

Expanding learning and supports for an equitable recovery

This is Afterschool in Massachusetts



 Afterschool Alliance April 2021

In Massachusetts, afterschool programs provide expanded learning opportunities to 154,792 students and are a lifeline for working families. In Massachusetts, 85% of parents report that all young people deserve access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Yet, too many kids in Massachusetts are being left out. In fact, **for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate if a program were available.**

Helping young people learn, grow, and thrive

Students in afterschool programs in Massachusetts are:

-  Interacting with peers and building social skills **86%**
-  Getting homework help **70%**
-  Taking part in physical activities **73%**

A 2020 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education evaluation of Massachusetts' 21st CCLC programs found that, based on teacher reports, a majority of program participants improved their social and emotional skills and academic behaviors, including relationships with adults (68%), critical thinking (62%), leadership skills (59%), engagement in learning (58%), perseverance (55%), and communication skills (54%). Additionally, historically underserved students made strong gains, with economically disadvantaged program participants making greater statistically significant gains in engagement in learning than their more advantaged peers. Black students showed the most growth in engagement in learning compared to their white and Hispanic peers, rising from the lowest average score at the start of the year to the highest score by the end of the year.

Parents in Massachusetts agree that afterschool programs:

-  Provide opportunities to build life skills **80%**
-  Get kids excited about learning **72%**
-  Reduce the likelihood that youth will use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors **73%**

Call and response: Afterschool programs stepping up during the pandemic

From the outset of the pandemic, afterschool programs have adapted and expanded their services to best meet the needs of the children and families they serve. Girls, Inc. of Taunton launched programming online via Zoom, which includes STEM education, yoga and meditation, fitness, nutrition, art, financial literacy, and leadership. To address the unique challenges students face during the pandemic, they provided virtual activities on confidence, cyberbullying, safety, and emotional health. Breakthrough Greater Boston hosted weekly community Zoom calls for their middle and high school students, teachers and staff and also connected with students via one-on-one calls to make sure they had educational resources, food, and technology.

A 2021 national survey of afterschool providers finds programs continue to provide:

Academic enrichment	94%
Time to interact with peers	86%
Physical activity	81%
Snacks or meals	77%
Check-ins with student and families	32%
In-person services during virtual school days*	24%

Looking toward the summer, **79%** of providers will be offering summer programming.

**Among program providers that report that they are offering in-person services.*

21st Century Community Learning Centers

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools, engaging students in hands-on learning activities aimed at supporting their academic growth. They provide a variety of enrichment activities to complement school-day learning and offer educational and support services to the families of participating children.

In Massachusetts, more than 16,000 children in 140 communities take part in a Community Learning Center.

21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding source that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programs is so great in Massachusetts that 3 out of every 10 applications cannot be funded.

The 2020 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:



Nearly half improved their math (**48%**) and English grades (**48%**)



69% improved homework completion and class participation



62% improved their behavior

A lifeline for working families

A national survey of parents in the fall of 2020 found that as the pandemic continued to disrupt school schedules, most parents were concerned about their child's social and emotional well-being and connection to peers, as well as their own ability to continue to provide learning support and/or care for their child as virtual school and distance learning extends into 2021.

Based on the 2020 America After 3PM household survey, parents in Massachusetts agree that afterschool programs:

- Build positive relationships between children and adults **81%**
- Keep kids safe and out of trouble **77%**
- Help working parents keep their jobs **80%**
- Provide working parents peace of mind **86%**

A smart investment

Research spanning several states shows that every \$1 invested in afterschool programs saves at least \$3 by:



- 1 Increasing kids' earning potential
- 2 Improving kids' performance at school
- 3 Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

Additionally, Community Learning Centers leverage diverse partners to meet community needs. A typical program receives \$67,000 from partners to supplement its federal funding. Nationwide, partner contributions totaled more than \$1 billion between 2006 and 2010.

Parents in Massachusetts are behind public investment in afterschool programs

88% of parents favor public funding of afterschool programs to expand opportunities for kids in underserved communities.



Support is strong and bipartisan



94% Democrats



89% Independents



82% Republicans