

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

ContraCostaTimes.com

Officials highlight value of after-school programs during Bay Point visit

By Rick Radin
Contra Costa Times

Posted: 05/13/2011 05:53:33 PM PDT

Updated: 05/16/2011 01:48:14 PM PDT

BAY POINT -- While after-school programs funded by a 2002 state initiative may not be threatened, local legislators are highlighting the need for more money to make sure that all K-12 students have something to do after the final bell rings for the day.

Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla, D-Concord, and Contra Costa Sheriff David Livingston visited a program at Riverview Middle School on Friday see what the students are doing and learning.

The two officials visited a community garden maintained by students from Mt. Diablo district schools, as well as a cooking class, a hip-hop dance class and a volleyball tournament.

Bonilla emphasized the extra learning the students get after school and the fact that the programs keep them off the streets from 3 to 6 p.m., the hours when the highest percentage of juvenile crimes occurs.

"With the reductions to child care funding for 11- to 12-year-olds, these programs are becoming more critical," Bonilla said. "Building relationships with after-school counselors helps reduce the high school dropout rate."

Proposition 49 covers 38 elementary and middle schools in Bonilla's Assembly District 11 serving about 4,600 students. Still, 25 low-income elementary and middle schools in her district get no after-school money.

The district covers the northern portion of Contra Costa from Pinole to Antioch, including Concord and Clayton.

Statewide, after school programs receive about \$550

million

a year under the initiative, with 97 percent of the money going to schools in low-income communities.

Eighth-grader Jaquan Shaw, of Bay Point, said he'd be home playing video games if it weren't for the Riverview program. He said he's been enrolled in a program since he started school.

Since he will begin high school in the fall, he is eligible to apply for a six-week intensive program working in the garden. The students selected for the program work four days a week for four hours and receive \$500 in pay.

Riverview student Jessica Leyva, 11, said she enjoys the dance class the most, but she has also learned to like carrots and spinach more from the experience of helping tend the garden.

"Vegetables taste better if you grow them yourself," she said.

Livingston said many law-enforcement agencies endorse Proposition 49 programs through a statewide coalition called Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.

"Why not intervene now to keep kids in school and prevent future crimes?" Livingston said. "We think this is an example of where the funding works."

Contact Rick Radin at 925-779-7166.



Send flowers for any occasion
Bouquets from \$19.99^{+s/h}
ProFlowers
Offer ONLY available at:
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™