



This is Afterschool in Alaska

In May 2022, Camp Fire Alaska received nearly \$670,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds to continue supporting three Title I schools in Anchorage during both the before-school and afterschool hours through the Learning Pods Program. First started as a free program for Anchorage students in 2020 when schools were entirely virtual, the program currently operates five days a week during the school year, serving students in need of additional supports, including but not limited to youth experiencing homelessness, English-language learners, and youth adversely impacted by learning loss. More than 150 students have taken part in the Learning Pods Program, participating in structured STEM and cultural activities while building their life skills, such as how to communicate effectively and learning about responsible decision-making and managing stress and emotions. By the end of 2023, 75% of students demonstrated an understanding and use of critical life skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Alaska youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Alaska, for every child in an afterschool program, 3 more would participate if a program were available. And a national fall 2023 survey of afterschool program providers found that nearly 3 in 4 are concerned about their program's long-term funding and future. Afterschool and summer programs across Alaska are accelerating students' growth, supporting students' well-being, and helping working families. To keep their doors open, these programs need additional investments at the local, state, and federal levels.

IMPROVING SCHOOL-DAY ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM







A 2023 U.S. Department of Education report on 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC)—local before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs that serve more than 1.3 million students attending high-poverty, low-performing schools—found that:

7 IN 10 students in the program demonstrated an **IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

NEARLY HALF of students who were **CHRONICALLY ABSENT** the previous year **IMPROVED THEIR SCHOOL-DAY ATTENDANCE**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ACCELERATE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC GROWTH AND SUPPORT THEIR WELL-BEING

Alaska students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (69%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (86%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (76%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (93%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (89%)
-  Building confidence (93%)



97% of Alaska parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Alaska parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(81%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(86%)**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Alaska parents favor public funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.



Research spanning several states shows that **EVERY \$1 INVESTED** in afterschool programs **SAVES AT LEAST \$3** by:

- ✓ Increasing kids' earning potential as adults
- ✓ Improving kids' performance at school
- ✓ Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency

With strong public support, a national survey found that approximately 8 in 10 registered voters said that afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for their community (79%) and that they want their federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for programs (80%).

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) 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 2023 Department of Education annual performance report of 21st CCLC found that among regular participants:



MORE THAN 1 IN 2 improved their GPA



7 IN 10 improved their engagement in learning



2 IN 5 saw a decrease in school suspensions

In Alaska, 3,510 children in 53 communities take part in a 21st Century Community Learning Center. 21st CCLC grants are the only dedicated federal funding sources that support local communities' afterschool and summer programs. Demand for programming in Alaska is so great that nearly 1 out of every 3 applications was not funded during the most recent competition.

AFTERSCHOOL WORKS

Studies have shown that students regularly participating in quality afterschool programs attend school more often, are more engaged in school, get better grades, and are more likely to be promoted to the next grade. For example, a 2020 evaluation of Alaska's 21st CCLC programs by Education Northwest found that students who participated more regularly in programs saw greater academic and behavioral gains. Teachers surveyed reported that an overwhelming majority of students attending the programs for at least 60 days improved their academic performance (74%), class participation (73%), and class behavior (60%), as well as formed relationships with adults (73%) and worked collaboratively with peers (71%). Respondents shared that students who attended programs for more than 90 days made the most significant improvements over the year.

