

## Afterschool Supports Healthy Lifestyles

Georgia ranked **24th in the nation for childhood obesity** (2020-2021).<sup>1</sup>  
Of children aged 10 – 17 years old:<sup>2, 3</sup>

**17%**  
OVERWEIGHT

**16.8%**  
OBESE

**20.8%**  
MALES WERE OBESE

**12.7%**  
FEMALES WERE OBESE



**360,210** of Georgia's children were food insecure – lacking reliable and regular access to food in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

**Hungry children are likely to have:**<sup>5</sup>

- Lower grades
- Higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness
- Higher chances of repeating a grade



**Youth lack physical activity opportunities:**

- **27%** of children ages 6 - 11 and **16.8%** of children ages 12 - 17 are physically active for at least 60 minutes daily<sup>6,7</sup>
- **60.4%** live near a park or playground area<sup>8</sup>
- **41.2%** of high school students spend three or more hours a day playing video games or using a computer<sup>9</sup>

## Impact of Afterschool

Afterschool and summer learning programs are critical partners in supporting the health of Georgia's youth by providing access to nutritious foods, keeping kids physically active, and promoting healthy habits.

### GEORGIA PARENTS IN 2019<sup>10</sup>



**83%** said their child's afterschool program offers a healthy meals and/or snacks



**86%** said their child's afterschool program offers opportunities for physical activity

### Meals Served in 2019



**120,039** youth served daily by Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)<sup>11</sup>



**112,495** youth served daily by Summer Nutrition Programs<sup>12</sup>

Youth who actively participate in high quality afterschool programs show less prevalence of obesity when compared to their non-participating peers.<sup>13</sup>

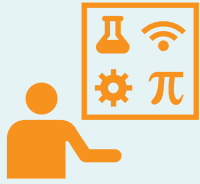
**Afterschool provides opportunities for:**<sup>14</sup>

- Snacks and meals
- Nutrition education
- Additional time for physical activity
- Safe space and materials
- Structured activities
- Adult support
- Team sports leading to:
  - conflict resolution skills
  - decreased stress
  - improved communication

**Regular physical activity and healthy eating leads to:**<sup>15</sup>

- Strong bones and muscles
- Improved cardiorespiratory fitness
- Reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Decreased likelihood of serious health conditions as an adult (heart disease, Type II diabetes, and cancer)
- Higher academic achievement
- Improved classroom behavior
- Improvement in indicators of cognitive skills (concentration, memory, and verbal skills)

## Afterschool Builds Georgia's STEM Workforce



STEM careers in Georgia are expected to grow

**13%** by 2027.<sup>1</sup>

Georgia students performing at or above the National Assessment of Education Proficiency in math (2022):<sup>2</sup>

**34%**

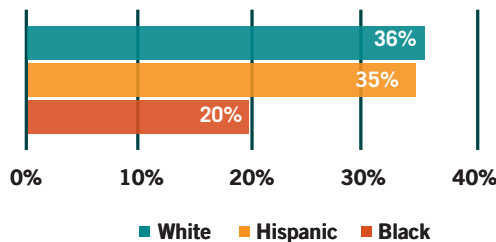
OF 4TH GRADERS

**24%**

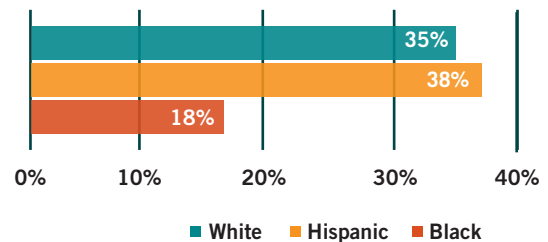
OF 8TH GRADERS

### INEQUITIES IN OPPORTUNITIES LEAD TO RACIAL ACHIEVEMENT GAPS IN GEORGIA

#### 4th Grade Math



#### 8th Grade Math



Proficiency Percentages in Georgia Math Assessments in 2022<sup>3</sup>

Historical inequities in educational opportunities, systemic barriers, and significantly fewer opportunities have resulted in unequal outcomes and continue to prevent a significant number of Georgians from reaching their full potential.<sup>4, 5</sup>

## Impact of Afterschool

Afterschool and summer learning programs are helping close the opportunity gap - which often results in a skills gap - by offering additional time and opportunities for students to experience hands-on STEM learning.

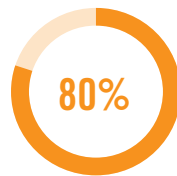
### NATIONAL STEM OUTCOMES

Survey of 1600 youth from 160 programs<sup>6</sup>

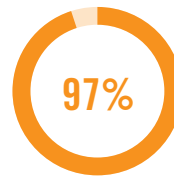


Students that have a more positive STEM identity (strongest indicator of pursuing a STEM career)

Afterschool program serving 25,000 youth<sup>7</sup>

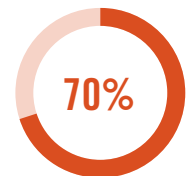


Students that reported the program was the most important source of support for pursuing a career



Students that said it taught them to set high goals and expectations of themselves.

National program<sup>8</sup>



Students that pursued post-secondary education and careers in STEM fields.

#### Afterschool provides opportunities for:<sup>9</sup>

- Enriching STEM activities such as computer science, coding, and robotics
- Critical foundational skills
- Communication skills
- Working collaboratively
- Fostering confidence
- Exposure to career pathways



#### Regular participation leads to:<sup>10, 11</sup>

- Significant gains in math achievement
- Positive results in reading achievement
- Increase in STEM knowledge and skills
- Higher chances of graduation
- Higher chances of pursuing a STEM career

## Afterschool Improves Literacy in Georgia

**6 out of 10 children (63%)**

completing third grade in Georgia were not prepared to meet the literacy challenges of the next grade level (2021)<sup>1</sup>



### This leads to a cycle of low literacy<sup>2, 3</sup>

- Struggle with learning and fall behind
- Discipline problems
- Perform poorly in 8th grade math
- Higher chances of becoming teen parents
- Higher chances of dropping out of high school
- More likely to spend time in prison
- Struggle with unemployment
- Poor health & shorter life expectancy

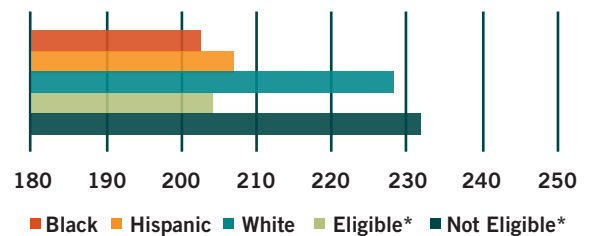
**1 million Georgia adults** have low literacy and earn 30% less than adults with a HS diploma<sup>4</sup>

**72%**

chance of being at lowest reading level for children with parents with low literacy levels<sup>6</sup>

Costs the state **\$1.26 billion** in social services and lost tax revenue annually<sup>5</sup>

### National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading (2022)<sup>7</sup>



Average scores of Georgia students.

\*Free or Reduced Lunch (indicator of family income)

### SUMMER IS CRUCIAL

**2-3 months** reading skills loss for low income children<sup>8</sup>

**2/3** of the achievement gap in reading between low and middle income children by 9th grade due to summer learning loss<sup>9</sup>

## Impact of Afterschool

Afterschool and summer learning programs provide students with the additional supports they need to help build a strong foundation in literacy, including reading, writing and critical thinking skills.

**7 out of 10 parents**

report that their children's programs provide opportunities for reading or writing and homework assistance.<sup>10</sup>

**21st CCLC programs in Georgia**

**77%**

of regular attendees improved their grade or maintained an A, B, or C grade in ELA (2019)<sup>11</sup>

**One 21st CCLC program served 60 students**

**100%**

of regularly attending middle school students increased at least one letter grade in ELA & 97% promoted to next grade<sup>12</sup>

### Afterschool provides opportunities for:<sup>13, 14</sup>

- Project based learning opportunities
- Strong literacy foundation
- Group activities
- Peer-to-peer learning
- Critical thinking skills
- Communications skills

### Regular attendance lead to:<sup>15, 16</sup>

- Significant gains in reading skills
- Improved grades
- Improved attendance
- Improved attitude towards school
- Higher chances of graduation

# Recommendations

Afterschool and summer learning programs are a key part of developing successful young people and building thriving communities. To help the youth of today grow into well-rounded, successful, and productive citizens of tomorrow:

- 1. Increase Investment** in Georgia's afterschool and summer learning programs that
  - Support healthy and active lifestyles as a way to reduce Georgia's high prevalence of child obesity
  - Introduce students to new interests, a diverse range of STEM careers, and real world experiences
  - Support literacy efforts to increase the number of children reading at grade level
- 2. Strengthen Partnerships** at the local, regional, and state level between afterschool and summer learning programs with school districts, businesses, and community-based organizations, such as food-banks, housing authorities and parks and recreation programs to support these initiatives beyond the school day.

## Healthy Eating and Physical Activity:

- Increase access to CACFP and Summer Nutrition Programs across Georgia, particularly in rural areas.
- Increase access to professional development opportunities, such as Georgia SHAPE, that help afterschool and youth development providers support the physical well-being of the youth they serve.

## STEM:

- Include afterschool and summer learning as strategies to support Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) learning and workforce development in Georgia's state CTAE and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WAIQ) plans.
- Create partnerships to increase professional development opportunities for afterschool and youth development providers and provide access to internships and apprenticeships for youth to continuously build Georgia's workforce.

## Literacy:

- Provide grants to libraries to fund summer reading programs, free tutoring, and homework assistance programs and utilize existing resources including books and computers.
- Connect afterschool staff and community partners to literacy training to help them better support students and encourage parents to read and talk to children from birth.
- Create partnerships between schools and afterschool programs that lead to shared professional development opportunities for staff and data sharing agreements to optimize resources and increase student's proficiency in literacy.

For more information on afterschool in Georgia, go to [www.afterschoolga.org](http://www.afterschoolga.org).  
For references, go to [www.afterschoolga.org/afterschool-issues](http://www.afterschoolga.org/afterschool-issues).