








# Partnering with Afterschool and Summer Opportunities to Engage Students and Accelerate Learning

Afterschool and summer programs operate at the nexus of schools, families, and communities to expand learning opportunities for youth of all ages. These programs provide essential supports that help students realize their full potential.

## Engaging and Inspiring Students

Afterschool and summer programs are designed to offer students more time for deeper learning, new opportunities for exploring careers, and access to caring mentors and tutors. Students are empowered through youth-led activities and engaged in hands-on, project-based, real-world learning experiences that reinforce what they learn at school and foster critical life skills.







**Decades of [research](#) proves students who regularly participate in quality, well-designed afterschool and summer opportunities:<sup>1</sup>**

-  Make gains in reading and math
-  Improve school attendance, work habits, and grades
-  Have higher graduation rates
-  Gain self-control and build healthy relationships
-  Explore career paths and gain workforce skills

## Power of Partnership

South Carolina has a strong network of afterschool, summer learning, and other out-of-school time programs that are rooted in local partnerships. They help diversify the educator pipeline and connect multiple sectors, bringing together resources, expertise, and [best practices](#) in assessment and improvement.<sup>3</sup> These providers partner with schools and districts, libraries, churches, museums, businesses, universities, health centers, recreation centers, and more. Program staff often work closely with teachers to align lessons with state learning standards, track student attendance and performance, and offer new opportunities for students to earn credits they need to graduate.

**The South Carolina Afterschool Alliance has the relationships and expertise to help schools build meaningful partnerships with programs that offer:**

-  Creative spaces that allow educators to try innovative curricular approaches, such as project-based learning
-  Additional educators, mentors, and tutors at flexible hours
-  Career experiences to help strengthen and diversify the educator workforce
-  Experience leveraging community partners and volunteers
-  Strong connections with families and deep reach in underserved communities
-  Opportunities for deeper student voice and engagement in their learning process

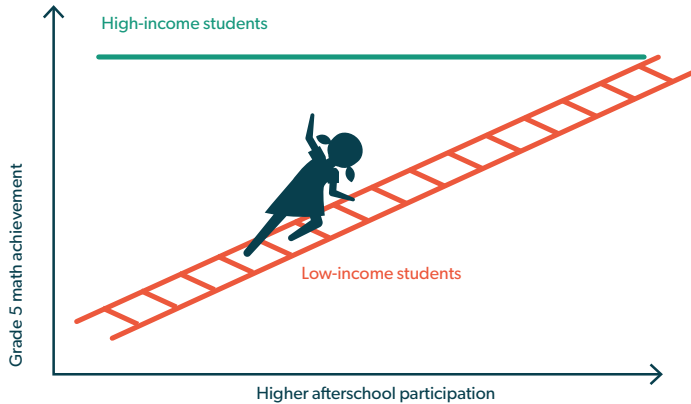
75%

of Nobel Prize winners in the sciences first found their passion in non-school environments.<sup>2</sup>

# Expanding Opportunities Where They Are Needed and Wanted

For students in elementary through high school, more than 80% of their time is spent learning outside of school.<sup>4</sup> And while all youth benefit from quality afterschool programs, young people from families with low income benefit most—and the benefits last. Students who regularly attend continue to improve their academic performance and see meaningful results into young adulthood.

**Afterschool raises math achievement to an even level among elementary school students from low- and high-income families.<sup>5</sup>**



**Students who consistently participate in afterschool during elementary school have higher grades when they transition to high school—and improved test scores in math and reading.<sup>6</sup>**



Grade point average in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (4.0 scale)



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

## Summer Internship, Claflin University

This pioneering program connects South Carolina high school students of color with faculty at Claflin University to study innovative STEM issues, such as researching biomarkers that can serve as early warning signs to people at risk of a heart attack and growing clusters of crystals that can be used to make glasses and optical tools. Created by Claflin in partnership with the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance, the program includes entrepreneurial education and guest lectures by industry leaders.

“

Living in a rural area, students like me don't have the opportunity to work with research mentors in a science lab. With this program, I built knowledge about the STEM field and pinpointed which career best fits me. Having hands-on experience with real lab equipment and writing my first research paper brought me to love the sciences, want to pursue a career in the science field, decide to major in biology at an HBCU, and become an anesthesiologist in the future.”

—Elon Tullock, who studied antibiotic resistance during an internship with a university mentor specializing in molecular bacteriology

## Meeting the Need

We have never had enough afterschool and summer opportunities to serve all the families who want to attend. In South Carolina, nearly [300,000 students](#) are waiting for an available program. Nationwide, unmet demand is higher than ever: for every student in an afterschool program, [3 more students are waiting](#) to get in.<sup>7</sup>

Rural young people, youth of color, and those living in low-income communities face bigger barriers to participating because of cost, lack of transportation, and lack of available programs. Parent surveys demonstrate that families at all income levels and of all political affiliations see the high value of their children participating in summer and afterschool opportunities. However, **families in the highest income bracket are able to spend more than 5x as much on enrichment for their children than those in the lowest.**<sup>8</sup> Expanding access to low-cost or no cost summer and afterschool opportunities in high need communities and ensuring that transportation is available is an excellent strategy for boosting student engagement, interest, and success.

## South Carolina Is a Top 10 State for Afterschool

The South Carolina Afterschool Alliance—working with the SC Governor’s Office, SC Department of Education, and other partners—helps support programs in their quality efforts and secure resources for a statewide quality improvement system for afterschool and summer offerings.<sup>9</sup> The Alliance is also collaborating with the SC Department of Education to oversee the Lifelong Learning grant program with up to \$14 million in funding to expand afterschool and summer opportunities and leveraging investments from the Governor’s Office to offer programs in rural areas for students at risk of dropping out of school or juvenile delinquency.



**Among South Carolina parents:**

**95%**

are satisfied with their child’s afterschool program

**74%**

agree programs help children become more excited about learning and interested in school

**83%**

agree programs provide kids opportunities to learn life skills, like the ability to communicate and work in teams

## Join Us

**We need to expand partnerships, funding, and collaboration between schools and community partners to build a stronger support system that helps all children realize their full potential.**

- ✔ Support afterschool and summer learning opportunities and partnerships in their essential role, recognizing them as foundational to greater engagement, healthy youth development, and lifelong learning.
- ✔ Assess and report on students’ access to high-quality summer and afterschool learning opportunities that are affordable, safe, and offer age-appropriate activities that parents value.

- ✔ Become an ally of [Engage Every Student](#)—a bold call to action launched by the U.S. Department of Education and leading national organizations that aims to ensure every student who wants a spot in a high-quality summer and/or afterschool program has one.
- ✔ Help inform states, district leaders, community organizations, colleges, and schools about the value of partnering with afterschool and summer programs—and how to access American Rescue Plan [funding](#) and state and local resources for these partnerships.

## Get Connected Today!

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### Endnotes

- 1 <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/The-Evidence-Base-For-Afterschool-And-Summer-2021.pdf>
- 2 <http://www.afterschoolstemhub.org/toolkit/share-visuals>
- 3 [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/ExpandedLearning\\_SupportStudentReEngagement\\_Mar2021\\_1pager.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/ExpandedLearning_SupportStudentReEngagement_Mar2021_1pager.pdf)
- 4 <http://life-slc.org>
- 5 Auger, A., Pierce, K. M. and Vandell, D. L. (April, 2013). Participation in Out-of-School Settings and Student Academic and Behavioral Outcomes. Unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.
- 6 Vandell, D.L., Lee, K.T.H., Whitaker, A., and Pierce, K.M. (2020). Cumulative and Differential Effects of Early Child Care and Middle Childhood Out-of-School Time on Adolescent Functioning, *Child Development*, 91:1, 129-144.
- 7 <http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/data/geo/National/overview>
- 8 <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2020/AA3PM-National-Report.pdf>
- 9 <http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2020/AA3PM-Top-10.pdf>