



NEWS RELEASE

Contra Costa County Supervisor
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District One

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2005

SUPERVISOR JOHN GIOIA CALLS ON STATE TO RELEASE MILLIONS IN AFTER-SCHOOL FUNDING

California Legislative Analyst's Office study finds state is under-utilizing federal money for disadvantaged kids

What: News Conference to urge state to release after-school funding
Who: John Gioia, Contra Costa County Supervisor
Terri Waller, Office of Assemblywoman Loni Hancock
Ted Lempert, President of *Children Now*
Evelyn Medler, Teacher/Site Program Coordinator
Karen Frison, Regional Superintendent, Elementary Schools
Where: King Elementary School (cafeteria)
234 S. 39th Street, Richmond, CA 94804
When: **Monday, March 14, 2005**
3:00 – 3:30 p.m.

RICHMOND, Calif., On the heels of a report by the non-partisan California Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) that found that California has problems in taking full advantage of the federal 21st Century after-school grants, Supervisor John Gioia will be urging the state to act now and distribute the money to existing after-school programs.

In the LAO's 2005 Budget Analysis, released February 24th, it found that the state had a surplus of between \$70 to \$100 million in unspent federal monies for after-school programs. The LAO attributed the surplus to a 4 – 6 month delay in the state's distribution of the money to community programs. California is the only state that disburses its 21st Century funds through reimbursements rather than through an up-front grant.

The 21st Century program is a federally funded before and after-school initiative that provides disadvantaged K-12 students with academic enrichment opportunities and supportive services to raise their test scores and grades. What's more, if the money isn't allocated, it goes back to the federal government.

At a 21st Century funded after-school program, Supervisor Gioia called on the state to cut through the red tape.

"If the state continues to sit on this pot of money and does nothing, California's children will be losing out on millions of dollars worth of enrichment and learning opportunities, critical for their future," said Supervisor Gioia who has led Contra Costa County's "Afterschool 4 All" initiative.

Among the recommendations made by the LAO is a 50% increase in funding to all existing after-school programs that are currently receiving federal 21st Century money. That's an increase from \$5 per student per day, to \$7.50 -- a \$2.50 adjustment.

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2-2-2-2-2 SUPERVISOR GIOIA URGES STATE TO RELEASE SURPLUS MONEY

"This is an opportunity for the state to show that our children's education and welfare are a state priority," said Assemblywoman Loni Hancock, a vocal advocate for education and after-school programs in Sacramento. "The state must act now so that we can use these funds in our communities."

Of the roughly 3300 children enrolled in the 21st Century after-school programs in Contra Costa County, 1360 are in West County.

Ted Lempert, President of *Children Now*, an Oakland based children's advocacy group, supports the LAO's recommendation but is also urging the state to make system-wide changes such as distributing money to after-school operators more quickly, and giving more money to the programs up-front. Currently, after-school programs must wait to be reimbursed for expenses such as rent, salaries, and student supplies.

"Non-profit service providers aren't able to do right by our kids under this system," said Lempert. "This problem is having a very real – and very harmful – impact on children throughout our state. There is high demand for after-school programs and the state needs to reform the way it funds providers to ensure that our children have safe places to learn and grow in the after-school hours."

Note to editors and reporters: staff will be on hand to facilitate interviews.

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