



SENATOR JOHN ENSIGN

ISSUE BRIEF

EDUCATION

AFTERSCHOOL CAUCUS

As Co-Chair of the Senate Afterschool Caucus I am committed to ensuring that our schools have the assistance they need to ensure that our children leave the public education system as well-rounded individuals. Children attending public schools should not only be proficient in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but should also be skillful in music, art, and athletics.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs in Nevada work to create well-rounded individuals by partnering with groups such as local YMCA, the local Children's Museum, the Girl Scouts, the Boys and Girls Club, the City of Las Vegas, The University of Nevada, the Clark County Health District, the Nevada Youth Alliance, and America's Promise, just to name a few.

It is clear that this program can bring together entities across the country that will best serve the needs of these children.

The benefits of this program go without saying. Children enrolled in 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs not only improve academically, but are also less likely to become caught up in the juvenile justice system.

According to the Department of Education, children who regularly attend high-quality after-school programs have better peer relations and emotional adjustment, better grades and conduct in school, more academic and enrichment opportunities, spend less time watching television, and have lower incidences of drug use, violence, and pregnancy. This makes sense considering that studies by the FBI have found that the peak hours for juvenile crime and victimization are from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Students in these important programs are given assistance on their homework, English as a Second Language, or ESL, students are given additional assistance to improve their English, students have access to computers not only for their school work, but also to improve their computer skills.

Most importantly, these programs give students something to do and somewhere to go after school. This program provides parents with a viable alternative to leaving their children alone in the hours after school.

I would also encourage everyone to get involved with programs that help youth in their communities. It is for that reason that I also support the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and the good work they do for at-risk students.

Website Links:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/index.html>