



# This is Afterschool in North Dakota

North Dakota's Gateway to Science received a \$20,000 Summer Academic Enrichment Grant from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, which supported an 11-week summer camp for students entering into grades 1-5 and a three-week summer camp for students entering into grades 6-9. The grant allowed North Dakota's Gateway to Science to increase the number of students served to more than 250—an increase of 142% from 2020—and provide a range of hands-on STEM learning opportunities for young people, including learning about fiber optics, flight simulation, coding, constellations, and more. The goals of the summer camp were to increase young peoples' confidence in their STEM abilities and increase their interest in pursuing future STEM opportunities by providing engaging, fun STEM learning experiences. By week 11 of the summer camp, 100% of student campers said that their interest in science had grown and half said that their interest in math had grown. One parent said of their child's experience in the camp, "[My son] enjoyed every minute and had so much to tell me what I picked him up each day. I can tell he learned a lot."

However, as American Rescue Plan and other pandemic relief funding expires, many North Dakota youth will lose their programs—and families and communities will lose essential supports—if action is not taken. In North Dakota, for every child in an afterschool program, 2 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 North Dakota 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

North Dakota students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help **(70%)**
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities **(71%)**
-  Working on their reading and writing skills **(68%)**
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills **(100%)**
-  Taking part in physical activities **(86%)**
-  Building confidence **(79%)**



**94%** of North Dakota parents are satisfied with their child's afterschool program

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

North Dakota parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(86%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(88%)**

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of North Dakota 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 North Dakota, 8,447 children in 107 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 North Dakota is so great that 1 out of every 10 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 2022 evaluation of North Dakota 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs by North Dakota State University found that teachers, students, and parents were in agreement that programs supported students' academic growth and overall well-being. Teachers surveyed agreed that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are beneficial to students and families (93%) and address students' academic (67%) and behavioral needs (62%). Similarly, students in the program said that the activities in the program help them learn new things (88%) and do better in reading (78%) and math (72%). More than 8 in 10 students (83%) said that they like school better because they go to their afterschool program. Parents also valued the supports programs provided their children, with an overwhelming majority reporting that the program offers a variety of activities to help their children learn (86%), has staff that have warm and positive relationships with students (91%), and has helped their child's attitude toward school improve (70%). Nearly all parents (96%) would refer a friend or relative's child to the program. Moreover, evaluators found that students in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs improved at rates higher than their non-participating peers in the areas of school-day attendance (71% vs. 58%), engagement in learning (71% vs. 58%), and a decrease in in-school suspensions (95% vs. 84%).

