



# This is Afterschool in Massachusetts



Afterschool Alliance

Throughout the pandemic, afterschool and summer programs adapted and expanded services to meet the needs of children and families. They are vital partners today in supporting students' well-being and academic growth. Yet, too many kids in Massachusetts are being left out. Prior to the pandemic, a survey of Massachusetts parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, **3 more would participate if a program were available**. These programs provide safe and supportive spaces to keep young people engaged in learning during a difficult and trying time. So it comes as no surprise that in a national fall 2020 survey, 75% of parents agreed that the experience of the pandemic made them appreciate teachers and afterschool providers more than ever before.

## Accelerating students' learning and growth

Students in afterschool programs in Massachusetts are:



Getting homework help – **70%**



Interacting with their peers and building social skills – **86%**



Taking part in STEM learning opportunities – **77%**

## Promoting healthy futures

Parents in Massachusetts agree that afterschool programs are helping young people to:



Learn life skills – **80%**



Be physically active – **85%**



Build positive relationships with caring adults and mentors – **81%**



Access nutritious foods – **66%**



Build confidence – **81%**



Stay safe and out of trouble – **77%**

A 2020 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education evaluation of Massachusetts' 21<sup>st</sup> 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, it was found that 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, and Black students showing 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.

## American Rescue Plan Funding Helping Increase Access to Afterschool and Summer Programs During the Pandemic

Over the past two years, an overwhelming majority of afterschool and summer program providers have been concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Costs associated with recruiting and retaining staff, instituting new COVID-19 health and safety protocols, and adding program space to allow for social distancing are a few of the added expenses afterschool and summer programs faced through the pandemic. Funds from American Rescue Plan present a tremendous opportunity to help afterschool and summer programs support the children and families in their communities. With \$70 million of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, Massachusetts is expanding evidence-based programming that builds on existing summer programming. Funds were awarded to school districts and community-based organizations to offer summer learning and recreational programs "that will help students, who have been impacted by a year of remote and hybrid learning, grow academically and socially." For example, \$3 million will go toward supporting camps and community organizations to expand education enrichment in their summer programs.



## Supporting working families

Parents in Massachusetts agree that afterschool:



Helps working parents keep their jobs – **80%**



Helps parents build connections to their child's school day education – **64%**



Provides 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:



Increasing kids' earning potential as adults



Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency



Improving kids' performance at school

## Massachusetts parents want investment in afterschool and summer programs

The overwhelming majority of parents in Massachusetts favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs:

**88%**

favor public funding for afterschool opportunities

**89%**

favor public funding for summer learning opportunities

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) are local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools. These 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 2021 Department of Education annual performance report of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC found that among regular participants:

**1 in 2**

improved their language arts or math grades

**7 in 10**

improved their homework completion and class participation

MORE THAN

**3 in 5**

improved their behavior in class

In Massachusetts, **more than 16,000 children in 125 communities** take part in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center.

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs.

Demand for programming in Massachusetts is so great that **nearly 3 out of every 10** applications were not funded during the most recent competition.

## Transforming Lives

"During the pandemic, it was challenging because I was social distancing and not doing certain activities. But, my 21<sup>st</sup> Century [Community Learning Center] program has been a place where I've been able to meet new friends, communicate, and be social with others. I wasn't a talker, but now I am! The mentors in my program also helped me stay on top of my work and encouraged me. Without my program, I wouldn't have the grades I do now, and I wouldn't be as social as I am. I wouldn't be able to do a lot of things without my program."

**Kyla Anderson**

High school student attending a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center afterschool program

