



This is Afterschool in Colorado

In Colorado, Project Launch, a full-day summer program for students in kindergarten through 5th grade, received \$2 million from the Colorado Department of Education’s American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant Program. The funding helped Project Launch expand programming from only the St. Vrain Valley district to four rural school districts: Montezuma-Cortez, Cheraw, Las Animas, and Estes Park. The free four-week summer program served more than 750 students and provided structured time for literacy and language arts, STEM, music, and physical activities, and has resulted in positive impacts on students’ reading ability in early assessments. For example, by the end of the summer program in 2021, students from Las Animas increased their ability to break words into their individual sounds by 14%, and by the end of the 2022 summer, this increased to 57%.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Colorado youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Colorado, for every child in an afterschool program, 5 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 Colorado 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

Colorado students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help **(70%)**
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities **(69%)**
-  Working on their reading and writing skills **(63%)**
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills **(97%)**
-  Taking part in physical activities **(82%)**
-  Building confidence **(79%)**



92% of Colorado parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Colorado 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 Colorado 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 Colorado, 20,829 children in 123 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 Colorado is so great that more than 2 out of every 3 applications were 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 of Colorado's 21st CCLC programs by Catherine Roller White Consulting found that, based on teachers surveyed, students in need of improvement in the areas of school engagement, homework completion, and getting along with their peers saw gains, with students attending programs more regularly seeing greater improvements. For example, 48% of students attending 21st CCLC programs fewer than 120 hours improved their motivation in class and 41% improved their classroom behavior. This increased by 5 and 7 percentage points among students who attended 120 hours or more (53% and 48%, respectively). Additionally, a majority of students (57%) who had a GPA below 3.0 the previous year saw an improvement and more than 2 in 3 students (68%) who had an attendance rate at or below 90% the previous year improved their school-day attendance.

