



Credit: Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImages

This is Afterschool in Texas

In rural Texas, Azle Independent School District (ISD) used approximately \$950,000 in American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funds from the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Support (TCLAS) grant to establish and run afterschool programs at seven schools from the fall of 2022 through the spring of 2024. The afterschool program, serving students in grades 3 through 6, ran Monday through Thursday, three hours each day. In addition to an hour of tutoring, students took part in a variety of enrichment activities, including sculpting, painting, scavenger hunts, and STEM learning opportunities, such as learning about bridge design to engineer a bridge and building planetary models. The funds supported staff, including a full-time grant manager, site leads, and teachers, as well as curriculum-based supplies. Previous to ARP ESSER funds, Azle ISD did not have an afterschool program, but with the funding, more than 200 students were able to take part in programming. Azle ISD found that among students who regularly attended the program, 95% were passing their reading and literacy classes and 83% were passing their math classes. This was an achievement as at least half of the students in the program had failed STARR assessments or grade-level tests focused on core subjects the year before.

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

Texas students in afterschool programs are:

-  Getting homework help (74%)
-  Engaging in STEM learning opportunities (76%)
-  Working on their reading and writing skills (74%)
-  Interacting with their peers and building social skills (87%)
-  Taking part in physical activities (83%)
-  Building confidence (76%)



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

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SUPPORT WORKING FAMILIES

Texas parents agree that afterschool programs are:



Helping working parents keep their jobs **(82%)**



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

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE A SMART INVESTMENT

An overwhelming majority of Texas 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 Texas, 131,888 children in 704 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 Texas is so great that 2 out of every 3 applications were not funded based on the most recently available competition data.

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, Texas students in the program saw academic and behavioral improvements. Approximately 2 in 5 Texas students with a GPA below 3.0 the previous year improved their GPA (45%), and demonstrated growth on the state's reading/language arts (41%) and math assessments (40%). Students in programs also demonstrated improvements in their engagement in learning and behavior in school, with teachers reporting that 72% of their students attending 21st CCLC programs improved their engagement in learning. Of students with an attendance rate below 90% the previous school year, 64% improved their school-day attendance and 60% decreased their in-school suspensions compared to the previous year. Additionally, a 2020 statewide evaluation found that participation over multiple years was associated with positive academic and behavioral outcomes. Students attending the program for at least 60 days across two years had a 42% higher chance of being promoted to the next grade level compared to non-participants, with high schoolers having a 470% chance of being promoted to the next grade, and a 6% lower chance of a disciplinary incidence occurring. The evaluation also found that students who regularly participated in programs had higher school-day attendance rates than their non-participating peers.

