



BEST (Boosting and Enriching Students Today)

Serving Lane County

Overview

BEST Afterschool provides the building blocks kids need to succeed in life and school, partnering with local organizations to provide the most enriching, engaging experience for our youth.

BEST Afterschool currently has 6 sites in the Eugene School District. 500 students are served annually at Caesar Chavez Elementary, Howard Elementary, River Road Elementary, Spring Creek Elementary, Kelly Middle School, and Madison Middle School.

Partners include the YMCA, Eugene Recreation, School Garden Project of Lane County, PAAWS, Eugene-Springfield Youth Orchestras, River Road Park and Recreation District, and Eugene Symphony.

Participation shows:

- Significant gains in academic achievement as a result of better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations.
- Social emotional development
 - Better relationships with peers and teachers
 - Increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and lower levels of depression and anxiety
- Health and Wellness
 - Decreased behavioral problems
 - Improved social and communication skills

Mission

In collaboration with community partners, BEST aims to engage youth in academic and enrichment opportunities that foster self-confidence, determination, a joy of learning, and a sense of community.

Vision

BEST strives to provide enriching afterschool programs for all students in need of expanded learning opportunities in our community. We will work to:

- Foster mutually respectful relationships that honor student voice in decision making.
- Boost academic achievement for all students.
- Create an environment that supports necessary positive youth development.
- Continually adapt program to empower students in becoming viable citizens of the 21st century.

Promising Practices

- Hours of operation are 2-5:30 which are the highest crime hours for youth.
- Engages youth through experiential, hands-on learning experiences that inspire students that helps keep them in school
- On average, BEST students make more growth in reading and math than their non-BEST peers
- The program provides experiences for middle school youth that help get them ready for college and careers.
- Utilizes community partnerships that maximize local resources and provide enriching opportunities while imparting a lifelong love of learning and reinforcing basic skills needed for success throughout life.
- Small groups
- Hot supper at school and bus ride home
- Recreational fitness time
- Music and art opportunities
- Integrated STEM learning



“The help that my son received at BEST has given my child the confidence he needs to be a solid, responsible student.” - 4J Parent

“BEST is a place where you can learn. And BEST is the best place you would ever want to be!” -BEST Student

For more information about
BEST, visit
www.4j.lane.edu/instruction/best
or contact Molly Wittkop Lajoie, District BEST Afterschool Coordinator at
541-790-7572 or lajoie_mo@4j.lane.edu