



News Release
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New Survey: NH Education Leaders See Urgent Need for More Afterschool Programs, Greater State & Federal Support

Older Youth Seen Benefiting From Afterschool

Manchester, NH – A new survey finds that an overwhelming majority of New Hampshire’s education leaders say that afterschool programs benefit students in their communities, and that they are an absolute necessity for children and youth. But nearly all these leaders say that students in their schools or districts are unable to participate because afterschool programs are not available, and they want the state and federal governments to increase their investment in afterschool.

The online survey of New Hampshire’s superintendents and public school K – 12 principals was released today by the Afterschool Alliance, PlusTime New Hampshire and the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. *Spotlight on New Hampshire* is the fourth installment in the Afterschool Alliance’s *New England After 3 PM* series, which explores the status of afterschool across New England. With help from the state Department of Education, the Alliance drew 214 responses from the 500 New Hampshire education leaders surveyed in September.

“This survey demonstrates that New Hampshire education leaders see tremendous value in afterschool programs and know that children and youth lose critical opportunities to learn and grow when programs are not available,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “We need to support more afterschool programs, which keep kids safe, inspire them to learn and help working families. As we celebrate *Lights On Afterschool* around the country this week, this survey underscores the work still to be done to make quality afterschool available to all in New Hampshire.”

“Schools and the people who work in them are doing noble work to support the learning of students they serve. To fully honor those efforts and to enhance student success, we need to go further in rethinking where, with whom and when we educate our youth,” said Nicholas C. Donohue, President and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. “The challenge of preparing students to become well-rounded and successful citizens demands this. *New England After 3PM* points out that New Hampshire education leaders are linking afterschool participation to improved school outcomes for older youth. It is for this and other reasons why I am pleased and proud to announce a planning grant from the NMEF to a public/private partnership between the state, PlusTime NH and others. This grant is meant to support the development of Extended Learning Opportunities that are rigorous, build on students’ interests and contribute to their ability to graduate. It is an exciting and important venture for the Foundation.”

Nearly all respondents in the new survey (99.5 percent) say it is important for older youth to have a safe haven and a coordinated offering of enriching activities after school. Academic support and alternative learning/credit attainment and recovery are seen as the most important benefits afterschool provides to older youth. Education leaders also rank recreational sports/activities and the chance to develop personal, social and life skills highly for older youth.

Among the other findings in the new survey of New Hampshire superintendents and principals:

- 96 percent of state education leaders 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 than similar students not in afterschool programs – and that afterschool students are more likely to be engaged in the classroom and less likely to drop out.
- While seven in ten respondents say their school or school district offers an afterschool program, 94 percent say there are students in their school or school district who would benefit from participating in an afterschool program but do not currently participate.
- Of those who do *not* have an afterschool program available in their school or school district, 38 percent of state education leaders say lack of resources or sufficient grant opportunities to support afterschool programs are the biggest barriers.
- More than half of respondents (58 percent) who say students in their school or district who would benefit from an afterschool program are not in one cite the lack of transportation home as the top barrier that prevents kids from participating.
- Seven in ten say the federal government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs in their communities. Sixty-four percent say their state government is not doing all it should to meet the need for afterschool programs in their communities.

“This study gives us real hope that we can achieve afterschool for all children and families who need it in New Hampshire,” said PlusTime New Hampshire Executive Director Cynthia Billings. “The education leaders who pay close attention to what students need recognize that afterschool programs are a solution. They prepare students of all ages to stay in school and to succeed after they graduate. Now we need to translate that awareness into action for our kids and our communities.”

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.

Based in Quincy, Massachusetts, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation is the largest philanthropy in New England that focuses exclusively on promoting access, quality and effectiveness of education. Established in 1998, the Foundation provides grants and other support to education programs in New England that are designed to improve low-income and underserved students’ academic achievement and access to higher education. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded approximately \$72 million in grants and support to education programs in the region. For more information, visit www.nmefdn.org.

PlusTime NH is a statewide non-profit organization that provides the guidance, leadership, and support essential to create, improve, and sustain afterschool programs in New Hampshire communities. www.plustime.org.