



STATEMENT OF JEN RINEHART
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Regarding Phase Three of the Mathematica Study on
21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Programs
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***Final Report from Mathematica Afterschool Study
Offers Dated, Unreliable Information, Afterschool Expert Says***

“Phase Three of the federal evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) afterschool initiative is more of the same – more conclusions from a deeply flawed study of a program that no longer exists.

Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Education, the final report from this study is of little use to the education community or to afterschool leaders, because all the studied programs were funded before the *No Child Left Behind Act* changed the program dramatically.

Experts have raised many methodological concerns about Mathematica’s controversial afterschool study. They include, but are not limited to:

- To be included in the study, elementary afterschool programs had to have sizeable waiting lists. Most do not. Thus, participating programs differed significantly from the norm. Indeed, Mathematica acknowledges in today’s report that its findings for elementary schools are not representative of 21st CCLC grantees nationwide.
- Middle school “treatment” and “comparison” groups were different in significant ways, because comparison students had higher grades and higher socioeconomic status. Despite attempts to adjust for these differences, contrasts between the two groups are deeply suspect.
- Middle school comparison students participated in afterschool programs not funded by 21st CCLC grants and significant crossover occurred, again casting great doubt on the study’s conclusions.

Nothing in this new report allays any existing methodological concerns about Mathematica’s afterschool study.

Afterschool programs enjoy overwhelming public support because Americans know they keep kids safe, help working families, and inspire children to learn. A household survey released in 2004 by the Afterschool Alliance, with support from the J.C. Penney Co., Inc. found that 14.3 million are unsupervised after the school day ends. The parents of more than 15 million children say their kids would participate if an afterschool program were available. That study also found that 31 percent of children in working families are unsupervised in the afternoons.

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Add One, Rinehart

Americans want more afterschool programs, so that all children can be safe and supervised in the afternoons. A poll conducted for the Afterschool Alliance by Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc. in November found that 82 percent of voters agree that “our newly elected public officials should increase funding for afterschool programs.” When asked if they would support more funding “even if it leads to a tax increase,” 76 percent of voters – and 74 percent of Republican voters – agreed that funding should be increased.

The U.S. Department of Education is working with providers to discover what is working well in afterschool programs, in order to strengthen them. But their benefits are apparent already. In March, when Laura Bush visited an afterschool program in Providence, she noted, “I’ve visited schools and afterschool programs that help children who might be at greater risk of getting in trouble. These programs are changing young people’s lives for the better ... Afterschool programs ... can keep children safe and improve their academic performance.”

Mrs. Bush is right. We invite lawmakers to work with us to make afterschool available to all, and to close the funding gap between the \$2.25 billion promised in the *No Child Left Behind Act* for fiscal year 2006 and the \$991 million that President Bush proposed. Our nation has no higher priority than to ensure that every child is safe and has adult supervision and opportunities to learn in the afternoons.”

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization supported by a group of public, private, and nonprofit entities working to ensure that all children and youth have access to afterschool programs by 2010. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.