



This is Afterschool in Louisiana

In Louisiana, Union Parish School District dedicated a portion of their American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds to provide summer programs for students from 2021 through 2023. The district partnered with the Outdoor Wilderness Center (OWL Center), which has a therapeutic wilderness campus, and the organization has an extensive history of offering experiential education, therapeutic recreation, and character development programming for schools. Thanks to ARP funds, students in kindergarten through 6th grade had the chance to participate in activities like horseback riding, equine-assisted learning, fishing, boating, hiking, biking, ropes courses, archery, and more. Students attended programming three days per week for six weeks during each of the summers.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Louisiana youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Louisiana, for every child in an afterschool program, 4 more would participate if a program were available. And a national fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across Louisiana are accelerating students' growth, supporting students' well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve more than 1.3 million students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

7 IN 10 students in the program demonstrated an **IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

NEARLY HALF of students who were **CHRONICALLY ABSENT** the previous year **IMPROVED THEIR SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

Louisiana students in afterschool programs are:



Getting homework help (79%)



Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (77%)



Working on their reading and writing skills (72%)



Interacting with their peers and building social skills (88%)



Taking part in physical activities (82%)



Building confidence (83%)



90% of Louisiana parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Louisiana parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(78%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(81%)**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Louisiana parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Research spanning several states shows that **EVERY \$1 INVESTED** in afterschool programs **SAVES AT LEAST \$3** by:

- ✓ Increasing kids' earning potential as adults
- ✓ Improving kids' performance at school
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

With strong public support, a national survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and that they want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) programs engage students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth, provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning, and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children. The 2023 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:



MORE THAN 1 IN 2 improved their GPA



7 IN 10 improved their engagement in learning



2 IN 5 saw a decrease in school suspensions

In Louisiana, 27,146 children in 113 communities take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in Louisiana is so great that nearly 2 out of every 5 applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

AFTERSCHOOL WORKS

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. For example, in a 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Education on 21st CCLC programs nationally, Louisiana students attending afterschool programs saw both academic and behavioral improvements. More than half of Louisiana 21st CCLC participants in grades 4 through 8 made gains on their state reading/language arts (53%) and math assessments (52%). While among Louisiana 7th-8th and 10th-12th graders who had a GPA below 3.0 the previous year, more than three-quarters (78%) improved their GPA. A vast majority of students in programs also demonstrated improvements in their engagement in learning and behavior in school, with teachers reporting that 87% of their students attending 21st CCLC programs improved their engagement in learning, 85% of students with an attendance rate below 90% the previous school year improved their school-day attendance, and 79% of students decreased their in-school suspensions compared to the previous year. These findings are similar to a study of the Louisiana Department of Education afterschool programs that found students participating in the programs—which include 21st CCLC programs—had fewer disciplinary issues than matched students not participating in the programs. The study also found that afterschool participants scored higher on math and English language arts and attended more school days than their non-participating peers.

