

# This is Afterschool in North Dakota



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 North Dakota are being left out. Prior to the pandemic, a survey of North Dakota parents found that for every child in an afterschool program, **2 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 North Dakota are:



Getting homework help – **70%**



Interacting with their peers and building social skills – **100%**



Taking part in STEM learning opportunities – **71%**

## Promoting healthy futures

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



Learn life skills – **79%**



Be physically active – **86%**



Build positive relationships with caring adults and mentors – **84%**



Access nutritious foods – **66%**



Build confidence – **79%**



Stay safe and out of trouble – **75%**

A 2021 evaluation of North Dakota's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs by North Dakota State University showed academic and behavioral gains for students. According to teacher surveys, 91% of participants improved in homework completion and class participation and 86% of participants' behavior improved. More than 9 in 10 students surveyed shared that they felt safe in their program (96%) and they have friends at their program (95%). Most parents surveyed (96%) agreed that they would refer a friend or relative's child to their program.

## 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. For example, with a \$182,000 grant from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund), the Grand Forks School District opened the Mentor Center in January 2021 on the campus of the University of North Dakota. With space donated by the university, GEER funds went toward the student support center's ability to provide academic support; enrichment activities, such as art, music, and STEM learning opportunities; and access to mental health professionals for middle and high school students in the district. When considering how to invest American Rescue Plan funds, the center was selected as a priority area in a district survey of staff, parents, students, and community members, with the district investing \$450,000 toward the center for the FY2021-22 school year to cover the cost of transportation, supplies, and staffing.



Photo credit: Allison Shelley/The Verbatim Agency for EDCUimages




## Supporting working families

Parents in North Dakota agree that afterschool:

-  Helps working parents keep their jobs – **86%**
-  Helps parents build connections to their child's school day education – **57%**
-  Provides working parents peace of mind – **88%**

## 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

## North Dakota parents want investment in afterschool and summer programs

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

**84%**

favor public funding for afterschool opportunities

**81%**

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 North Dakota, **11,788 children in 87 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 North Dakota is so great that **2 out of every 5** 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

