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### **SEDL Awarded Contract to Support Quality in After-School Programs**

*September 26, 2003 — Austin, Texas* — The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) won a three-year \$9.6 million contract from the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen the content, teaching methods, and retention of the nation's after-school programs.

In partnership with the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing at the University of California, Los Angeles; Mid-Continent Resources for Education and Learning in Aurora, Colo.; the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Ore.; SERVE in Greensboro, N.C.; and WGBH Educational Foundation and Institute for Responsive Education in Boston, SEDL will support program quality among more than 1,600 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which provide after-school programming throughout the United States. SEDL and its partners will assist after-school programs in meeting two main goals: (1) including high-quality, research-based academic content using appropriate teaching and learning methods and (2) attracting and retaining students who participate regularly to benefit from these investments.

“After-school programs need a strong connection to the learning objectives of the school day to successfully increase student achievement,” said SEDL program manager Catherine Jordan, who will direct the project. “This project will identify and validate existing after-school programs that positively impact student achievement.

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It will also create tools, provide training opportunities, and deliver technical assistance to other after-school programs so they can have similar results.”

SEDL operates the National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools, which works to raise national awareness of the importance of creating partnerships among schools, families, and communities for student achievement, especially in reading and mathematics. SEDL also oversees regional after-school training initiatives through its MidSouth and Southeast After-School Regional Advisory Committee, which consists of practitioners and trainers experienced in leading after-school programs and in developing the skills that after-school staff need to build and sustain their efforts.

"This new program will extend SEDL's expertise and resources," said SEDL president and CEO Wesley Hoover. "The project's staff, consultants, and advisors bring to the table some of the most active and respected experts in after-school programming, core academic content issues, and evaluation and research related to the effectiveness of after-school initiatives."

SEDL is an Austin-based nonprofit corporation that operates research, development, and dissemination programs focused on improving school performance; strengthening reading, language, mathematics, and science education; integrating technology into teaching and learning; connecting disability research to practice; and involving family and community in student learning. For more information on how SEDL is promoting parent and community involvement with schools, visit SEDL's back-to-school media kit at <http://www.sedl.org/new/bspkit.html>.