



**New England After 3PM**

**Spotlight on  
New  
Hampshire**



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# New England After 3 PM: Spotlight on New Hampshire

## Introduction

*Spotlight on New Hampshire* is the fourth installment of the Afterschool Alliance's *New England After 3 PM* series, and the first to focus exclusively on afterschool in New Hampshire. Released last year, the first installment examined afterschool across the region with a special focus on Massachusetts. The second installment, *Spotlight on Connecticut*, explored the need and demand for afterschool in that state, as expressed in surveys of parents and afterschool program providers. The third installment, *Spotlight on Rhode Island*, focused on the need for afterschool as expressed by municipal leaders in the state. (Full reports are available online at [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/NE\\_3pm.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/NE_3pm.cfm).)

"There's only so much schools can accomplish during the school day. Afterschool programs can enhance a student's education and provide additional opportunities for learning."

-- Survey Respondent

In developing *Spotlight on New Hampshire*, the Afterschool Alliance worked with PlusTime New Hampshire in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Education to survey superintendents and public school K-12 principals. The survey, distributed via the Internet in September 2007, asked education leaders their views on children and older youth in their communities and the role afterschool programs can play in supporting student success. The Afterschool Alliance received responses from 214 education leaders, representing more than two out of five of the 500 public education leaders we were able to contact.

In this survey, New Hampshire education leaders voice tremendous support for afterschool. Almost all say that afterschool is an absolute necessity for children and youth, and they see a wide range of benefits for students who participate in afterschool programs. Principals and superintendents throughout the state are concerned that there are not enough resources for afterschool, and almost all report that there are children in their school or district who are currently unable to participate in afterschool programs. These education leaders say that federal and state elected officials are not doing enough to support afterschool, and want to see investments increased.

## Education Leaders in New Hampshire See Significant Benefits to Afterschool

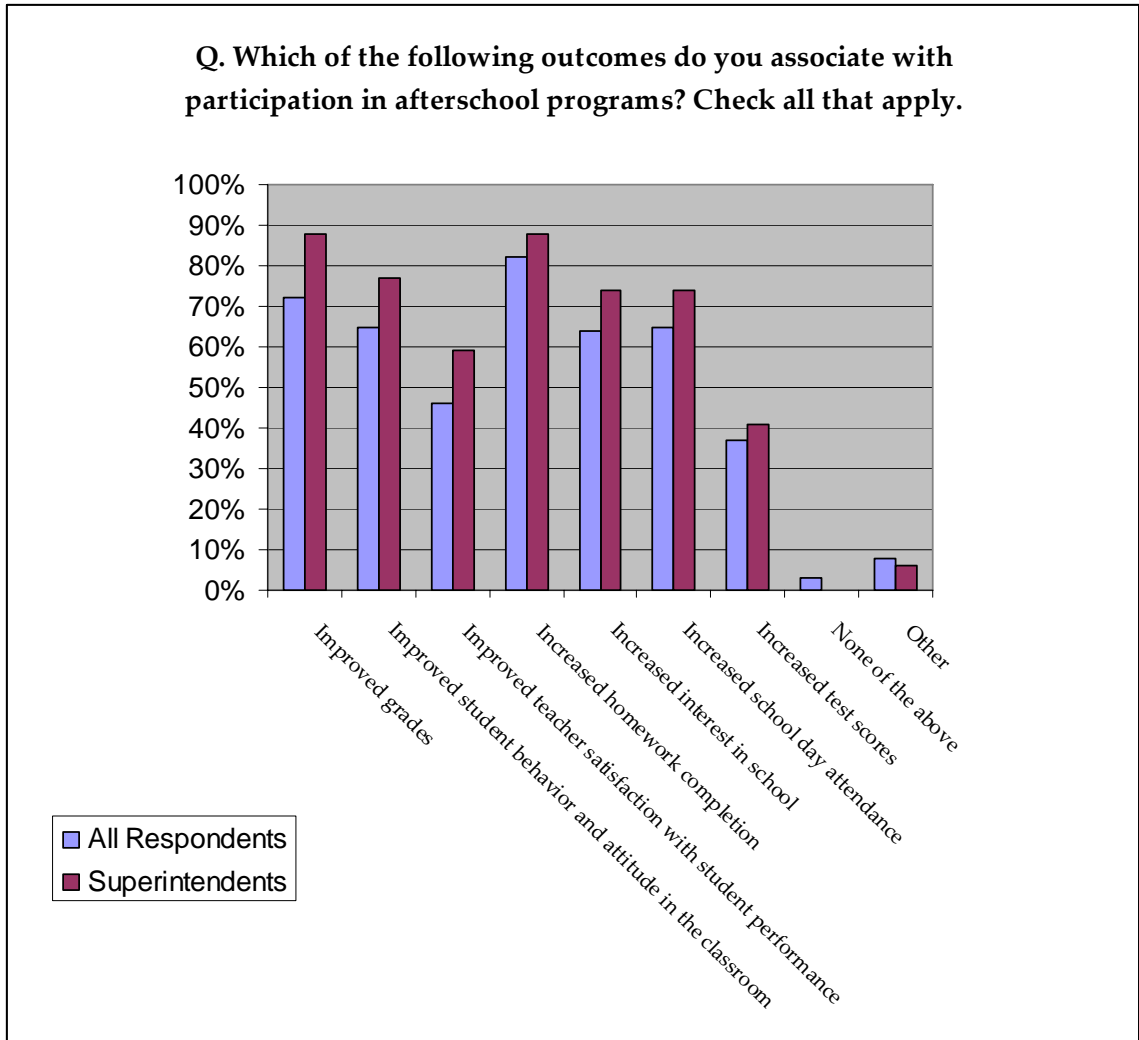
Afterschool experts have long recognized that learning doesn't stop at 3 PM and that the hours after school provide an opportunity to keep children and youth safe, inspire them to learn, and help them get the skills they need to succeed academically, socially and professionally. New Hampshire education leaders unanimously agree. They see academic and behavioral progress that strengthens learning during the regular school day, and they say participation in these programs can help boost student achievement.

🔔 96 percent agree that children in afterschool programs are more likely to attend school regularly, turn in homework on time and improve their grades and test scores compared to similar students who do not participate – and that afterschool students are more likely to be engaged in the classroom and are less likely to drop out. Sixty-one percent strongly agree with this statement and another 35 percent somewhat agree.

🔔 Increased homework completion and improved grades are the two outcomes most education leaders associate with participation in afterschool programs. Eighty-two percent of all respondents – and 88 percent of superintendents – say they associate increased homework completion with participation in afterschool programs. Seventy-two percent of all respondents – and 88 percent of superintendents – say they associate improved grades with participation in afterschool programs. Almost two in three respondents (65 percent) say they associate improved student behavior and attitude in the classroom, increased interest in school (64 percent), and increased school day attendance (65 percent) with participation in afterschool programs.


*"I can't tell you how proud we are in New Hampshire of the great work the Department of Education has done in the area of afterschool initiatives. They've done a great job looking at ways to make sure those programs are focused on skills and readiness – the kinds of skills that translate into better achievement in the classroom."*

**-- U.S. Senator John Sununu  
Breakfast of Champions, April 24, 2007**



## New Hampshire Education Leaders Welcome Afterschool Programs in Their Schools and Communities

New Hampshire education leaders recognize that kids need access to resources outside of the regular school day that will help them feel more connected to the school so they will attend more regularly, stay in school and graduate. Afterschool programs expose children and youth to new experiences, different learning and teaching styles, and a choice of hands-on academic and enrichment activities. New Hampshire education leaders want their students to have access to afterschool opportunities.

 Ninety-six percent agree that afterschool programs are an **absolute necessity** in their school and/or community. Sixty-five percent strongly agree and 31 percent somewhat agree.

🔔 Ninety-four percent of New Hampshire education leaders say there are students in their school or school district who would benefit from participating in an afterschool program who do not currently participate.

🔔 Seven in ten education leaders say their school or school district offers an afterschool program. Of those who do not have an afterschool program available, 84 percent say that they would like to have an afterschool program available at their school or in their school district.

*"Afterschool programs are terribly important, since we know that between the hours of 2 PM and 6 PM many of our youth are not supervised and do not always make good choices."*

-- Survey Respondent

## Education Leaders Agree: New Hampshire Needs Greater Investment in Afterschool

Education leaders in New Hampshire value their afterschool programs and welcome the opportunity to provide more learning opportunities for children and youth. However, lack of resources is an obstacle.

🔔 Seventy-three percent of respondents say that they do not have enough resources to run afterschool programs. Only one-quarter report having enough resources to run their programs.

🔔 Of those who do not have an afterschool program available in their school or school district, 38 percent say that lack of resources or sufficient grant opportunities to support afterschool programs are the biggest barriers.

🔔 More than half of respondents (58 percent) who say there are students in their school or school district who would benefit from participating in an afterschool program but are not in one cite lack of transportation home from the program as the top barrier preventing kids from participating.

New Hampshire education leaders need support from state and federal officials to meet the demand for afterschool programs. According to a 2006 national poll, 72 percent of voters think that newly elected officials in Congress should increase funding for afterschool programs and 73 percent want their newly elected state and local leaders to increase funding for programs.<sup>1</sup> Education leaders in New Hampshire also want afterschool opportunities to be a higher priority in the federal and state budgets.

- 🔔 Seven in ten New Hampshire education leaders say the federal government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs in their communities. Nine in ten (91 percent) superintendents say that the federal government is not doing all it should to meet the need.
- 🔔 Sixty-four percent of respondents say the New Hampshire state government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs in their communities. Almost eight in ten superintendents (79 percent) say the New Hampshire state government is not doing all it should to meet the need.
- 🔔 Nearly three-quarters of all respondents say they would be *very* concerned if existing programs had to close their doors. Another 15 percent say they would be concerned.

## Afterschool Viewed as Key for Helping Older Youth Succeed

As the nation struggles to improve achievement for high school students and better prepare them for college and the 21st century workforce, many schools and education systems are looking to afterschool programs to help meet these needs. Each year, 24 percent of New Hampshire youth – nearly 4,000 students – do not graduate with their peers.<sup>ii</sup> This survey finds that New Hampshire education leaders, like others across the country, see afterschool programs as a valuable tool in helping older youth succeed.

*"Afterschool programs are extremely important for older youth! Quite often they are the only chance our at-risk students have to prove themselves as 'worthy' to the community. Often these programs help with individuals' self confidence."*

*"Older students still need a connection. Afterschool programs can engage students and make those connections for youth to stay in school and be successful."*

-- Survey Respondents

- 🔔 Nearly all respondents (99.5 percent) say it is important for older youth to have a safe haven and a coordinated offering of enriching activities available to them after school. Two in three say it is very important.
- 🔔 New Hampshire education leaders cite increased homework completion as the outcome most commonly associated with older youth participating in afterschool

programs. Improved grades and school day attendance are also commonly cited benefits of participation.

- 🔔 When asked to think about what afterschool offerings are of greatest benefit to older youth, respondents report academic support, including tutoring and homework help, followed closely by alternative learning/credit attainment and recovery. Recreational sports/activities and development of personal, social and life skills also rank highly.

It stands to reason that education leaders in New Hampshire link afterschool participation to improved school outcomes for older youth. The New Hampshire Expanded Learning Opportunities Leadership Team -- a group comprised of representatives from the New Hampshire Department of Education, the Office of the Governor, PlusTime New Hampshire, the State Senate, and the State House of Representatives – has been working to improve afterschool and summer learning opportunities for students by better integrating afterschool and summer learning into education systems throughout the state. In particular, they are focusing on providing real world learning in the hours after school as a way to engage high school students.

In this survey, state education leaders say clearly that they see afterschool programs as a way to tie education – and specifically, credit recovery and attainment – to student interests and learning styles. Most say that credit attainment and recovery through afterschool programs has advantages over the school day, including the ability to better engage students (78 percent) and to personalize learning (60 percent). Keeping kids engaged and connected to learning are two of the primary strategies commonly proposed for preventing dropouts.

Of course, there are barriers to offering credit attainment and recovery in the hours after school. Respondents report a lack of established policies (44 percent) and the lack of extended learning opportunities in the community (44 percent) as the top barriers preventing school systems from offering credit attainment and recovery after school. Establishing policies is a task that the New Hampshire Expanded Learning Opportunities Team can likely tackle, but making sure that more afterschool programs are available to offer credit attainment and recovery will take all New Hampshire stakeholders working together.

## Education Leaders Strongly Support Afterschool for All

Examining the findings from this survey in the context of other existing research demonstrates that New Hampshire's education leaders are right to be concerned about the availability of afterschool programs in the state. According to *America After 3 PM*, the Afterschool Alliance's groundbreaking household survey of Americans' views on afterschool released in 2004, more than 50,000 New Hampshire youth (23 percent) are responsible for taking care of themselves in the hours after school. These hours are the most dangerous for youth, because they are when they are most likely to be perpetrators or victims of crime, or to engage in drinking, drug use or sexual activity. Afterschool programs not only keep kids away from these dangerous activities, but also engage them in enrichment and learning opportunities and connect them with caring adults and mentors.

Public support for afterschool programs is overwhelming. A November 2006 poll commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance found that eight in ten Americans believe there should be some type of organized activity or safe place for children and teens to go after the school day that gives them opportunities to learn. Among New Hampshire voters, 81 percent say that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity (Afterschool Poll, New Hampshire, 2004). Nationally, more than seven in ten voters want elected officials at all levels -- federal, state and local -- to increase funding for afterschool.

This survey shows that New Hampshire education leaders agree that federal and state officials are not doing enough to support afterschool. In fact, the federal investment in afterschool has been eroding for several years. 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool, has been cut by \$20 million since 2002 and New Hampshire has felt the sting of this cut. In 2007, the New Hampshire Department of Education was able to fund only six new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers.

It is clear that voters, parents and education leaders across New Hampshire want afterschool programs to be available for all students who want and need them, including the 63,000 children and youth in New Hampshire who would be likely to participate in an afterschool program if one were available to them.

*Afterschool for All New Hampshire* is a partnership with PlusTime New Hampshire and the Afterschool Alliance to bring together all New Hampshire residents who believe that young people deserve positive, enriching opportunities after school and in the summer. The strength of this important state effort lies in the diversity and number of partners, among them governors, mayors, police chiefs, prosecutors, educators, policymakers, youth advocates, faith-based organizations, corporate leaders, afterschool providers, and others. To date, more than 150 partners in New Hampshire have pledged their support including Chief of Police Timothy F. Hefferan, Chief of Police John A. Jaskolka, State



Representative Eileen C Flockhart, State Representative Linda J McCarthy, State Representative Martha McLeod, State Representative Peter J O'Keefe, and the New Hampshire Recreation & Park Association.

*Spotlight on New Hampshire* shows that superintendents and principals believe in the value of afterschool and see a real need for more such programs for children, youth and families. The voices of these education leaders are a powerful addition to the chorus of voices, across New Hampshire, New England and the country, who are calling for afterschool for all.



## Acknowledgments

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<sup>i</sup> Afterschool Alliance/Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates, Inc. (2006). *Election Eve Poll on Voters' Attitudes on Afterschool*. Retrieved October 4, 2007, from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll\\_reports.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/poll_reports.cfm)

<sup>ii</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. (2007). *Understanding High School Graduation Rates in New Hampshire*. Retrieved October 4, 2007, from [http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/wcwc/NewHampshire\\_wc.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/wcwc/NewHampshire_wc.pdf)