room, while a coach teaches several others about the software on another equipment suite. It is impressive. The class travel but will be here through June. This is a high interest activity. Students who concentrate can learn all the basics of being a DJ.

As in the last visit, students learn the software, equipment, and techniques to play selections like a DJ. They mix tracks, and record their own music combinations. Later, they crank up the volume on a second giant electronic master board that is outside. It has two turntables, a monitor, and all required connections. It is an excellent hands-on activity. Students are very motivated, and the two program leaders are very knowledgeable.

This is a drumming class. Students play loudly on several kinds of drums. They work with a knowledgeable coach who has written out the day’s exercise in musical notation on a whiteboard. They play an entire exercise and it is really well done. The class meets in a former adaptive P.E. room off the gym. Students all have drumsticks and other proper equipment. When they stop for a break, I ask them if they plan to be a part of a drum line in high school. Two say yes. Right now, they are just learning the craft and enjoying themselves.

This dance team went to a competition last week and did not do well. Some of the dancers are on the floor now. A new group of girls learns hip-hop dance moves. Although they have to share the space, everyone cooperates.

It is Friday and the instructor just received a big box of new arts and crafts materials: watercolors, yarn, plastic straws, construction paper, etc. As the 15 students enter the room after snack break, he asks them to pick up trash left in the room during the day. The room is a mess. These kids put chairs up on tables to gather the trash under them. One student sweeps up. No one complains. They then set up a video game. A few girls cluster around the goodies box.
Ms. McClendon wants to integrate the DJ class with the dance team. At the time of the observation, it was probably too late for a production, but the material, equipment and level of learning in these classes, combined with the drumming class, are enough to plan one.

**Sports and Games**
Combining several ASPs to better appeal to students and coordinate activities is common elsewhere. Traditional YS programs all offer sports after school. But because it is an ASP, YDP is supposed to offer more. A district-wide policy requiring a C average from students participating in YS sports tournaments helps resolve the conflict between providing a robust sports program and providing quality academic assistance.

This ASP has a lot of sports activity. Observers watched basketball, indoor and outdoor soccer, dodge ball, and handball. Observers wrote:

This is indoor soccer: the walls and ceiling are all in play. It is by far the most well attended event of the day. About 25 students play inside the gym. Soccer here is so popular there is a middle school junior varsity team, and many of these students hope to qualify next year. The play is fast-paced and bystanders must keep very close watch to see where the ball, which is much softer than a regular soccer ball, goes. The kids play without rest. They make many goals, but no one appears to keep score. It is fun to watch. Students show impressive footwork and skillfully use the wall to make plays.

These are the stalwarts of after-school basketball. After all other activities end, they wander in and practice free throws. When enough students show up, they start a half-court game. Two coaches play with them as the day ends. There were about 35 students early in the program. Now, only about 25 remain.

Kids who do not play basketball play dodge ball. A coach sets up cones and the game begins. It is fun, a little silly but good exercise. Not many students participate, but those who are here are enthusiastic. A coach plays with them. A few other kids play board games in corners of the gym. This is not an ideal location for that, but the students want to be where the action is, with friends and coaches.

The strength and leverage of the soccer team is evident. An observer wrote:

Soccer is big business here. The Sepulveda soccer team is a highly competitive group of boys who have a lot of leverage, Ms. McClendon said. The coach let her know there was no way they would start the ASP with homework, so they now report to practice immediately after school ends. They supposedly do their homework later, but she cannot say whether that occurs. Letting the soccer players skip homework was a risk. Ms. McClendon believed the other students would ask for the same break, but that did not happen. The practice is lively and intense. These players are good. The team has two coaches. Sepulveda is the chosen valley site for all YS tournaments. They ranked second in the city last year. There is a girls’ team, but they do not practice today. Their tournament is tomorrow.

The boys’ soccer team does drills and practices directly after school. They will play in a citywide YS tournament on the 31st. They are very focused on their game and the coach is knowledgeable and definitely in charge of this competitive group.
This is an all boys’ soccer game. The girls sit in a corner of the gym floor talking. The red team plays against the green team. No one keeps official score, so any team member can flip the score chart when there is a goal. Three coaches play with the students.

One observer watched students playing computer games and noted they used profanity. Staff members worked hard to keep the language under control:

The leader helped a student set up a computer game called World of War Craft. The student is now at level 5. The teacher constantly told the students to watch their mouths. The leader helped another group set up Wii games. Some manipulated the remote control. The students cheered each other loudly. At 3:40 p.m., the leader told them to stop for a snack.

Engagement and Classroom Management
It was difficult to assess the level of engagement of students during homework/academic because observations occurred during standardized testing time. Students were highly engaged in their sports activities, in the DJ class, and during drum practice. They were clearly interested in the activities, and relationships among them and with staff members were strong. The staff members also showed a strong grasp of their activities. Students listened to and respected them and they, in turn, showed warmth and concern for the students.

The willingness of participants to clean up the homework room on two occasions, as well as their willingness to play board games in a less-than-ideal location to be near favorite program leaders, reflects a general atmosphere of cooperation. Observers saw no evidence of any interest on the part of YDP students to place a coach or a specialty class leader in an uncomfortable position through misbehavior in front of guests. Observers wrote:

There is a warm and respectful relationship here between the students and this leader. It really would not matter what he did today. The kids would love it.

The DJ group is another successful, well-attended YDP program. The leader is popular and competent.

Three YDP coaches play with the kids who are just as competitive as they are. The coaches are very popular and competent. Keeping students involved and interested will become more difficult as the semester ends. Coaches who have established positive relationships will keep many of these young people connected to the program.

Likeable young YDP workers who enjoy playing basketball, soccer, dance, and drums with the kids led the students that showed up.

The basketball sessions demonstrated students’ enthusiasm:

I am watching late afternoon half-court basketball after other activities end. It is a small group and two of the participants are coaches. It is friendly and fun. The activity is characteristic of every group I have seen today: not a large number of kids, but all friendly …. If they did not feel valued in some way, or if they did not want to hang out here with these young men and women, they would be home.

Outside of the profanity used in the video games room, there were no instances of disruptive behavior.
Ms. McClendon said she finds working with some students very difficult. Some students have been disrespectful of inexperienced staff members. Their teasing brought one coach, an inexperienced dance teacher, to tears. Ms. McClendon seemed to imply that she needs capable, experienced, agency-trained staff. An observer wrote:

This is my second visit to this school. Ms. McClendon is a hard worker who cares about the students. She is concerned about their safety and behavior. On the way to the interview, she saw a boy and a girl in the program kissing. Two boys stood and watched. She took the time to stop and explain the inappropriateness of their action in this setting. She escorted them to other activities.

Staff
Playground supervisors earn $15.50 per hour. Ms. McClendon earns $17.40 per hour. She said 80 percent of the jobs are easy to fill. Hiring specialized staff presents a challenge. She said she is disappointed in the agency’s efforts to hire a new dance coach. This is one of her biggest frustrations. “We had one, but she left in February,” she said. “The second person was not good at dancing. She did not dance in front of the supervisor during the interview. That was the mistake. They must audition.”

Ms. McClendon had to fill a teaching position herself in addition to managing the ASP. “I also teach dance and yoga,” she said. “I don’t teach every day. However, it would be nice to focus on my site coordinator’s duties and just teach one class.” One observer made a special visit to the school to see the yoga class at Ms. McClendon’s request, but she cancelled it because not many students showed up.

Some coaches are quite skilled. They have training in CPR, health and safety procedures, and strategies for working with young people, including classroom management. However, Ms. McClendon said training for new coaches consists of a school tour, a review of expectations, and an activity agenda. “Basically, we throw them into the water,” she said. Ms. McClendon may not understand her obligation to train and support new hires. The agency trains new staffers on safety procedures and gives them paperwork, she said. She complained that some experienced staffers get more training than she does, but did not elaborate. Staff members do not receive training in LAUSD curricula or homework assignments.

Ms. McClendon said getting staffers to behave more responsibly and students to behave more appropriately have been among her biggest challenges. The end of the school year requires that both day teachers and ASP personnel pull together to coordinate activities and deal fairly and firmly with problems. Her frustration was evident in her comment to one observer that she is leaving this position at the end of the school year.

Material Resources
Ms. McClendon is satisfied with the ASP space. She said staffers gather students in one room for homework assistance to ease supervision. The ASP uses the arts and crafts room, the classroom next to it, and the DJ classroom.

Ms. McClendon said materials and equipment are sufficient for activities, though some equipment is hard to replace when it is damaged. Observers did not see broken equipment, and leaders did not mention it either.

When asked about previous conversations between ASP staff and school administrators about space allocations, Ms. McClendon did not respond directly. Instead, she talked about one teacher complaint. “Some teachers like to stay late and work after school,” she said. “Then they complain about the noise
from the DJ program we had, which lasted five weeks. We resolved it by moving the DJ outside in the open in a shaded area.”

Ms. McClendon was very pleased with the appeal, quality, and quantity of the snacks, but she mentioned the need for bigger drinks to keep students hydrated through sports activities.

Ms. McClendon said she is satisfied with the cleanliness of the parts of the school that her program uses and the quality of the janitorial services. “It’s pretty clean,” she said. “They do a great job. When there is graffiti, they clean it up immediately.”

Observers had other comments about space resources and janitorial services:

This ASP is fortunate to have three rooms for activities. They are all relatively close together near the gym. One room looked better when the ASP students left it than when they arrived. The ASP leader asked students to clean one teacher’s classroom before they began their own activity, so they lost time with that. The leader told me he believes they should leave the room cleaner than they met it.

The small dance class meets in the same room as the drumming class. The noise level is not conducive to focusing on dance instruction, and when the dance group wants to practice with their music, the other leader has to tell the drummers to stop.

The drums are only sufficient for three students at a time. Students in this activity wandered in, tapped a few beats on the drum, then left to continue playing basketball. The basketball court is visible from the music room. Some students cut through this room to get to the basketball court.

Relationship with the School
Ms. McClendon’s primary contact here is the assistant principal, Mr. Wright. “We have a great relationship,” she said. “He is my favorite person at the school.” She said they communicate by walkie-talkie and talk face-to-face about four times a week, mostly about supplies and room allocations. The after-school staff communicates with classroom teachers through notes in mailboxes and homework agendas. ASP staffers also meet with the teachers whose rooms they use just before school lets out.

There is no joint planning done to coordinate after-school program activities with the classroom teachers. Administrators and teachers do not share CST and assessment scores with ASP staff. Ms. McClendon said there are three ASPs at the school, including one called GEAR UP, whose director meets with her. Because GEAR UP students finish their meetings at 4:15 p.m., students who remain from that program join YDP.

Relationships with Parents and the Community
Staff members talk with parents face-to-face two or three times a week, at pick-up time. Topics include individual behavior issues and activities. There are no group meetings. Ms. McClendon said she had to suspend one student over the use of a racial epithet.

Ms. McClendon said she is happy with parent communication but wishes “more parents were involved in their kids’ lives.”

Ms. McClendon said she knows the community because she goes to Bible study here, and another staffer grew up in the area and graduated from this school.
Ms. McClendon said the local Pizza Hut gives the ASP discounts but mentioned no other relationships with community groups or businesses. “I wish they weren’t hesitant to help,” she said without elaborating.

**Relationships with the Agency and Beyond the Bell**

The strong point of this ASP’s relationship with YS is that they work as a team. But there are weaknesses in communication with Beyond the Bell. Ms. McClendon said it needs to be stronger, but did not offer any examples.

**Attendance**

Program leaders take attendance through daily sign-in sheets. At the end of the month, Ms. McClendon takes the tallied paperwork to the Beyond the Bell North office if her supervisor does not first pick it up at the school. She said a weekly tally of absences might be better than a daily one. Banners and posters recruit students into the program. Also, the P.A. announcements include notices about the ASP three times a week. There is no wait list. The program enrolls 94 students but can accommodate 10 more.

Ms. McClendon believes good relationships between students and staff improve attendance. Staff interaction with parents also helped. “The parents can make the students come to the program,” she said.

Ms. McClendon said two events, a field trip to Disneyland and special dance sessions that helped students with an upcoming play, might have helped attendance. The school has a tutor program after school, and some YDP students attend that. There is another school-sponsored soccer program and a weightlifting program that take some students away. There is no competition with other ASPs.

**Safety and Security**

Ms. McClendon said she is not satisfied with student security. She wants a school police officer available during the program. Difficult students and bad behavior are a continuing source of concern for her, although observers did not see this.

She also is not happy with the security of school and ASP property. “Lockers would be nice, instead of that tiny room inside of the gym,” she said. “[They] would improve the safety of the items. We had basketballs stolen.”

**Conclusions and Comments**

Sepulveda had significant difficulties with its ASPs last year. The assistant coordinator said the school had another agency with few policies in place that did a poor job of tracking students’ whereabouts. During the transition to YDP, the assistant principal has provided strong support. YDP has improved the program this year. Ms. McClendon’s opinion that Sepulveda has “tough kids” could be a reflection on the previous agency. However, Ms. McClendon also had trouble managing her staff and gaining respect from students.

Middle School ASP coordinators have a demanding job; and at least one observer left with the impression that Ms. McClendon expected these kids to behave like elementary students. Perhaps she would have been more comfortable working at that level.

Observers saw both strong and weak activities. None mentions tough students with behavior problems. Our staffers doubt the credibility of some of her comments. In five visits and more than 20 formal observations, as well as informal interactions, that brought then in contact with all aspects of the ASP, our
observers saw mostly contented, engaged students and coaches, and very few examples of unhappy, disruptive students.

“The program is fun when you make it fun,” Ms. McClendon said. “Everything is good. There is drama every day with a different kid.” She is happy with the activities, particularly soccer and the Wii games. She wants to bring in Dance Dance Revolution and believes the school will get the equipment next year.

With any luck, the new director will have middle school experience, patience, perseverance, and the ability to work with a staff of YS coaches and enrichment teachers. We recommend a second round of observations next year.