



# This is Afterschool in South Carolina

In South Carolina, the Finklea Family After School Team (FFAST)—an intergenerational learning program that supports rural families in the areas of adult education, youth services, and agency connections—was awarded \$50,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds through the Providing Opportunities for Lifelong Learning (POLL) Grant, a partnership between the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance, the governor’s office, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. The grant allowed FFAST to significantly expand the number of students served during the 2021-2022 school year, growing from previously serving between 35 and 50 students, to reaching 70 students during the spring of 2022 and enrolling 120 students for the summer 2022 program, with a waiting list of interested families. The program has provided needed academic supports to Horry County students who have limited access to afterschool and summer programs due to cost and limited availability.

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

South Carolina students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help **(81%)**
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities **(66%)**
-  Working on their reading and writing skills **(81%)**
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills **(95%)**
-  Taking part in physical activities **(83%)**
-  Building confidence **(82%)**



**95%** of South Carolina parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

South Carolina parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(83%)**



Providing working parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe **(83%)**

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of South Carolina 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 South Carolina, 13,011 children in 150 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 South Carolina is so great that nearly 3 out of every 10 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 South Carolina's 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs by the American Institutes for Research found that programs had a positive impact on students' academic performance and engagement in learning. According to teacher surveys, more than 7 in 10 students who regularly attended programming and needed to show improvement made gains in their academic performance (76%) and class participation (73%). Additionally, a strong majority of students improved their attentiveness in class (69%), motivation to learn (67%), and classroom behavior (57%). Nearly all students regularly attending the program were promoted to the next grade (97%). In a 2022 evaluation, researchers found that students who attended 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs for 60 days or more over two years had fewer school-day absences and discipline incidents than their peers not in the program.

