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Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Safe and Smart: The Promise of Effective Afterschool Programs
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Moderator: **John E. Kyle**, Program Director, Outreach and Strategic Planning
Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Speakers:

Susan Burgess, Mayor Pro Tem in Charlotte, North Carolina and the former president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board.

Terry Peterson, Counselor and Senior Advisor to former U. S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley;
Senior consultant to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Carla Sanger, President and CEO of L.A.'s BEST After School Enrichment Program in Los Angeles, California.

KYLE: My name is John Kyle. We're pleased to welcome you to an audioconference sponsored by the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families.

Today we're focusing on afterschool programs -- "Safe and Smart." We have a distinguished group of folks to help discuss this with us. First, Susan Burgess, who is the mayor pro tem in Charlotte, North Carolina and the former president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board. We have Carla Sanger, who is the president and chief executive officer of L.A.'s BEST (Better Educated Students for Tomorrow), an afterschool enrichment program in Los Angeles, California. And last we have Terry Peterson, currently senior consultant with the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, one of the nation's foremost philanthropies attending to afterschool programs. Recently Terry served as counselor and senior advisor to the former U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley.

KYLE: Carla, I'd like to ask a question of you first. Could you just give us a little bit of detail about what L.A.'s BEST is all about?

SANGER: We're a partnership with the City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the private sector, operating afterschool programs at elementary school sites, 76 of them throughout Los Angeles. [<http://lasbest.org/>]

KYLE: What kinds of numbers of kids are you serving these days?

SANGER: A little more than 13,000 every school day.

KYLE: So one of our bigger programs. In Charlotte, Susan, what kinds of things are we

seeing about afterschool programs?

BURGESS: We have through our school system 6,000 children enrolled in afterschool enrichment. In addition to that, the City of Charlotte has in our CWAC neighborhoods -- our “City Within a City” neighborhoods -- nearly 1,000 children in afterschool and summer programs on a full time basis. Our city is not responsible for social services nor education. So, we are approaching our children’s care and youth care from a community safety and economic development point of view.

KYLE: What is the focus of the programs that you’re offering to kids?

SANGER: Our focus is a balance of academic support and enrichment, nutrition, fun, keeping our children safe and supervised every school day after school.

KYLE: Terry, in your experience during the past eight years, do these examples in Charlotte and L.A. kind of reflect what you’ve seen in cities across the country? What do you see and what have you been seeing in how afterschool programs and afterschool age children are being dealt with?

PETERSON: This is a very, very important issue, and it’s very hot right now. It makes sense because there is a growing concern about the achievement gap throughout this country. Kids need extra time after school and in the summer to learn. As Susan said, there is great concern about safety between three and eight in the afternoon. That’s one of the highest crime periods for teenagers. Yet, most schools, and by the way, museums, have their least attendance at that time. There is great interest, I think, right now in building partnerships among schools and community based groups and faith groups. Afterschool and summer school really give us a great opportunity to do that, to have the kind of program that Carla described. Yes, there’s tutoring and mentoring, homework, academics, but it has to be engaging, it has to be enriching, it has to be enjoyable. Otherwise, kids don’t show up.

KYLE: The programs you described, Carla and Susan, with thousands of children now most likely didn’t start out having thousands of children. What were the beginning steps? I know, Carla, you’ve been there since the beginning for L.A.’s BEST.

SANGER: I have.

KYLE: What did it look like in the beginning, and how did you get started? What did you do first?

SANGER: It started with a visionary. It started with then Mayor-Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, who certainly felt the city had no *legal* responsibility for education, but felt there was a strong *moral* one because of the numbers that were reported to be unsupervised after school every day. I think it starts with a visionary, from wherever that visionary comes, with a lot of help from inside staff crusaders. It takes the staff of both the school district and the city, coupled with good afterschool leaders who know how to move talk into action. L.A. had traditionally been very progressive in its rhetoric and not so swift in implementation of that rhetoric. And I

think it was a combination of those three that moved L.A.'s BEST from the drawing board to implementation very quickly.

KYLE: In Charlotte, what kind of steps do you remember launching the efforts there?

BURGESS: Well, mostly because of the demands of working parents -- North Carolina has the highest proportion of parents working outside the home of any state. And there was simply very little childcare. It only made sense that the school system that had the facilities and also had the children be the lead agency to provide out of school care. There were many programs, of course, and a lot of latchkey children. But what we realized very early is that the standards were all over the place. And for the most part, they were inadequate standards. We wanted our children in a safe, rich environment, and the school system, along with the community, stepped up to that.

Years ago it was actually recognized by the Junior League of Charlotte. They're the ones that really brought everyone together, and that culminated in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools being the lead agency and the primary provider for afterschool time.

KYLE: To start with you, Terry, what kind of partners have you seen in other places? They have mentioned already a mayor, the school district, and the Junior League. Who have you seen as partners in getting these efforts off the ground?

PETERSON: Oh, there is a whole host of them. You get wives, you get Boys and Girls' Clubs, 4Hs, and often the arts and cultural groups, such as museums are an untapped resource. But I think it probably takes someone -- a municipal leader -- even if you don't have direct authority as is stated, to kind of step up to be the convener or the facilitator to pull people together. Someone to admit that we don't have direct authority over the schools or social services, but this is a great need in this community and we have to sit down and work this out together. You've lost the battle when people don't work together, when each goes their own way in their own separate little funding fight and gets excited when they get 5% more and a competing group lost 5%. You really have to look at enlarging the pie and making it a win/win situation. The need is so massive, there's room for everybody, if everybody wants to put their shoulder behind this effort.

SANGER: And let me add the importance of business involvement at decision points. The Mayor of Los Angeles is a businessman. Dick Riordan came from business. And there was so much insight he brought to the development of L.A.'s BEST from a business point of view, from a business sense. Those of us who had been involved in non-profits for so many years don't often think in that same way. And, know what you need to be able to expand, and know what you need to be able to go to scale. That business point of view, both in our board of directors and in a businessman mayor, was certainly helpful to our expansion.

BURGESS: Oh, there's no question. In Charlotte, our business community has been extremely supportive and instrumental in getting this going. Not only is their future workforce sitting in our classrooms and in our childcare, but also productivity of their employees went down at two o'clock, three o'clock, when children were arriving at home or wherever they were going on their own. And that got their attention. They really want to support their employees and were helpful on the systemic level. And many of our companies, particularly Bank of America, have gone into the childcare business as a support for their employees and their

families.

KYLE: Some of this conversation about the likely and logical partners is just good common sense. And I'm sure that's what some of our listeners are thinking. "Of course those are the people we should be talking to." But it isn't as simple as that, is it? Aren't there complications in terms of whether an elected official, for instance, will come on board? What about the business leader who doesn't have the phone calls streaming out from the employees between two and three in the afternoon? And how do you surmount getting their attention when they seem to be resisting it? How do you deal with what Terry was talking about -- the notion of taking a pie, and they feel threatened that you're going to take something away from what they're already doing? Some of these partnerships are pretty complicated to make work. Can you describe, Carla, where you might find a pitfall, and how you get out of it?

SANGER: There are so many ways to respond to that. I think all of my colleagues appreciate the fact that this is about relationship building primarily. And as my colleague, Richard Murphy from the Academy for Educational Development, said, there are certain "Gotta Believes" and "Gotta Dos." And it's a one-on-one sitting with everybody and anybody to transfer the meaning of what those "Gotta Believes" and "Gotta Dos" are for children unsupervised after school. It's one-on-one-on-one-on-one. And it's knowing how to get that opportunity to sit down. Asking for five minutes when you really need 20. It's that opportunity to use the Rolodex Factor of people who are already supportive of your issue and your mission. And it's plugging one at a time to build the buy-in and the support for co-developers in your process.

BURGESS: In Charlotte, our effort is being coordinated from the Foundation for the Carolinas, a community foundation. We've had what we call "The Charlotte Way." We do everything in collaboration. And the partners are from the voluntary, government, faith community, and business. The steering committee of what we call POST -- Partners in Out of School Time -- is working together. They've collected a lot of data and have assessed what is here and what is not here, what our needs are, where our holes are. And they have identified four areas of the city in which we have much more work to do. But it's a group of about 40 representing all of those sectors, including some private philanthropists. And together we're just trying to figure it out. And we will be successful.

You asked the primary barrier. The primary barrier in every effort, I believe, is money. So how we get the money to pay for all of this is the big question. But, as always, our community responds to a legitimate need, and I feel that we'll pull this one together as well. We have a good plan.

PETERSON: What's interesting, I think, is that in polls -- and I'm sure municipal leaders watch polls like people do at the national level. The Afterschool Alliance (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>), which is a good source of information, helps to sponsor a public opinion poll every year. The first time the pollsters did this, a Democrat and a Republican, they were almost shocked because quality afterschool is one of the few issues that cuts positively across all the age groups and all the political parties. There are very few issues, they said, today that you can get that kind of agreement. And what they found, which may help in thinking and planning, is that different groups have different reasons to be for it. Senior

citizens like afterschool because it keeps kids busy and off the street. Parents like it, and not only from the care perspective. There's been a real shift in the last couple of years. It used to be principally care, but now parents really do want enrichment. They don't just want babysitting. And as Susan said, employers are increasingly interested in this because of productivity. John Hancock in Boston a few years ago actually did a scientific study and found that providing these programs -- quality programs -- actually saved money for the company in increased productivity.

BURGESS: I think one of the polls I remember was the Mott Foundation/J.C. Penney poll (http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll_reports.cfm). In that poll, 92% of voters think there is a need for organized activity for teens and children. And 92% -- that's rare to get on any question. But I think you're right, all people, all ages, all parties, all parts of the country have recognized this incredible need for our children.

KYLE: Well, the need is recognized. So we have all the afterschool programs we need?

SANGER: Hardly.

KYLE: Why the disconnect? Why do the voters and all these various constituencies say good things about afterschool programs, and then we don't have all that we need?

PETERSON: I think part of it is that the need is actually so massive, it's sort of mind-boggling. Some estimate that as many as eight to fourteen million kids are out of school after school time, home without supervision. And because there's nobody directly responsible for this area -- the schools aren't directly responsible, the churches aren't. Everybody is playing a part, but there's no direct responsibility. So having mayors or other leaders step up and convene people and take this on really does that kind of galvanizing that Carla talked about. It takes someone showing people the need. One community I remember actually went around the city and mapped out where the need was and where the resources were, and that really helped people see that it was possible to address this big problem. But also they saw how large it was. And if they worked together and the leadership came from the very top of the city, people could get behind it.

SANGER: I think if we believe, and I think we do, that never in this country's history have so few adults been at home after school, it's pretty easy to document the fact that this isn't just the issue du jour. It's not going to go away. Every demographic indicator points to the fact that this is as real in our urban areas, in our rural areas, in our wealthy areas, in our poor areas. And frankly, I think we are not unlike the 1880s with the development of kindergartens where there will be an increasing groundswell for publicly funded afterschool programs to be available at every single school in the country, and privately funded as well.

BURGESS: Another issue is that there have never been so many children, with the baby boom echo. We just have so many children whose parents are working. The need has probably never been greater than ever before in this country's history. And that's getting everyone's attention. We have addressed a teenage pregnancy problem in Charlotte head on and have set a community goal of reducing it by 50%. And of course, Charlotte, like the rest of the country, has been successful somewhat in that. But still we know exactly when those children are getting pregnant, and it is the time immediately after school when they're alone and unsupervised. We have been

much more successful and have addressed earlier, younger children. But middle school children, and high school as well, need something to do with some supervision. And that is a much tougher group to serve.

KYLE: One of the questions we were asked before the call was the involvement of youth in planning afterschool programming -- and I think it's a good time to ask about that with Susan's comment about the harder-to-serve middle-school and older young people. Have any of you seen any experiences, or can you relate some experiences about how the youth have helped to plan what you actually carry out or map what the need is so that what is delivered is actually going to be more responsive to what those young people want?

SANGER: I can speak in terms of elementary school children, not in terms of middle schools, in direct experience ways. Certainly we do an awful lot of surveying of children. What's so interesting in L.A.'s BEST, with all the sports that we do and all the recreation and all the field trips, the response seems to be more science and more sports equally. Those are the most exciting things that the children want to see programmatically within L.A.'s BEST. I do know that L.A. Unified has taken due diligence to survey youth and middle schools and brings middle school students to the table in designing applications for federal and state funding.

PETERSON: I think the challenge, as Susan pointed out so rightfully, is that middle school and high school kids can walk with their feet. So, the program has to be interesting and engaging. I didn't visit this particular example, but a director told me about it. In one community, in an attempt to comply with a new standard, they really narrowed the afterschool curriculum in the middle school. They were doing pure, kind-of-narrow academics. And we need to keep the academic and educational focus wherever we can. But it was totally narrowed in a "drill-and-kill" way, as they call it. By Christmas time, they had no students in the middle school afterschool program.

On the other hand, last summer I visited a program in Wausau, Wisconsin, which has a big Hmong population. And I was there on a Friday in the middle of summer in Wausau, 75 degrees outside. And on the way into the program they told me this was a program for kids who had to be there in the summer because they skipped so much school during the regular school year. So I thought to myself, how in the world do you have these kids here in the middle of summer? They actually very cleverly wrapped in arts, theater, and music into an academic program. And it was really powerful, and it really kept the kids engaged. Then, they had the middle school students perform regularly in the parks for elementary school kids in the summer recreation program. So the kids had a real reason to stick with it, learn their material, write, measure, whatever. And I thought it's going to take a different approach. In fact, even the name of what you call afterschool programs for middle and high school kids needs to be carefully addressed. Otherwise you won't have students even the first day.

BURGESS: John, the youth voice is the one voice that's missing at the table here in Charlotte. One thing I've learned through the programs at the Institute for Youth, Education, and Families is the wonderful advantages of youth councils. And that's the next great idea that I hope to bring here. I have seen some participants in youth councils from around the country who are just extremely insightful. They have the best ideas, sometimes, of what we should be doing for our children and youth. And I would encourage other city councils and other communities to really

get these youth councils organized and get them involved in planning and decision-making.

KYLE: The other question I think that comes up repeatedly for programs around the country is how to fund them, how to get dollars for them. I'd like you to try and give us some ideas about both local governmental money, either direct taxes or general support or fees that are generated through local government. What do you think about private sector, either foundation or corporate? And what about what is happening from state and federal sources? Are these all equally good places to go? Is one better than another? Is there a prognosis, especially at the national level that you all want to make about what might be opportune for funding support into the future?

SANGER: Well, let me speak first to certainly the value of diversifying a funding base. I don't believe that government alone could ever fund the need for afterschool programs, nor could the private sector alone. So I think we have to start with the belief that a combination of private/public funding is going to be the most optimal way to go. In terms of L.A.'s BEST, we have about 48% from the state, 19% from private sector, about 24% from the city, and about 9% from the federal government. I'd like to increase the private sector's share of that piece. But I don't believe government should ever be off the hook for funding. I think the important thing for our colleagues to understand is sometimes there is no legislation available that will support the kind of programs that our youth development specialists feel are in the best interests of children. And it's important for us to know how to generate, and be at the table for, the kind of language and legislation that will create the funding for the kinds of programs that we believe are the best kinds of programs for children and families.

KYLE: How do you get to be at the table, Carla?

SANGER: Again, that's relationship building. That's the value of your board and your contacts and just plugging away with a lot of support. You know, something's changed -- and I've been involved in this kind of work for many, many years. To me, it used to be about numbers. If we had constituents and letters and a groundswell of people writing, that got you at the table because you represented so many constituents. At least in Los Angeles, that isn't as true anymore. It's more about who you know than how many you know.

PETERSON: Combined with all the dynamics, we need to have good ideas combined with what Carla said. Also, we need networking among those people out there who are already working on this issue from different vantage points. It's sort of the same point in terms of funding. It's going to take diverse funding . . . a very strong base of people out there interested in this issue coming at it from different angles -- some from childcare, some from youth development, some from education, some from safety, some from productivity. And somehow bringing them together so you have a more unified voice is important.

At the federal level, one of the newer sources of funding is the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which is in the United States Department of Education (www.ed.gov/21stcclc). A competition was just held, and there will be something like another 1,500 schools with community partners awarded grants within the next few months. So, by the fall of 2001, there will be 6,000 such centers around America. But even though that sounds like a lot, it's still probably only maybe 10, 20% of where we need to be. And right now, the funding

for that is being debated in Congress in the House and Senate as we speak. And at this stage, it looks like it's going to be frozen so there will not be any new money next year unless people from the field -- municipal leaders, community based leaders, parents, and school folks -- let their members in Congress know that there needs to be more money for that initiative. [The 21st CCLC program is a key component of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind Act." Congress has supported this initiative by appropriating \$1 billion for afterschool programs in fiscal year 2000 (up from \$846 million in 2001). Of the \$1 billion appropriation, \$325 million will flow to the states on a formula basis, and the states will make competitive awards.] But I think as others have said, any one of these initiatives shouldn't be seen as a sole way to go, but more as a part of the puzzle and a way to build out your programs and build quality.

BURGESS: And you need to be creative, as you said, in developing a diversified base of funding. For example, we have in North Carolina mandatory computer competency tests that all of our students must pass before they graduate from high school, although it's given in the 8th grade. The children who live in our "City Within a City" neighborhoods don't have computers in their home for the most part. So we have a program called CAN -- the Computer Access to Neighborhoods. And by combining city money with federal money, with Parks and Recreation, with the community centers, with business support, with donations of computers, with volunteers from the voluntary sector, we've been able to serve many neighborhoods with these computer centers. Even though it's not a structured program for out of school time, the children come there and really enjoy it and bring their families. And while they're there at the computer, they can also access information. We have a new database on affordable housing called "Social Serve," and the children can actually teach their parents how to use the Internet and use the computer in these community centers. It's sort of complex. But on the other hand, it's very simple. We had a specific problem, and we brought the partners together and said, "How can we solve this?" We ended up with a really good middle school program that involved not only the children, but their families. It's been nifty.

SANGER: John, let me address something that we talked about just a little bit before in response to your question, "How do you get these primary movers and shakers interested?" The luxury to me of working in afterschool programs is that we are so many things to so many people. If we do our homework and find out who these principal movers and shakers are and what they care about, we can connect what's important to them to what we do, whatever it is. Whether it's economic development, arts, academic support, crime, or computers. And that's a door that's open to us that isn't open to a lot of delivery systems of direct service.

PETERSON: Also I think the point that was made earlier by Susan about how the computer is bringing in middle school kids. What's a real draw for students can be a real draw for adults. And looking at afterschool programs in particular and into the evening as a way to not only serve children -- giving homework, health, safety, recreation, fitness activities, and nutrition -- but also to lift up the surrounding community with adult learning opportunities. There is some real interesting research on languages -- not only learning English, but learning a foreign language. For low income kids, learning a foreign language in addition to English -- for some, that's a foreign language . . . but learning English and another language or two and learning science and math at a high level really opens doors for their future. Think of a language lab or a whole set of labs at an elementary school, a middle school or high school. That same lab, if you've worked it

out with the school folks, can be a great learning resource for adults in the community. Same with the library -- it's in an information age, and often it's hard to get access to libraries; the hours don't match. But, if you pull the library folks together from the school and from public libraries in neighborhoods where the folks live, that too can be a great learning resource for not only the regular students, but the adult learner as well.

BURGESS: Well, actually, our city's point of entry into after school and summer care was through neighborhood development. CWAC -- City Within a City -- is a geographical area of about 60 square miles of really our lowest income neighborhoods that were considered fragile or threatened neighborhoods. Looking at what we could do to uplift those neighborhoods, it became very apparent that providing wholesome, positive opportunities for kids when they were not in school was one of the most effective, obvious things to do. That's how we justified using city money for what could be considered a county responsibility here in our local scheme of things.

But, we also have what we call a Joint Use committee, and any public program that involves a facility has to have mandatory referral to this committee. This is the staff people in county/city, Park and Rec, library; those people meet. Any project that we're going to do has to be referred to that committee, and they look for possible joint uses. This has provided so much efficiency for our city and our county. It has allowed us to do more with what we have. We are building public libraries within public schools, for example. We are building community centers and actually enlarging the gymnasiums and multi-purpose rooms in our schools and making them available to the communities. Even the neighborhood organization has a little office there. It has allowed us to do much more for our families and our children, of course, within the neighborhoods just by leveraging each other's money and property.

KYLE: I wanted to ask a further question about each other's property. What kinds of locales are you using for programs? And do you have any recommendations about it in terms of using schools, using recreation centers, using the facilities of faith-based organizations, using the facilities of non-profit organizations like YMCAs and Boys and Girls' Clubs? Are you using a mix of those? And do you have any ideas or recommendations for why you do that or why you're moving in one direction or another?

SANGER: I think you need them all. I think that what has characterized childcare in this country hopefully will characterize afterschool delivery systems. That's a diversity and choice for parents, because what works for one parent in one community may not work for another. That's why I think all of these venues are appropriate places for children after school. I think L.A.'s BEST has confined itself to the schools, and that is not without it's own challenges because figuring out how to maintain flexibility and independence and leverage within a monolith as great as L.A. Unified School District is always a dance. And we're always working to do better. But at the same time, as we do better, we're making institutional change, and we're making systemic change that's reaching huge numbers of children. So, it's very exciting to work within that system of location at the schools.

PETERSON: I think that's right. You really want to keep everybody involved. And there is so much to do. In many cases, the school provides a convenient place to maybe build out a program. I think in New York City there are something like 200 schools that have the YMCA

run the afterschool program in the school. The Wausau program I mentioned earlier works out of the school, but they do a lot of things in the Boys and Girls' Clubs and YMCAs. They transport the kids from the school to those facilities, and then back to the schools so they can get home. There's a lot of interesting ways you can work together. And we need to find those so we don't just end up in a fight over who's going to have the money and who's going to have the kids.

BURGESS: Our school system is definitely the big gorilla in afterschool care here in Charlotte, and I believe appropriately. The transportation issues are delicate because children don't move unless they go to a nearby school that has afterschool care. But in addition to the obvious advantages of already having a building that meets code, which is not easy, we also have the link with the academic program. We actually hire teachers and tutors that connect the children to their precise educational needs. Because we have such a system of standards and accountability here, we know which child needs to work on which particular math concept. We can do it by computer-based instruction there after school and help them get caught up. Because the information is linked to the school, and we have certified teachers who are helping coordinate all this, we can really be much more efficient about reaching kids academically and giving them much more time to go out and play, which is what we do. Homework first. Play and Girl Scouts and music lessons and all that other stuff comes later. We are trying to keep all of our kids up with their academic work while they're there, so when their parents take them home for dinner, much of their homework is already done.

KYLE: I want to pick up on that staffing issue and go into some staffing questions. Staffing for these programs is difficult, as I think most of us understand. What kinds of qualifications do you think are best to look for? Then, how do you retain and sustain a staff that meets those qualifications?

SANGER: Well, we must be doing something right because our turnover is significantly lower than any national average. We have staff who have been with us ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen years. What the operations side does to ensure that is start with very appropriate recruitment. By design, we're looking for men as well as women so that traditionally where there are seven women to every one man in programs nationally, according to the latest research I've read, we try to have at least a three-to-one ratio or better of women to men. We're looking to recruit from the communities around the schools in which we're working because we believe that we can take responsibility for the training and for the support and bringing community people into decision points in these programs, which will have them more invested in the outcome of these programs. Our first qualification is looking for individuals who live close to the schools, who must agree to and want to be involved in staff development. This has resulted in about 76% of our staff. And again, Los Angeles is atypical because of the number of higher education institutions -- about 76% of our staff is in college, whereas only 10% are credentialed teachers.

BURGESS: Carla, do you pay them well?

SANGER: I think we pay them, probably for the field, among the highest in the scale. We're paying on average between \$12 and \$13 an hour, which is certainly for the field of community

people involved in afterschool programs, high -- but, not nearly as high as it should be. Fortunately, we have hundreds of teachers that volunteer to accept our rates in the afterschool programs because they feel so benefited by the opportunities they have to work with children in ways that they otherwise would never have.

PETERSON: Carla, I've visited your program, and they are terrific. Do you think part of your success, too, is you've really thought through the afterschool programming? It's not a happenstance thing, and you're constantly revising the content so it has that mix you talked about. I would think someone coming in there as a new staff person feels like they're stepping into something that's organized and then you can do a better job of preparing to deliver it. Do you think that's a part of it?

SANGER: I do. I can only say -- and it's embarrassing to say so because I know that many, many communities are not nearly as fortunate -- but we have jobs that have far more applicants than we can fill. In other words, we have never left vacancies because we couldn't fill the positions. We have to turn people away.

BURGESS: Well, we have the opposite problem. Staff turnover is a significant challenge. Charlotte's economy is booming. We have full employment and we are looking always for good staff people at the scale that we're able to afford to pay them, although our school system's based program actually pays quite well. Our private ones are not paid as well. I read one time -- and this has just haunted me -- that animal care workers are paid more than childcare workers. What that says about our culture is alarming. But at any rate, significant staff turnover is one of our greatest challenges, and one that needs to be addressed. And it's addressed by salary.

PETERSON: It's interesting, Carla and Susan. In some programs I've seen, they use maybe a teacher or an assistant principal or someone to be the overall coordinator. But they use a lot of folks who are working on a college degree or a two-year associate degree. Is that an interesting mix or a good mix?

SANGER: It is a good mix. In L.A.'s BEST, our configuration is every six schools has an activities consultant, who is someone who is either a credentialed teacher or someone who has had a great deal of experience in managing or in leading afterschool programs as that middle manager support that's helpful to their work. I think, Susan, money is critical, but I also think there is a certain humanistic environment that affects the turnover of staff. That has staff involved in decision points so they feel an autonomy with the budget, so they feel an autonomy with bringing a marriage of background knowledge and experience to the children and to the families and to the communities. That they have a say in what happens. And I think that has led to our success in maintaining staff as much as the salary.

KYLE: Are the folks who are working in the programs in your two cities -- are any of them city employees? Or are they employees of some other entity? I know a big chunk of yours are school-based, Susan, but I'm asking are there any that are city government or municipal employees?

BURGESS: I'm not really sure. I do know that employees and neighborhood development

pay for them. And we do have some employees involved, but the providers are not.

SANGER: Ours are district employees or employees of the corporation. The administrative staff are employees of a 501-c-3 non-profit corporation that's housed in the Office of the Mayor, which makes it interesting. And the primary line employees and the operations staff are all employees of the L.A. Unified School District.

KYLE: The reason I asked is I'm familiar with one or two cities where they have actually changed municipal pay scales to include afterschool work in order to provide a leadership role for what else was going on in the community. Not to compete, but to use recreation workers in city afterschool programs and pay them and classify them and describe them in much the same way that other afterschool workers were described so that they could be pointed to and used as a model. It sets up a series of expectations in the city that this is what afterschool workers should be paid. I was wondering if you thought anything like that could work or would work to move this along.

BURGESS: Well, that would be nice. We're in budgeting right now. I think that's a potential in some cities. We do not have consolidated government, and we have pretty much defined roles of government. So whatever the City of Charlotte does, we take from neighborhood development funds based on that, or from economic development programs, some federal grants or donations from corporate partners and so forth. But, we don't have funding. And until now have not really had the bully pulpit for children. But I think that is all changing. That has resided with the county and with the school system.

KYLE: What do you think the outcomes of your programs are on youth development generally? What are they contributing? What are the long-term impacts? And then a related question -- how do you know that? How are your programs evaluated so that you know about the kinds of outcomes they're having?

SANGER: I can speak to ours very briefly. Our founding board had the good sense in 1988 to determine evaluation was a critical piece and built into the budget the need to raise money from the private sector to have independent evaluations, which my colleagues know are very expensive. We have done evaluations and have been able to demonstrate the success of the program at both the academic achievement levels and with the Stanford-9 Achievement Test (SAT-9) scores. We know from tracking them through middle school that L.A.'s BEST participants, over time, have less absenteeism than do non-participants, and that holds across geography and across ethnicity. We know that L.A.'s BEST students begin with lower grades than non-participants, but they've caught up, increasing their grades with levels of program exposure. We know that language redesignation rates to English are faster with L.A.'s BEST participants than non-participants. [To read the 23-page PDF report, go to: <http://lasbest.org/learn/uclaeval.pdf>]

But my caution in all this, and these results are delicious, and they're available and they're valid and reliable and peer-reviewed and all that stuff -- but people who are not statisticians -- and I'm not a statistician -- look for huge gains. These aren't huge gains. And statistical significance, when you plot it on a graph, sometimes doesn't look very big. I'm not talking about weeks of less absenteeism. I'm talking about days of less absenteeism. But to the

non-statistician, that may not look like a very big finding. But to those who are familiar with educational research, that's huge to be consistent through the years.

PETERSON: I've looked at L.A.'s BEST -- and by the way, they have the longest term, biggest evaluation out there -- and I think what is said is really accurate. If you're talking about thousands of children, you don't get these big leaps forward. You've got to work on the day-by-day. I think some of the indicators would show that afterschool programs build linkages, both for the kids and to the school or other caring adults. And those connections are kind of an intermediary point to higher achievement and staying out of trouble. That's kind of a long explanation for people because they want a quick fix. But on these types of issues, there is no quick fix. And I think afterschool programs, well done and engaging, are one ingredient to dealing with these issues.

BURGESS: We have similar evaluation data with our school-based program, where most of the children are -- the 6,000 children. But what we don't have a handle on are the many, many neighborhood-based, church-based programs that serve just a few children. One reason that Partners for Out of School Time has been organized is to set some sort of standard for quality of care, and also for assessment. So in big cities, that is a challenge.

SANGER: Let me tell you what L.A. has done to respond to that, and I would like to say as immodest as it sounds, that L.A.'s BEST had a big share in moving this agenda forward. It took us five superintendents of L.A. Unified School District to get this buy-in. But there is now a central division for afterschool programs, called "Beyond the Bell," whose specific purpose is to look at access and equity and to avoid the duplication and the inefficiency and the lack of quality control that has characterized a lot of the growth and development in afterschool programs in Los Angeles Unified School District. And it's very exciting to see the mission articulated from LA Unified for what quality afterschool programs at the elementary, the middle, and the high school level should be and guided by an assistant superintendent with full charge for afterschool programs.

BURGESS: That's wonderful! Have you put that in your literature?

SANGER: We have. It's very exciting. It's "Beyond the Bell with L.A. Unified Assistant Superintendent John Liechty."

KYLE: We've talked about the quality of programs. Can you give a couple of what you think are the top benchmarks or hallmarks for what a high quality afterschool program would have? Each of you maybe would have two or three things that you would put at the top of your list.

SANGER: To me, the quality of the interaction between the adults and the children.

PETERSON: Yes, and a program that has content. Recreation is great; play is great. But it needs to have, in my estimation, a learning and enrichment component. There are a couple of publications that are put out that you can get from the U.S. Department of Education. One is called "Safe and Smart: Making Afterschool Hours Work for Kids"

[<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SafeandSmart/>]. Another one is called “Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers” [<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/LearnCenters/>]. And they have examples of a lot of the things you’re talking about, John. And people can get those free by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS [Or, go to: <http://www.ed.gov/about/pubs.jsp>]

BURGESS: I would say the quality of the staff, the safe facilities, and most importantly, the programs, with some academic component.

KYLE: What do you have to say about a student-to-staff ratio? How important is that and what is a good one?

SANGER: Our 1:20 works just fine.

PETERSON: I think it probably depends too if you have other folks there. I think you need that core staff. But you can bring in senior citizen volunteers and college work-study students. You can get college work-study students if you talk to your college campuses and lean on them a little bit. You can get 12 to 14 hours a week for free of college students to help. I think having a lot of caring hands under an umbrella is the way to a well-orchestrated program with quality staff.

SANGER: I think we need to add to quality indicators also the capacity to respond to program evaluation and evaluation requirements. I think there’s a lot of training and a lot of technical assistance that needs to continue to happen to give both small and new afterschool programs the capacity to respond to evaluation.

KYLE: As we wind up, I think that one of the things I want to come back to is the role of municipal government. You’ve had wonderful support going back for a decade or two, Carla. But if you were going to another city starting from scratch, what would you try to expect or ask for? How would you try to approach the mayor or council members to make this work? Susan, you are a member of council, actually -- mayor pro tem -- but you’ve also served on another elected body, and I know you’re also an appointee of the Lieutenant Governor at this point for yet a third area of expertise. So you’re spread around quite a bit. But if you were trying, what would you try to get a mayor or city council member to do? And what do you do when you find that these lovely arguments we talked about at the top of the hour with the various audiences just don’t seem to work with some of them? You’ve got a mayor who will be working with you, but a council member who won’t or vice versa, and you need a majority vote of the council before you can move ahead. What steps are you taking? What are you recommending to folks as they try to work with elected officials?

SANGER: We’re in a very interesting position now, as some of you may know. We’re right at the eve of a mayoral race, and it’s very difficult to stay fastidiously apolitical and at the same time be on the screen of all mayoral candidates. And particularly when your mayor endorses one of those mayoral candidates and comes to one of your sites to visit with his endorsement. That happened to us yesterday. But at the same time, as you’re trying to remain apolitical, it’s terribly important to start thinking about who is with you to make the “ask.” And thinking about myself as an afterschool provider, I am benefited going hand-in-hand with someone who is going to make an “ask” with me who is a well-known entity to whomever that person is that I’m trying to

bring to the afterschool table. And that person may be a colleague, a staff person, or a deep-pocket donor. It's whoever might come with me hand-in-hand to make the "ask" to that elected official.

BURGESS: That's interesting, Carla, that your candidate came first to afterschool. Because in survey after survey, the number one issue for voters -- for families -- are children's issues. Many times candidates run on that sort of platform. But once elected, what we have is the bully pulpit. Even though in our city, at least, the city is not responsible for human services and education, we constantly lift it up and make people understand how important we know it is to our city's prosperity and to the welfare of our families and to our overall quality of life. Sometimes it's just leadership. And on this issue, it definitely has to have the political leadership of the city and all of the other political entities as well as all the partners. But those kinds of issues are so near and dear to my heart, I talk about them all the time. And there are so many ways that municipal leadership and municipal issues intersect with issues that effect children and education. I feel so fortunate to be at the table where I can point these out all the time. My colleagues are probably tired of hearing me talk about it. But, nevertheless, we are slowly changing the way we view our role as municipal leaders because we are serving our constituents who for the most part live in families. And, almost everybody lives in a neighborhood. When we can identify or define the health and welfare of our families and neighborhoods, we have to look at children's issues and where our children are . . . making sure that they're not unattended, making sure that they're involved in safe and wholesome activities instead of crime activities.

SANGER: Part of our job as providers, I think, is to promote ourselves, to get the good news out there, to have good PR campaigns, to join national efforts like "Lights On Afterschool!" [www.afterschoolalliance.org/lights_2002/index.cfm]. To be able to get billboards to sponsor our work. To be able to have good publications and not depend on garage sale mechanism kinds of publications with borrowed paper and borrowed print, but to really do a professional job to get our work out there and to find the resources and the money and the support to allow us to do that. Certainly easier said than done. But there is an old cliché, but I do believe it that says, "To be successful, the three things you have to do are, one, do a damn good job, and two, do a damn good job, and three, let everybody know you're doing a damn good job." And I think we can do better at that, at letting people know that we're here and we're out there, and if you read about us, you're going to be more open to the conversation when we're asking for money.

KYLE: Terry, let me let you have the last word.

PETERSON: Well, they've covered it a lot, but I think a lot of times, just as Susan mentioned, people don't realize when a city leader or a governor calls, people show up. I think using that bully pulpit to create a collaborative effort and alliance; then, getting a game plan and using that alliance to look at best practice and define training that they can all share is a good way to go. There are a lot of national resources to help people sort through this. I mentioned earlier that the Afterschool Alliance is a good group [<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>]. A group that does training all over the country for afterschool programs is the National Center for Community Education [<http://www.nccenet.org/>]. Those groups have a lot of information and examples, and I think people need to tap them in order to get started so they don't feel so alone and feel like it's too overwhelming.

KYLE: I want to thank all of you for excellent participation today. This is John Kyle at the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (www.nlc.org/iyef).