

# Communicating the Need for OST Programs

## Research Findings & Recommendations

Presented by Faith Knocke and Susan Stanton



# ADVOCACY & LOBBYING

Non-Lobbying Advocacy	Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Educating</b> a member of Congress on how a policy affects constituents</li><li>• Using social media to <b>get the word</b> out about a cause/issue</li><li>• Meeting with a government official to <b>explain</b> how a particular problem/issue is affecting a particular group or organization, the community, etc.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asking your member of Congress to <b>vote for or against</b>, or to <b>amend or introduce</b>, particular legislation</li><li>• Emailing members of your group asking them to <b>contact their member of Congress in support of or opposition to</b> legislation or pending regulations</li><li>• Generating an online <b>petition</b> asking members of your organization (direct lobbying) or members of the public (grassroots lobbying) to contact their legislator(s) to support or oppose particular legislation</li></ul>

# SOURCES

Information compiled from research coordinated by the

- **Afterschool Alliance and Afterschool Consultants**

- Focus groups
- One-on-one interviews
- Online bulletin board (education influencers)
- National online survey

- **Frameworks Institute**

- Surveys
- Focus groups

# FRAMEWORKS INSTITUTE

## Views on Youth

- Grow up in a dangerous environment with different values
- A problem for parents

## Education

- Pragmatism
- Common Good
- Global Competition and Workforce Prep

## Human Services

- Community and not the individual.
- Supporting people through their entire lives.

## Helpful Metaphors

- Construction
- Cooking with knowledge

# FOCUS POINTS OF ALLIANCE RESEARCH

## Values

What are the values that messaging in support of afterschool should focus on?

## Audiences

What specific messages resonate with specific groups?

## Conservatives

How can we better reach conservatives?

# GENERAL VIEWS ON AFTERSCHOOL

## Views towards afterschool



Views on afterschool are shaped by concerns about school day – testing, does not allow for student choice, not enough opportunities for social interaction



Safety after 3:00 PM includes new dimension of technology and social media. Helping kids avoid risky behaviors online and offline.



A typical program for parents includes physical activity, nutrition, arts and crafts, homework and academic support, and hands-on projects, like STEM.

Fun and learning key.



Parent peace of mind and helping them provide for their families resonates more than helping parents keep working



Parents want their children to have new learning experiences that spark interest – something afterschool provides.

## The Business Impact of Afterschool Programs



Peace of mind for parents.



Skills missing in workforce: communication skills, general work ethic, problem solving and teamwork.



For parents, workforce development means learning ‘tools of the trade’ and career-specific skills, communication, and interpersonal skills. Afterschool can help preparedness, but there are limits to how it acts as an on-ramp for careers.



Business leaders see afterschool programs increasing preparedness with soft skills, opportunities for career exploration, and new ways of learning foundational knowledge.



Partnerships in communities can be good for businesses. Positive PR and connect students to opportunities.

## The Educational Impact of Afterschool Programs



Education leaders worry about achievement, truancy rates, general inequity, and the test-focused structure of learning.



Afterschool helps, but access limits impact.



Chief benefit: increase interest in learning.



Other benefits: meet mentors, witness model careers, and spark an interest in careers.



Other benefits: personal growth, increasing attendance, good behavior in the classroom, and classroom learning.



Benefit to schools: reducing need for reinforcement during the school day, giving teachers time to cover more topics.

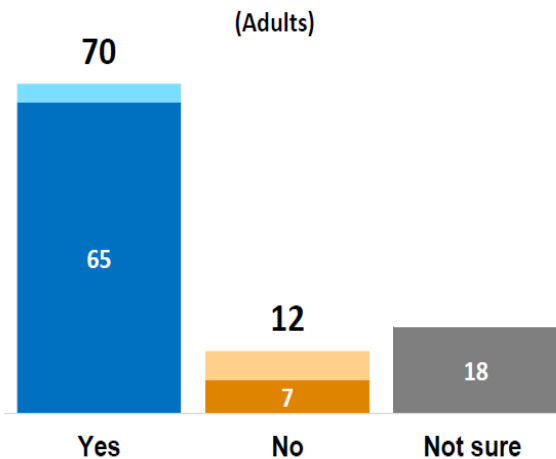


# GENERAL VIEWS ON AFTERSCHOOL (VOTERS)

Since 2006, there has been a 17-point increase among likely voters in strongly believing afterschool programs are a necessity.

Thinking about children and the hours after school, would you say that...

...afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for your community?\*

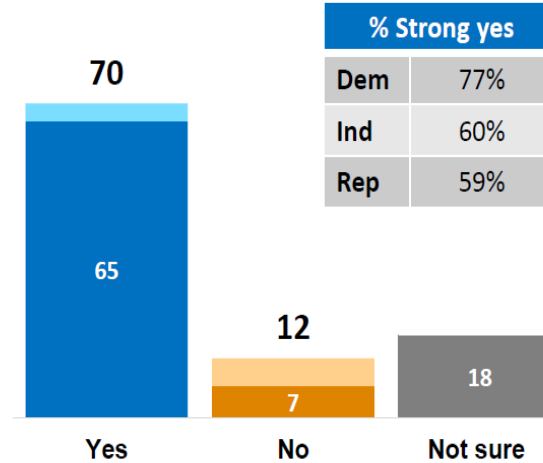


% Strong yes over time	
2018 (Likely Voters)	69%
2008 (Gen Elect Voters)	58%
2006 (Gen Elect Voters)	52%
2003 (Reg Voters)	48%

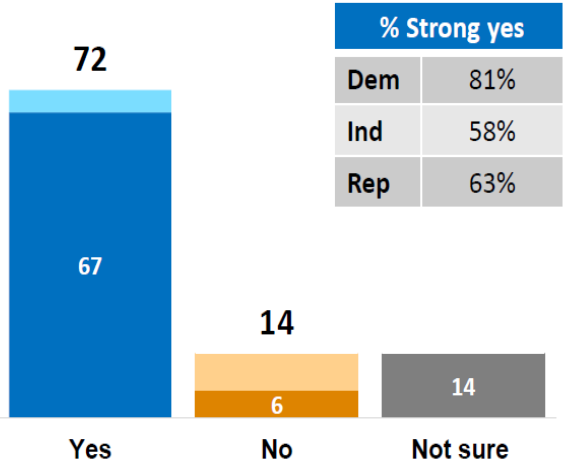
Americans believe afterschool and summer programs are an absolute necessity for their community. Including summer programs increases intensity among partisans.

Thinking about children and the hours after school, would you say that...

...afterschool programs are an absolute necessity for your community?\*



...afterschool and summer programs are an absolute necessity for your community?\*

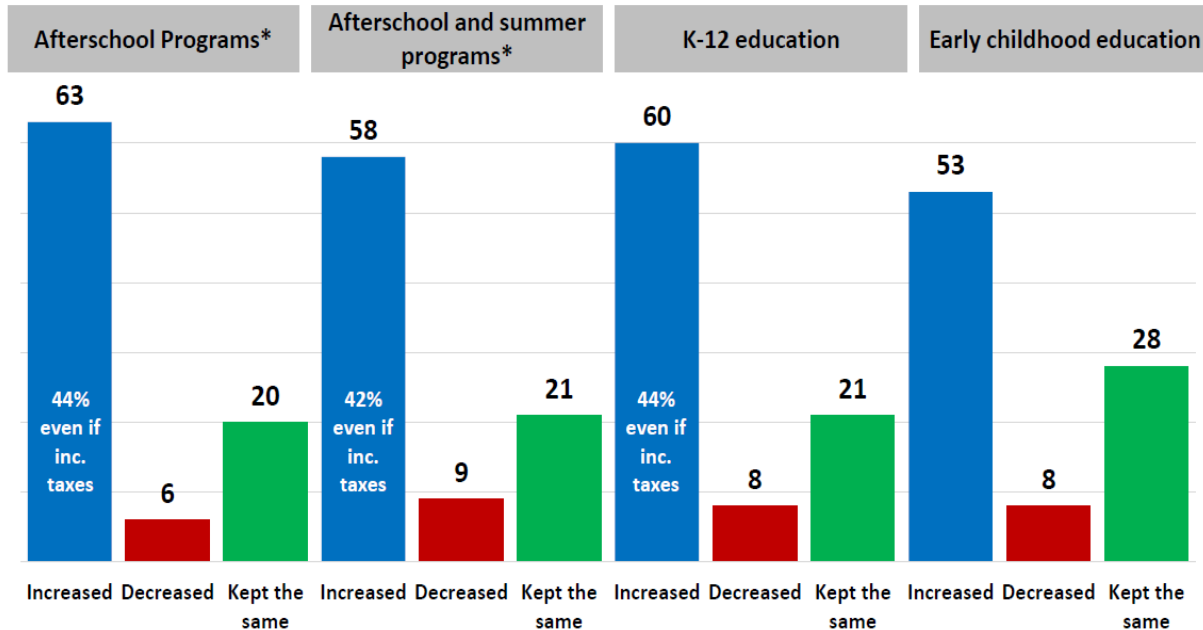


Not so strong yes  
Strong yes  
Not so strong no  
Strong no

# GENERAL VIEWS ON AFTERSCHOOL (VOTERS)

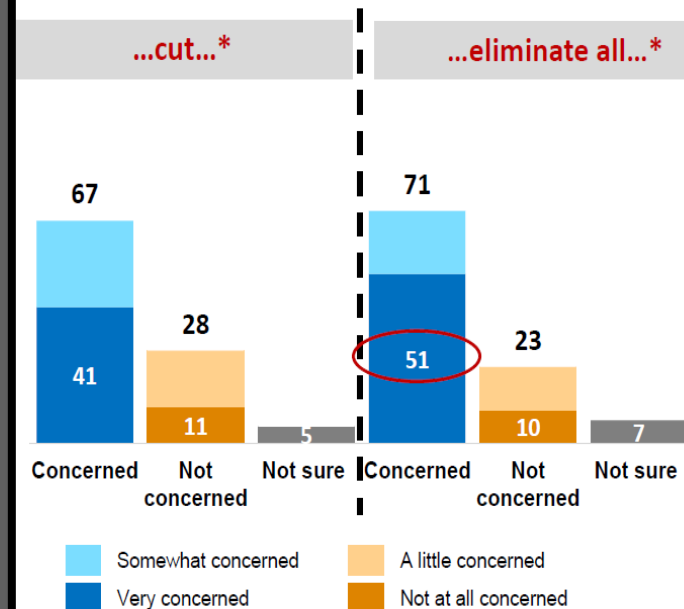
Americans overwhelmingly believe funding needs to be increased across the continuum of education. People are as supportive of increasing funding for afterschool programs as K-12.

Please indicate if you think public funding for each of the following should be increased, decreased, or kept the same: (Initial Ask)



Adults are more concerned when they hear a proposal to eliminate all federal funds versus cutting federal funds, including a majority who are very concerned. Republicans and people in rural areas are much more concerned about eliminating all federal funds.

How concerned would you be if there was a proposal to...[cut v eliminate all]...federal funds for afterschool and summer programs?



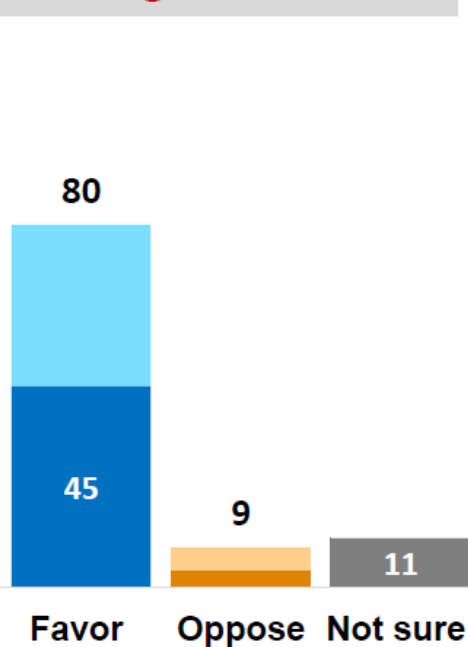
% Total Concerned	Cut	Eliminate all
White	62	65
AA	82	87
Latino	82	78
Democrat	84	88
Independent	60	62
Republican	57	67
Urban	66	76
Suburban	71	67
Rural	58	73
Northeast	72	80
Midwest	68	66
South	66	71
West	65	68

# GENERAL VIEWS ON AFTERSCHOOL (VOTERS)

People across demographics want government to set aside specific funds to be used for afterschool programs regardless of whether it is their local or state government.

Do you favor or oppose your...[local v state] government setting aside specific funds to be used for afterschool programs?

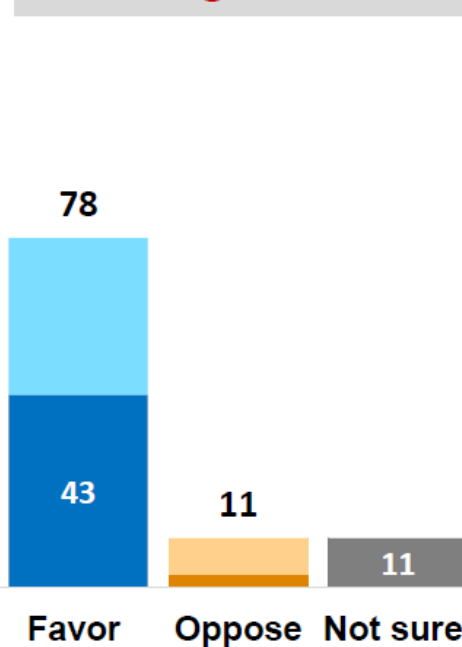
...local government...\*



Favor Oppose Not sure

Somewhat favor  
Strongly favor

...state government...\*



Favor Oppose Not sure

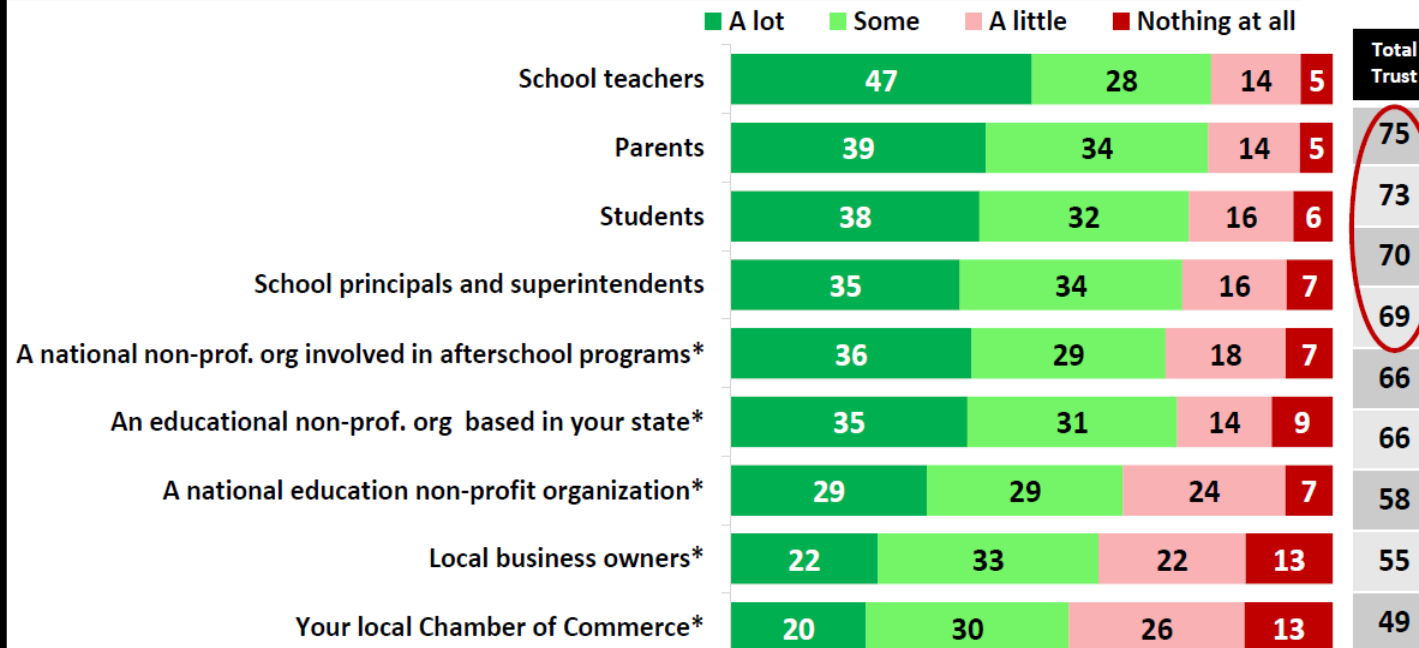
Somewhat oppose  
Strongly oppose

% Total Favor	Local	State
White	79	76
AA	82	86
Latino	89	80
Democrat	90	90
Independent	75	70
Republican	79	77
Urban	82	77
Suburban	82	81
Rural	71	74
Northeast	80	76
Midwest	83	79
South	82	76
West	74	82

# TRUSTED SOURCES

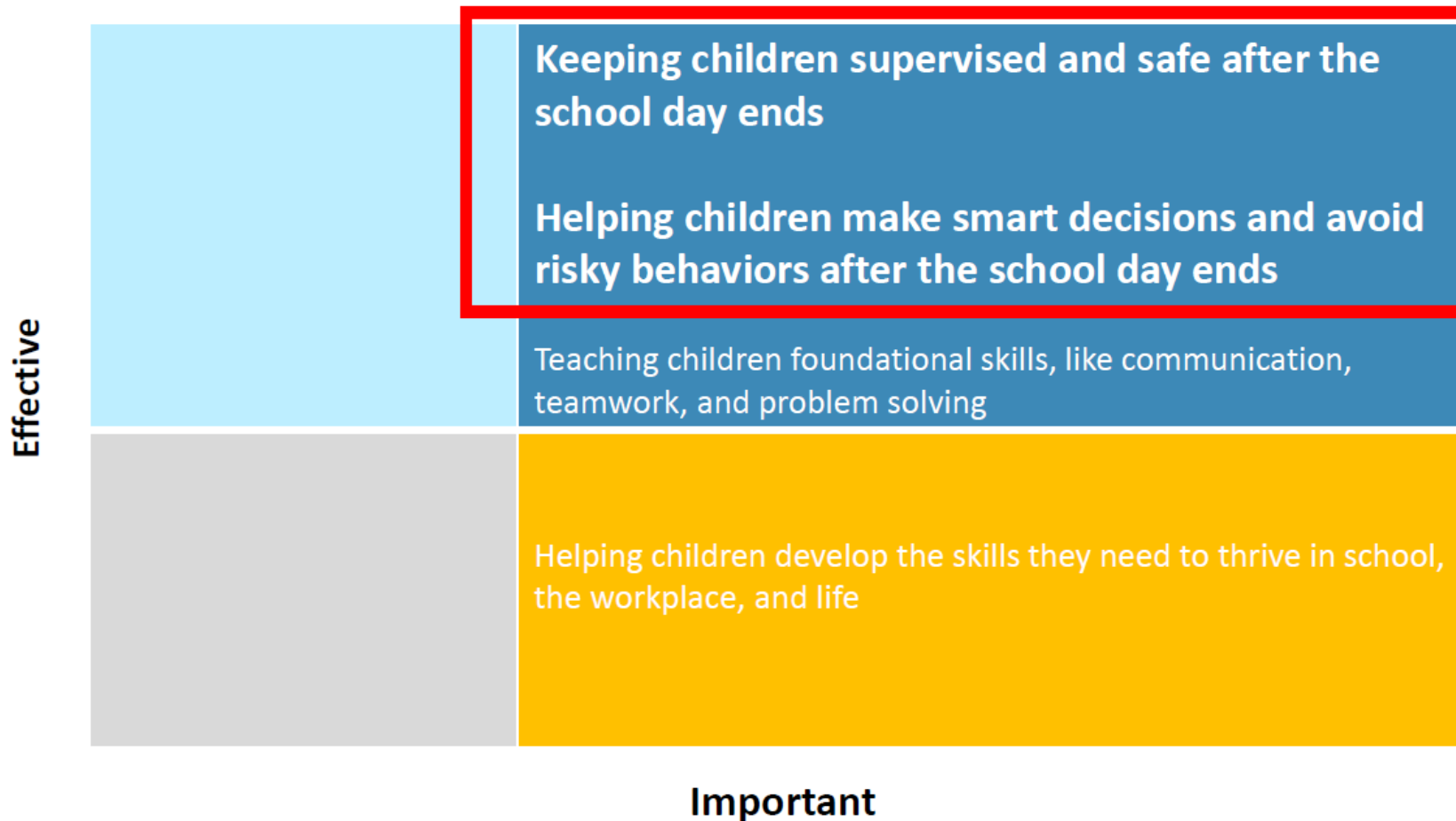
School teachers, parents, students, and school administrators are the most trusted sources of information about afterschool programs. Non-profit organizations, whether they are national or at the state level, fall into a middle tier.

Please indicate how much you would trust the following groups or people if they shared information about afterschool programs.



# SAFETY

Keeping children supervised and safe after school is the most important and effective impact that Americans believe afterschool programs have.



# JOBS

## “Jobs of Tomorrow”: Why It Works

Afterschool programs open a new world of opportunities to help young people prepare for the jobs of tomorrow. Young people gain hands-on experience and learn to communicate, collaborate, and lead.

Businesses want to hire responsible problem solvers and team players, and afterschool develops these skills.

Today, STEM jobs are driving global economic growth, and 7 million students are getting opportunities to develop an interest in science and gain STEM-related skills in afterschool.

Afterschool helps students learn by doing, build skills, connect with mentors and prepare for the jobs of tomorrow.

Connects afterschool programs to “jobs of tomorrow” which is a salient outcome.

Invoking the needs of business community helps underscore the value of skills afterschool programs help develop.

Helpful context that links needs of business, skills, and the jobs of tomorrow.

Highlighting key attributes – learn by doing, connecting with mentors – that people associate with quality programs.

# LEARNING

## “Learn and Grow”: Why It Works

Students who participate in afterschool programs have a better chance to learn, grow and realize their full potential.

Programs spark interest in school so students attend school more often, get better grades, and are more likely to graduate.

Teachers report that students in afterschool programs show more interest in learning, behave better, and complete their homework assignments.

Afterschool programs offer new learning opportunities and help all students thrive in school and in life.

Connecting to powerful aspirational goals for children to realize their full potential.

Establishing direct connection between programs and strong outcomes.

Utilizing teachers as a validator for specific benefits.

Expressing equity in terms of opportunity instead of narrowing gaps broadens the appeal.

# REFRAMING STATEMENTS

Original Statement	Statement Reframed
<p>Having afterschool choices <b>helps parents keep their jobs</b>, <b>helps students succeed in school and beyond</b>, and <b>helps ensure businesses can hire the local workforce they need to thrive</b>. <b>In short, afterschool works for students, parents, and the economy.</b></p>	<p>Participation in afterschool programs <b>inspires children to learn and connect with each other</b>, <b>provides parents peace of mind while they are at work knowing their children are supervised</b>, and <b>gives students the skills they need to land the jobs of tomorrow</b>. <b>Afterschool works!</b></p> <p><small>*added piece on safety/supervision</small></p>



# AUDIENCE SPECIFIC MESSAGING

Afterschool programs inspire students to learn, keep kids safe, and give working parents peace of mind.

Common  
Start



Common  
Finish



## Parents

Peace of mind; work & family balance;  
gets kids excited about learning!

## Business

Better productivity; helps kids gain skills like teamwork & problem solving.

## Educators

Increases interest in learning; provides mentorship and sparks career interest.

## Policymakers

Safety. Benefits workforce of today (parents) and tomorrow (students).  
Personalize based on interests.

Note: Policymakers want data & citations!

**Give Working Parents Peace of Mind**  
**Keep Kids Safe**  
**(Help Avoid Risky Behaviors)**  
**Inspire Students to Learn**

**Afterschool Works!**  
**21st CCLC Wins &**  
**Bipartisan Support**  
**We're Making Progress!**

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: ENGAGEMENT V. TEST SCORES

It is better to say afterschool programs help children become more engaged in school rather than to improve their school grades and test scores, particularly among Republicans.

How [important/effective] do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

	Helping get children more engaged in school so they improve their attendance and attitude toward school*		Helping children improve their school grades and test scores*	
	% Very Imp	% Very Eff	% Very Imp	% Very Eff
Total	44	31	42	31
Dem	55	39	59	32
Ind	36	26	35	30
Rep	42	30	33	32

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: OPPORTUNITIES V. ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Positioning programs as providing “more opportunities for learning” rather than “clos[ing] the achievement gap” increases agreement particularly with with independents, Republicans, and people in urban areas.

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)

% Rating 10, Strongly Agree	All	Party ID			Region		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urb	Sub	Rur
Afterschool programs <u>provide more opportunities for learning</u> for students in underserved communities*	31	37	27	32	40	25	29
Afterschool programs <u>help close the achievement gap</u> for students in underserved communities*	24	35	20	16	27	21	23

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: SUPPORT V. OPPORTUNITIES

Democrats more strongly value “support” while Republicans more strongly value “opportunities” when considering children in low-income communities. Support likely implies programs or something requiring funding for Republican adults.

How [important/effective] do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

	Providing extra <u>support</u> to children in low-income communities*		Providing extra <u>opportunities</u> to children in low-income communities*	
	% Very Imp	% Very Eff	% Very Imp	% Very Eff
Total	44	38	41	36
Dem	62	47	52	45
Ind	40	37	34	32
Rep	28	30	40	41

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: DREAMS V. POTENTIAL

The goal of helping children “pursue their dreams” has strong importance particularly for Democrats but not for Republicans. However, “reach their full potential” is a strong concept for Republicans, while also being important for Democrats.

How [important/effective] do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

	Helping children gain the skills and confidence <u>to pursue their dreams*</u>		Helping children gain the skills and confidence <u>to reach their full potential*</u>	
	% Very Imp	% Very Eff	% Very Imp	% Very Eff
Total	42	30	46	34
Dem	60	34	51	43
Ind	38	31	41	27
Rep	29	25	48	32

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: SAFETY

Democrats more strongly value supervision while Republicans more strongly value helping children make smart decisions and avoiding risky behaviors, tapping into values of personal responsibility.

How [important/effective] do you think afterschool programs are for each of the following? [0 to 10 Scale]

	Keeping children supervised and safe after the school day ends*		Helping children make smart decisions and avoid risky behaviors after the school day ends*	
	% Very Imp	% Very Eff	% Very Imp	% Very Eff
Total	53	39	49	37
Dem	74	50	61	48
Ind	41	35	41	28
Rep	44	31	53	35

# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: WORKING PARENTS

Including working parents increases agreement on the safety dimension, especially for Republicans.

Do you agree or disagree with each statement? (0-10 scale, 0 strongly disagree, 10 strongly agree)

% Rating 10, Strongly Agree	All	Party ID			Region		
		Dem	Ind	Rep	Urb	Sub	Rur
Afterschool programs provide <u>working</u> parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe and supervised*	36	45	27	39	41	33	36
Afterschool programs provide parents peace of mind knowing that their children are safe and supervised*	31	43	22	26	36	28	32

# REFRAMING STATEMENTS

Say	Instead of	Notes
"Eliminate" funding	"Cut" funding	Generate greater concern and urgency around protecting valued programs.
Develop the skills they need to <u>thrive</u>	Develop the skills they need to <u>succeed</u>	More aspirational language with a broader range of positive outcomes.
Provide <u>working</u> parents peace of mind	Provide parents peace of mind	Adding working parents in a safety dimension provides helpful context for benefits of supervision.
Provide more opportunities for learning	Help close the achievement gap	Increasing more of something good is better than reducing something bad. "Gap" language allows people to fill in causality on their own.
Jobs of tomorrow/the future	Land that first job	Stronger values orientation for a key outcome.
Teach children foundational skills like...	Enable through [activity] children to learn [skill]	Try to assert the positive benefits without bridging or hedging language.
Reach full potential	Pursue dreams	Both values driven and stronger than "succeed." Potential likely better suited in an academic context.



# MESSAGING FOR POLICYMAKERS: REFRAMING STATEMENTS

Where it depends:	Notes
Afterschool programs vs. Afterschool and summer programs	Both work, however Republicans and people in rural areas are more favorable when we <u>include summer programs</u> .
Support vs. Opportunities for children in low-income communities	Democrats favor “support” where Republicans respond more to the language of opportunity. Support may be conjuring up programs and cost.
Student vs. Children	We also tested “student” and “children” and found conflicting results depending on the context. Referring to children increases importance to Democrats while students increases importance to Republicans.

# MESSAGING TEMPLATE

- ACT Now developed a messaging template to help guide you through the process of effectively communicating the need for afterschool programs
- This template is customizable and should be tailored to fit your program
- ACT Now is here to provide support if you have questions along the way

Access the template here:

[bit.ly/2RPGA4L](http://bit.ly/2RPGA4L)

For an example of a completed template:

[bit.ly/2MzcJra](http://bit.ly/2MzcJra)

**Support Afterschool in Illinois!**

[Program Logo]

[Program Name]

[Mission Statement]



**The Need for Afterschool**

Across America, 1 in 5 kids are alone and unsupervised from 3 to 6 p.m. These are the hours when juvenile crime and victimization peak—and many parents are still at work.<sup>1</sup>

Despite clear support for afterschool programs, 433,390 young people in our state are alone after school. For every ONE Illinois student in afterschool, TWO more would participate if a program were available.<sup>2</sup>

These children are not only unsafe and at risk—they are also losing out on important learning opportunities.

## Afterschool Works!

Afterschool and summer programs help youth develop skills for the jobs of tomorrow, help youth make smart decisions and avoid risky behavior, and help youth learn and grow. Through group activities and project-based learning, youth in afterschool strengthen their communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills. Afterschool is a natural vehicle for career and skill exploration, project-based learning, interaction with industry, and exposing students to the opportunities that exist for them right here in Illinois.

Research shows that students in afterschool programs engaged in school, including improved grades, attendance, schoolwork, and behavior. Afterschool and summer programs can add 1,080 hours of academic learning to a child's school year, equivalent to 144 school days.<sup>3</sup>

Afterschool programs also help support our current workforce by providing working parents peace-of-mind. Working parents are more likely to be able to maintain a sustainable work-life balance when they know their kids are safe and engaged in fun learning opportunities.



Participation in afterschool programs inspires children to learn and connect with each other, provides parents peace of mind while they are at work knowing their children are supervised, and gives students the skills they need to land the jobs of tomorrow.



**References:**

1 Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America after 3PM: Afterschool programs in demand.

2 Afterschool Alliance (2017). Afterschool in Illinois. <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state=IL>.

3 Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America after 3PM: Afterschool programs in demand.

# HOW TO USE THE MESSAGING TEMPLATE

## Use the messaging template to:

- Educate policymakers
- Raise awareness about afterschool programs in the general public
- Solicit funding opportunities
- Develop business & community partnerships
- Educate possible volunteers

**[PROGRAM NAME] contributes to the impact of afterschool and summer programs by:**

- Increasing youths' learning potential through additional educational opportunities
- Reducing crime and juvenile delinquency by providing a safe space for youth to explore their interests
- Improving career readiness through workforce development programs
- [ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION]
- [ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION]

Since [YEAR], [PROGRAM NAME] has served youth ages \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ neighborhood/region of \_\_\_\_\_, Illinois. The youth served represent a community that is \_\_\_\_% Black, \_\_\_\_% Hispanic or Latino, and \_\_\_\_% White. Nearly \_\_\_\_% of youth in the community receive free or reduced-priced lunch.

[TYPES OF PROGRAMMING/SERVICES OFFERED]

[INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA/COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC DATA/STATE-SPECIFIC DATA]

[ANY ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION]



[QUOTE FROM PARTICIPANT, PARENT, OR STAFF]

**For the sake of Illinois' youth, I urge you to support afterschool programs!**

*[Opportunities for Collaboration/Specific Ask]*

- Support our afterschool advocacy efforts, such as securing funding streams (e.g. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers and the Teen REACH program).
- You can also lend your voice and expertise by participating in an [PROGRAM NAME] event as a speaker or attendee.
- Business partners can connect with [PROGRAM NAME] to facilitate opportunities for volunteering and to share their professional expertise with students hungry for career knowledge.
- Join us for a site visit or meeting to further discuss the afterschool needs in our community.
- *[add/replace bullet points with relevant opportunities for collaboration]*

### Contact Us

 **Call:**  
312-312-3123

 **Email:**  
samplemail@email.org

 **Website:**  
www.samplewebsite.org

**QUESTIONS?**

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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