



This is Afterschool in New Jersey

In New Jersey’s East Orange School District, American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds allowed the district to run a full-day, four-week summer 2021 program for its students. The programs included academic support, enrichment, and field trips to places such as the Liberty Science Center. Positive feedback on the summer programs led the district to use additional ARP funds to expand its afterschool program, growing it from one site serving 150 students to seven sites serving more than 1,100 kindergarten through 5th grade students across the district, providing academic enrichment, STEM learning opportunities, meals, and social and emotional support at no cost to parents. Nearly 30% of students who attended the afterschool program for 30 days or more saw academic gains in literacy and math, and 90% saw a reduction in discipline referrals. As stated by a district leader, “afterschool programming has become a part of the fiber of the district.”

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

New Jersey students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help **(89%)**
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities **(77%)**
-  Working on their reading and writing skills **(75%)**
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills **(82%)**
-  Taking part in physical activities **(86%)**
-  Building confidence **(85%)**



97% of New Jersey parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

New Jersey 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 New Jersey 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 New Jersey, 12,779 children in 149 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 New Jersey 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 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Education on 21st CCLC programs nationally included findings that showed that New Jersey students in the program became more engaged in learning and made academic and behavioral gains. Based on teachers surveyed, 77% of New Jersey 21st CCLC participants in grades 1 through 5 improved their engagement in learning and 63% of 1st through 12th grade students with an attendance rate below 90% the previous school year improved their school-day attendance. A majority of New Jersey 21st CCLC participants in grades 7-8 and 10-12 who had a GPA below 3.0 the previous year improved their GPA (58%), and approximately 2 in 3 students in grades 4 through 8 demonstrated growth on the state's reading/language arts (66%) and math assessments (64%). Students in programs also demonstrated improvements in their behavior in school, with more than 2 in 3 students (68%) decreasing their in-school suspensions compared to the previous year. Additionally, a 2019 evaluation of New Jersey's 21st CCLC afterschool programs by the American Institutes for Research found that students attending programs at high levels had lower unexcused school-day absences compared to non-attendees, and a 2022 report found that an overwhelming majority of students reported that the program helped them learn new things (81%) and get better at something (79%).

