

## STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

### A School Year Like No Other Demands More Resources & Partners: Afterschool & Community Partners Can Help

We are deeply concerned about the impact of social isolation on our children and youth. Children best connect, learn, and thrive when they are with peers and caring adults. Virtual learning is not possible or successful for *all* students. In order for our economy to recover, parents need to be able to work. Children with disabilities are impacted by social isolation and adjustment to virtual learning at a greater level than their non-disabled peers. As school districts plan for learning in the fall, they need to think beyond the school building and school staff to create a learning ecosystem that: follows public health safety protocols; keeps our children engaged and learning; and ensures that parents can work. We will need more space, more time, more educators, and more resources.

Schools need help, and afterschool programs and community-based organizations can answer that call for assistance. Afterschool, “out-of-school,” summer, expanded learning, and community-based programs (local providers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, 4-H, Girls Inc, parks and rec, museums, religious centers, etc.) operate at the nexus of schools, families, and communities. Programs offer opportunities for youth to develop strong, trusting relationships that research shows can help buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma.<sup>[1]</sup> Students who participate regularly in quality afterschool programs show improved engagement indicators such as attendance, behavior, and coursework.<sup>[2]</sup> And programs provide spaces for deeper learning and for youth to use their talents, skills, and interests to innovate and thrive.<sup>[3]</sup>

Community partners will be critical in helping schools address the inequities that have been exacerbated by COVID-19, providing academic, social, and emotional support to those students who need it most. During the pandemic, many afterschool and summer programs helped to lessen these gaps, continuing operations on-site and virtually and providing a foundation for a redesigned learning day. Programs served as bridges between families and schools, providing the cultural and linguistic connections to help families understand new school procedures and access necessary resources in the community including food, health, and economic supports. Faith-based organizations and institutions, public libraries, museums of all types, institutions of higher education, local businesses, and other community-based organizations can all offer creative supports and physical spaces to support the needs of students and families.

This school year, as schools across the country are planning staggered schedules, hybrid learning, and virtual learning to keep children, families, and our communities safe, the hours students are physically “out of school” will increase dramatically compared to previous school years.

We need to work together to tap all the assets in our communities to support children and families, and involve afterschool and community partners in school reopening plans and implementation policies.

Together, we can ensure that *all* our children are learning, safe, and engaged; that parents can return to work; and that communities can rebuild their economic strength during the increased periods of “out-of-school time” in the new learning day. The full [Blueprint for How Afterschool Programs & Community Partners Can Help](#) can be accessed [here](#).

## National Organizations in Support

Afterschool Alliance  
After-School All-Stars  
Alliance for a Healthier Generation  
AlphaBEST Education, Inc.  
America SCORES  
American Alliance of Museums  
American Association for State and Local History  
American Camp Association  
American Institutes for Research  
Americans for the Arts  
America's Promise Alliance  
Association of Art Museum Directors  
Association of Children's Museums  
Association of Science and Technology Centers  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America  
BOOST Collaborative  
Boys and Girls Clubs of America  
CampFire  
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)  
Classroom, Inc  
Coaching Corps  
Coalition for Community Schools  
Committee for Children  
Communities in Schools  
Council for Strong America  
Education Redesign Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education  
Education Trust  
Every Child Matters  
Every Hour Counts  
Excelencia in Education  
First Tee  
Food Research & Action Center  
Foundations, Inc  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Girls Inc.  
Girls on the Run  
Global Family Research Project  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
International Association of Blacks in Dance  
kid-grit  
League of American Orchestras  
Learning Policy Institute  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
National 4-H Council  
National AfterSchool Association  
National Alliance for Public Charter Schools National  
Association of Elementary School Principals National  
Association of Secondary School Principals National  
Girls Collaborative Project  
National League of Cities  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Summer Learning Association  
National Youth Leadership Council  
Outward Bound USA  
Rural School and Community Trust  
Save the Children  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Search Institute  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
STEM Next Opportunity Fund  
Teach for America  
Techbridge  
The Forum for Youth Investment  
United Way Worldwide  
US Chamber of Commerce Foundation  
Write Brain  
YMCA of the USA  
Young Rembrandts  
Youth Service America