



City Manager's Office

August 11, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager 

Re: Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department Elementary Afterschool Programs,
2026-2027 School Year

The Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) currently serves 1,450 students with afterschool programming at 9 elementary schools (2 of 11 Elementary sites are run by non-profits). BUSD serves over 150 students per site, yet the demand for afterschool programming still exceeds that number. To support this additional need, the City of Berkeley offers afterschool programming at various locations. These programs have traditionally been made possible by General Fund subsidies and BUSD bus transportation.

Currently, the City's Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department (PRW) offers approximately 364 elementary (TK-5) afterschool program slots at five locations (see table below).

Location	TK-K	1-5	# of Students on Waitlist	# of Students -- no walking or bus transportation
	Filled / Available			
Frances Albrier Center	17/17	62/62	16	8
James Kenney Center	17/17	62/62	28	2
Live Oak Center	17/17	59/62	0	4
Shorebird Nature Center	NA	48/48	6	12
Willard Clubhouse	17/17	63/62	36	5
Total	68/68	294/296	86	31

As of Monday, August 10th, only two slots remain unfilled. Staff have recently confirmed the above waitlist totals, and they are much smaller than previous years. Fewer than 9% of students that have enrolled in a City-sponsored afterschool program (31 of 364 slots), do not have staff-supervised walking or BUSD bus transportation. New this year is a BUSD/City collaborative program that will walk 1st-5th graders from three (3) BUSD elementary schools (Rosa Parks, Emerson, Sylvia Mendez) to two community centers (Willard and James Kenney). This pilot program is limited to schools within approximately a half mile of a community center. This program is currently serving about 22 children and potentially could be expanded in future years.

The need for afterschool programming has grown, and in 2025 PRW expanded afterschool program opportunities by approximately 90 slots by taking advantage of the increased size of the new Willard Clubhouse, BUSD's willingness to help transport to new locations and by using a self-sustaining fee model to open new programs (Shorebird Nature Center and Totland). This year, PRW is offering an additional 30 slots by maximizing capacity at existing sites to offer 364 afterschool slots (68 TK/K and 296 First – Fifth graders).

City Capacity to Expand

The City's capacity to expand is based on three factors:

1. Funding: Any new program needs to be self-sustaining because of the lack of available General Fund resources. This means that program fees need to cover all costs directly related to the program.
2. Indoor-Facility Space: Programs need to have an area where students can stay dry and warm throughout the year.
3. Transportation: While there are a few parents who are willing to transport their children, most need some form of transportation (i.e. BUSD bus transportation or supervised walking) to City locations as City programs are not at school sites.

Last year, the City operated a small program (28 students) at Virginia/McGee Totland for TK/K students and BUSD provided bus transportation from four elementary schools to this location. Initially this year, the City did not offer this program because BUSD had expanded to serve all the needed slots in the TK/K age group, but in the last couple of weeks BUSD had a surge of requests which they cannot fill. As a result, City and BUSD staff are considering reopening the Totland program.

In addition, next school year, the City will be able to add another 40-50 elementary afterschool slots, once the construction project at Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Services Facility (YAP) is complete.

cc: David White, Deputy City Manager
Scott Ferris, Director, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager
Farimah Brown, City Attorney