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Press Release

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Four East Baton Rouge Public Schools Get \$400,000 in 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant from Big Buddy

Baton Rouge, LA – Villa del Rey Elementary, Highland Elementary, Scotlandville Pre-Engineering Academy and Glasgow Middle schools are the proud recipients of Big Buddy Program after-school services funded by a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grant for the next three years. The 21st CCLC grant, worth about \$100,000 per school, will begin this summer.

According to **Sheron C. Thomas, Elementary Programs director for the Big Buddy Program**, the four schools in **East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS)** will benefit from a Big Buddy summer enrichment program that **runs June 1 to July 16**. The program will be held **8 a.m.-4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays** during those dates. The program will hire teachers and college students to work with the children and youth attending the four school sites.

Summer enrichment activities will range from hands-on literacy and numeracy lessons to kickball, culinary classes, dance, karate, visual arts and aerobics. At the elementary school level, Villa del Rey and Highland will study a different region of Louisiana each week. Each school will be assigned one region to represent in the Big Buddy Louisiana Festival on July 14 at the schools. Cajun dancing, Zydeco music, Creole cuisines and Louisiana art all will be part of the lessons and the festival.

With the support of EBRPSS, Big Buddy will provide after-school programming at the schools during the academic year and summer enrichment during the summer. The program will serve 100 students at Highland, 100 students at Villa del Rey, 60 students at Glasgow and 60 students at Scotlandville. All students will be in grades K-8.

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“**The elementary program’s** academic component is designed to address areas of student deficiency and reinforce what is learned during the school day,” **Thomas** said. “Academic support with a focus on reading and language arts (literacy skills) and mathematics (Numeracy skills) will be organized around small groups of students with specific shared needs. In addition, each participating student will select an enrichment activity in which they will participate for a full semester. Potential choices will include dance, cheerleading, rhythm band, choir, stomp, visual arts, science lab, horticulture and gymnastics, among others.”

Middle school students will be assessed and placed into one of four Power Hour labs addressing math, English Language Arts, general needs and LEAP testing practice. Each lab will be supervised by a professional educator with guided study and homework time targeting the individual’s needs in specific subject areas. In addition, each middle school students will select an enrichment major from Dance, Music, Visual Arts or Athletics (two days per week, two hours at a time each semester).

All students will be involved in social development and growth programs, including mentoring services components, as well.

Program goals are to: increase participants’ academic achievement in reading and math; improve their homework completion and class participation in other subject areas (like technology, art, music, theater and sports); increase their positive and pro-social behaviors; provide services to strengthen connections between students, families, schools and the community; and increase program stability and sustainability.

For more information, contact Thomas at (225) 388-9737 or sheron769@yahoo.com.

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