



# This is Afterschool in Mississippi

In rural Forrest, Mississippi, thanks to \$1,500,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) through the ARP Learn More grant, Scientific Research (SR1) has provided even more supports to young people in grades K-12. Bringing afterschool and summer programs to a large Hispanic population in Forrest, the organization used funds to provide literacy and math support, lessons in foundational skills like character building and standardized test preparation, and field trips to the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Millsaps College, and Mississippi University. All of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who participated in SR1 passed the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ELA exam, also known as the “reading gate test,” and advanced to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many Mississippi youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In Mississippi, 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 Mississippi 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

Mississippi students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (79%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (69%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (73%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (84%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (79%)
-  Building confidence (79%)



**88%** of Mississippi parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Mississippi parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs (**77%**)



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe (**76%**)

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Mississippi 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 Mississippi, 9,920 children in 139 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 Mississippi is so great that approximately 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, in a 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Education on 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs nationally, Mississippi students saw both academic and behavioral improvements. Based on teachers surveyed, nearly 8 in 10 Mississippi 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants (78%) improved their engagement in learning, and a majority improved their state assessment scores and GPAs. More than 2 in 3 students in grades 4 through 8 demonstrated growth on their reading/language arts (67%) and math state assessments (67%), and 65% of 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students who had a GPA lower than 3.0 the previous school year improved their average. Additionally, among students who had an attendance rate at or below 90% the previous school year, 68% demonstrated an improved attendance rate, and 85% of students decreased their in-school suspensions compared to the previous year. These findings are similar to a 2018 evaluation by Align Education LLC of Mississippi's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs that found, based on teacher reports, majorities of regular program participants improved their math (76%) and their reading/language arts grades (75%).

