



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

# Building Community Together

## Thank You

*Damián Mazzotta, Board of Directors Chair*

Dear LA's BEST Community,

Bringing Community Together around caring for children is a valuable measure of our impact. We weave community into the fabric of our afterschool and summer programs because a sense of belonging, with shared goals and purpose, increases one's agency and self-efficacy. Building Community Together with LA's BEST students, families, staff and partners helps nurture kindness and develop advocates for equity throughout Los Angeles.

[+ more](#)



## Impact

### Yearlong Learning Across Los Angeles

Academic Year 2022-2023

**197** LA's BEST Sites

During the academic year, in partnership with the Beyond The Bell Branch of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), LA's BEST operated afterschool programs across Los Angeles, from San Pedro to Pacoima, and Venice to East LA. Students remained on campus from the dismissal bell until 6:00pm, giving families peace of mind knowing their children were engaged in experiential learning facilitated by caring adult role models building community with their peers.

Summer 2023

**142** LA's BEST Sites

The LA's BEST Summer Learning Program, also operated in collaboration with LAUSD, provided students with access to fun



experiential learning opportunities from 8:00am to 6:00pm, from June 13 to July 28. Without this support, research shows that children from low-income families lose more than two months of reading achievement every summer compared to their more affluent peers. For another summer, LA's BEST continued to help prevent learning loss for LA's BEST students.

## Enrichment Through Experiential Learning

**Experiential learning – learning through action, experiences and intentional reflection – has always been the backbone of our enrichment programming.** We are grateful for support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and the City of Los Angeles, enabling LA's BEST to implement enrichment programs, and for our students and staff to come together and build community.

**Here is a snapshot of enrichment at LA's BEST during the academic year 2022-2023 and summer 2023:**



## Arts



**1,200** students participated in **27** visual & performing arts residencies

Students were engaged in high-quality experiential learning led by local professional teaching artists. We proudly supported the local artists community! Residencies operated for 20 hours over four to eight weeks and included: **Ballet Folklorico, drama theater, painting, story-telling, guitar, percussion drumming, keyboard, ceramics and so much more.**

## Seasonal Sports & Dance & Drill Team

**500** teams played **2,925** games

We were able to offer the seasonal tournament sports opportunities we offered prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the year students competed in **flag football, soccer, softball and basketball.** These sporting events brought LA's BEST families together which nurtured a sense of community, critically important as we



continued to rebuild after years of isolation.

## 1,025 students performed routines

After a hiatus of all our citywide events due to the COVID pandemic, we reignited the **Dance & Drill Team Showcase!** Students choreographed and practiced their routines throughout the academic year and performed their best at the showcase. This iconic LA's BEST event brought together students, staff volunteers and families for a lively and energetic full day of dance and fostered a sense of pride to be involved with LA's BEST.



## Nutrition & Wellness



### Students at 60 sites participated in nutrition education workshops

Students learned about nutrition through experiential learning like how to read food labels and how to **make healthy and affordable snacks**, such as low-sugar ice cream and fruit-infused water. Supporting students and their families to learn about wellness helps our community build for now and into the future.

### Students at 197 sites participated in 30-minutes of physical activity each day

Every school day, all students were encouraged to participate in at least 30-minutes of physical activity that **nurtured self-confidence and teamwork**. Building a strong sense of community through physical activity and play has the power to help tackle mental health issues exacerbated by the COVID pandemic.

## STEM & Digital Learning

### 75 staff

#### trained in the LEGO® Education SPIKE™ Curriculum

Staff participated in weekend training led by LEGO® Education Trainers on how to engage students in designing with LEGOS around narrative-based problem-solving that inspired students to **think independently as STEM creators**.

### 365 students

#### participated in Digital Learning residencies

Students participated in residencies taught by local professionals with expertise in STEM on topics based on students' expressed interests and aligned with their grade level and academic objectives. Focus areas included: **film and technology, robotics, and coding**.



## Literacy & Academic Support



### **520 students participated in KidzLit or LA Kings Royal Readers**

The KidzLit and LA Kings Royal Readers programs helped **boost students' literacy skills and fostered a love of reading**. Working in small groups led by staff, students had opportunities to express their feelings and explore ideas based on the books they heard and read.

### **340 students participated in Young Authors**

Students were invited to become autobiographical authors by **publishing their own book** as they investigated the origin of their family name and culture, while having fun learning through language arts lessons.

### **Students at 197 sites received homework assistance**

Staff supported each student's academic achievement by assisting them with their homework. Staff also helped bridge communication between teachers and families, helping students thrive during school and afterschool.

## Workforce Development



### **Staff Development**

The Staff Development Department expanded to include six new people working to ensure site staff have the training, tools, and resources they need to support students and themselves. This year, 257 site staff completed New Staff Orientation and over 600 site staff attended training sessions such as: **LA's BEST Values and Youth Development Principles, Successful Learning Environments, Building Relationships with Students, and Anti-Racist Journey: Designing Culturally Relevant Learning Experiences.**

### **Career Pathways**

A significant component of our employment model is to hire staff from the communities where we work. Thanks to a grant from The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation, we launched an innovative initiative to explore how LA's BEST can provide pathways for our program staff to successfully and possibly simultaneously **pursue careers in education, social services, or whatever they choose as part of their employment with LA's BEST.** Stay tuned for more information on this initiative as we continue to examine and create new means to invigorate the local workforce while positioning our program staff for their own career success.



### **Leadership Development**

We established the Leadership Department, stemming from our Staff Development Department, which created customized leadership training to help site staff grow as leaders and learn how to compassionately develop and nurture their team. So far, 80 staff participated in the pilot sessions in topics such as: **Leading with Compassion, Managing Difficult Conversations, Making a Difference: Coaching, and Thoughtful Feedback.**

LA's BEST celebrated the incredible **dedication and achievements of staff** who go above and beyond to support students, their families, and one another. As always, there were many wonderful submissions for the awards and it was challenging to single out just one winner.

[Read more about all the winners here](#)

- Maria Carranza won the **Rebecca Turner Meaningful Impact Award**
- Nancy Lemell won the **Carla Sanger Leadership Award**
- Coreena Parraz won the **Al Minturn Humanitarian Site Coordinator Award**

## Summerland

This year, 260 staff members attended Summerland, an energetic annual community event, resource and technical assistance fair for LA's BEST site staff to connect, share opportunities and learn new skills to benefit students. Unique training topics included **Create Your Own Manga, iMovie, Indi Cars and Collaborative Mural Art.**

# Public Partnerships

As we continue to meet the needs of families living in economically distressed neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles, Laura Beebe, Vice President of Public Partnerships and Policy led LA's BEST to further strengthen our foundational partnerships with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the City of Los Angeles.

The 2022-23 school year was full of highlights with our public partners. Mayor Karen Bass has been a longtime champion of LA's BEST and demonstrated her commitment by more than doubling City funding in her very first budget. We are deeply grateful for Mayor Bass's leadership and her impact on the communities we serve together.

This funding increase came at a critical moment, helping LA's BEST build capacity as we continued working towards a statewide vision of afterschool for all. Achieving this vision would not be possible without our partners at LAUSD, and alongside Superintendent Alberto Carvalho and the Beyond The Bell Branch, the LA's BEST community is proud to be preparing students to be ready for the world!

The success of LA's BEST relies on our incredible community of supporters. Special thanks to our Advocacy Committee and Chair Peter Hidalgo, as well as everyone who supported our public partnerships this year. We look forward to continuing our work together!



## LA's BEST 2022 – 2023 Annual Report Executive Summary

[Download Here \(pdf\)](#)



Thank you for  
supporting LA's BEST!

LA's BEST 2022-23 Annual Report | Explore. Engage. Expand

Copyright 2023 © LA's BEST 2022 Annual Report



Explore. Engage. Expand.