



10 Reasons for High School After-School

Because of recent changes to the After School Education and Safety Program, there is significant new funding available for high schools to provide after-school programs for their students. Under the new law, a portion of California's funds from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding stream will now be reserved for high school after-school programs, under the California 21st Century High School After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens (ASSETs) Program. Below are 10 reasons why high school students need after-school programs.

1. After-school activities give youth time to discover and develop their passions. Many a successful musician, journalist, actor or community leader discovered their particular knack during an after-school activity they didn't have time for during the school day.
2. After school is a time for youth to build confidence and connections. At the Youth Together program at high schools in Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond, 90 percent of teen leaders and teen members reported having more positive relationships with adults in their school and improved leadership skills, and 89 percent of teen leaders and 79 percent of teen members felt more connected to their communities as a result of the program.
3. High school after-school programs increase graduation rates. For example, the BlairLEARNS after-school program at Blair High School in Pasadena has been so successful with its after-school "credit reclamation" classes that the school's graduation rate was at 92 percent in June 2005—the highest it has been in 20 years.
4. High school after-school programs decrease crime and increase student safety. For example, a study of the Bayview Safe Haven after-school program in San Francisco revealed that the crime problems in the area of the Bayview Safe Haven recreation center fell, with a police officer noting, "Calls for [police] service have gone down—there used to be probably three or four times [more than] what they are now."
5. Young people spend just 20 percent of their waking hours in school. How they spend the remaining 80 percent of those waking hours can have a significant impact on their overall development.
6. California has created a vibrant and varied world of after-school programs for elementary and middle school students, thereby creating a generation of young people who will expect to be able to fill their afternoon hours with safe, fun, enriching activities as they move into high school.
7. Surveys show that older youth have an eye on life after high school and want to spend their free time in worthwhile activities. After-school programs can provide the extra time for career exploration, skills development, and internships that will prepare high school students for college and beyond.
8. In a recent survey, 86 percent of California teens surveyed said they believe supervised after-school activities help teens stay safe and out of trouble.
9. According to a 2000 survey, 72 percent of California parents with teens believe there are not enough after-school programs in their communities.
10. There are 2,266 high schools in California. Only 66 currently are served by this funding.