

Afterschool: A Path to College & Career Readiness

High-quality afterschool programming leverages hands-on learning experiences and community connections to prepare youth for success in college and the workforce. It accomplishes this by:

Raising College and Career Aspirations & Readiness

Afterschool programs inspire youth – especially disadvantaged youth – to more actively engage in their learning and reach for higher goals. Recent research demonstrates how essential these attitudes are to quality of work later in life.¹ Presented below are two examples from the many evaluations that support this point:^{2,3}

Citizens Schools, an academic support and experiential learning program for middle school students found positive trends in:⁴

- Student engagement and achievement
- Attendance and course pass rates
- Likelihood to select a rigorous high school

Project Exploration, a hands-on science learning and mentorship program, found:⁵

- 95% graduation rate – nearly 2x the overall rate of their city’s public school system
- 60% of alumni pursuing STEM-related degrees
- 32% held science-related employment

Fostering 21st Century Skills

Afterschool programs offer inquiry-based, applied learning experiences that emphasize collaboration, investigation, and problem-solving. Civic and business leaders understand how crucial these 21st Century skills are for success, and increasingly expect these skills in their employees.⁶

Several meta-analyses of afterschool programs find that participants gain skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and a variety of other skills crucial for success in the 21st century economy.^{7,8,9}

A report from the US Department of Education emphasizes the great potential for afterschool learning environments to foster grit, tenacity, and perseverance in young people.¹⁰

Connecting Youth to the Workforce

Afterschool apprenticeship and youth employment programs provide young people with:

- Practical work experiences that expands their interest in and understanding of career possibilities¹¹
- A network of adult professionals to help them achieve their career goals^{12,13}
- An opportunity to earn wages while staying engaged during the summer months away from school¹⁴

Success for Youth, Success for Minnesota

Minnesota can’t afford to wait: we need to invest in our youth now to narrow the opportunity and skills gap, and ensure a thriving economy.^{15,16,17} Afterschool programs address both these challenges by inspiring all Minnesota youth to reach for better opportunities, while fostering the skills and connections to help them succeed in life.

The logic is clear: When youth succeed, so do our communities, and so does Minnesota.

Sources

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