



# This is Afterschool in Arizona

In Arizona, receiving \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley braided these funds with an additional \$5 million in philanthropic dollars to partner with Terros Health and launch their Whole Child Approach program in the fall of 2022. Focused on trauma-informed care, mindfulness, and wellness, behavioral health coaches were integrated into club programming, from developing activities that combined wellness with art to leading mindfulness sessions where students practiced regulating their emotions to help them get ready for the day. One club parent stated that her daughter, "...had benefited so much... tak[ing] up a newfound interest in journaling and drawing, which has helped with deciphering and conveying her emotions and daily interactions with family and peers." Additionally, wellness coaches work with club staff on classroom management training, promoting positive behavior, and de-escalation training. Over the course of two years, the program expanded to a high of 19 clubs, reaching more than 2,500 students. An external evaluation of the program reported that in the first year, approximately three dozen club staff were trained in areas including adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed care, and more than 300 wellness sessions were provided.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Arizona youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Arizona, 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 Arizona 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> 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

Arizona students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (74%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (73%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (68%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (92%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (87%)
-  Building confidence (84%)



**91%** of Arizona parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Arizona parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(82%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(81%)**

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Arizona 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%).

## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Arizona, 55,422 children in 202 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 Arizona is so great that approximately 1 out of every 5 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 2023 evaluation by the Arizona Department of Education found that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants showed growth in academics and attendance during the school day. Based on available data for students in grades 4 through 8, evaluators found that the higher the participation in the program, the greater the positive effect on math assessment scores among 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in particular and English language arts assessment scores for 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Although not statically significant, other grades did see gains, largely performing better than their non-participating peers. Additionally, participants in 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade had higher school-day attendance rates compared to their peers who were not a part of programming, with increased program participation also associated with greater improvement in school-day attendance over non-participants.

