



This is Afterschool in South Dakota

In South Dakota, the Black Hills Special Services Cooperative (BHSSC)—in partnership with Rapid City Area Schools—was awarded approximately \$196,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds by the South Dakota Department of Education through the Out-of-School Time Expansion Grants program. In addition to helping BHSSC enhance enrichment opportunities and provide two more hours for its 21st Century Discovery Afterschool Program during early release days, the funds allowed the program to implement STEM modules to spark students’ interest in STEM careers. Modules included building design, circuits and electricity, water adventures, force and motion inventions, and more. Each module began with the “Power of Struggle” whole-group activity that emphasized perseverance. Students then rotated through art projects and robotics/STEM stations customized for grade levels. The final module was a whole-group engineering and design task. BHSSC sites saw an average attendance increase of 27.6% from October 2023, when modules were first launched, to March 2024. One student said, “My mom let me decide if I wanted to go home or stay at Discovery for the STEM stuff, and I chose to come to Discovery because I love it!”

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

South Dakota students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (74%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (73%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (72%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (99%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (87%)
-  Building confidence (80%)



99% of South Dakota parents are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

South Dakota 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 **(87%)**

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of South 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%).

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 South Dakota, 12,762 children in 84 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 South Dakota is so great that 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, in a 2023 report by the U.S. Department of Education on 21st CCLC programs nationally, South Dakota students in need of improvement saw both academic and behavioral improvements. More than half of South Dakota's 21st CCLC participants who had a GPA below 3.0 the previous year improved their average (53%). Forty-eight percent demonstrated growth on the state's reading/language arts assessment and 44% demonstrated growth on their math assessment. Students in programs also demonstrated improvements in their engagement in learning and behavior in school. Teachers reported that 64% of their students attending 21st CCLC programs improved their engagement in learning, 40% of students with an attendance rate below 90% the previous school year improved their school-day attendance, and nearly 1 in 4 students (23%) decreased their in-school suspensions compared to the previous year.

