

Out-of-School Time Stories

BOOST Grantee Spotlight: Hope For Youth

Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Hope for Youth (HYPE) is a STEM program designed to equip girls of color with skills, networks, and opportunities in the tech industry. HYPE serves mostly girls of color and low-income youth of all ages through afterschool and summer programming. BOOST funds support two programs, the HYPE Project and HYPE Summer Coding Camps, at ten sites serving 11 counties across North Georgia.

Programming includes field trips, guest speakers, project-based learning, training in STEM software, leadership training, networking and internship opportunities, and STEM career preparation. **With BOOST funding, HYPE has expanded partnerships, grown its staff, increased sustainability, and added programming to empower girls of color as future leaders in the STEM industry.** These no-cost programs served 136 afterschool and 227 summer programming youth during the 2022-23 year.

STEM Representation

“There is a gap in young Black girls having the opportunity to learn anything about computer programming. I think [HYPE] exists to give them access to that kind of education and connect them with people already in the tech field so they can see a future in it if they want to.”

— HYPE Parent



Youth Served in Year Two:

136 in Afterschool

227 in Summer



Ages Served:

Elementary, Middle, and High School




Counties Served:

Barrow, Clayton, Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henery, Jefferson, Newton

Programming Offered:

Afterschool & Summer

BOOST Grant Purpose:

-  Expand Access
-  Reduce Barriers
-  Increase Quality

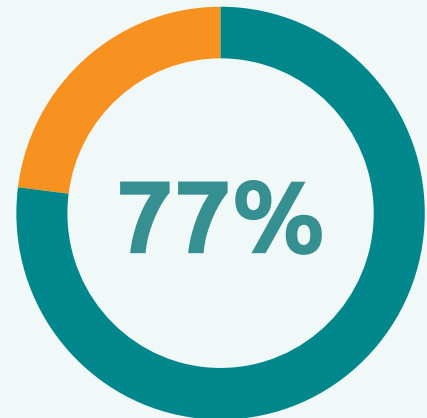
Website:

www.gethype.org



In a field where women of color are underrepresented, HYPE expands youth opportunities to connect with women of color in the tech field and grow their network alongside their skills. Parents shared that this mission was one of the core reasons for choosing HYPE programs for their students. One parent wanted their daughters to understand that “males don’t dominate this field.” Staff share this understanding goal for their students, saying that “seeing women of color in the tech field... it just feels more attainable when you can see people that look like you.” In response, the afterschool HYPE Project uses an instructor-led club model with 12 interactive sessions to provide students with career exposure field trips, guest speakers who are women tech professionals, and leadership training and development. One HYPE Project highlight for staff and students is the emphasis on problem-solving with students, as reflected by a staff member in their instructional practice of demonstrating how to identify solutions to coding problems online. To extend STEM representation and skill-building to the summer months, HYPE offers Summer Coding Camps for middle and high school students teaching HTML, CSS, Robotics, and Women in Tech guest speaker panels, including networking and entrepreneurship opportunities in partnership with Southern Crescent Women in Business.

Youth Interest in STEM Careers

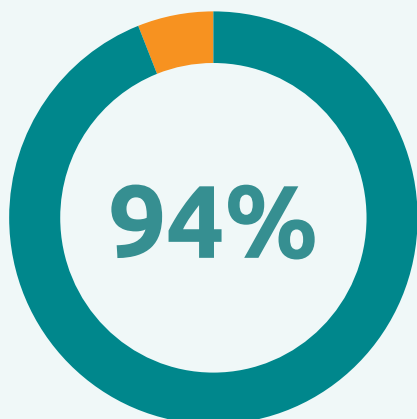


These opportunities led to more students expressing interest in STEM careers, with 77% of survey respondents reporting a high likelihood that they would enter the field after high school. One student shared their experience of how HYPE increased their access and interest in STEM: “[HYPE] helped me join dual enrollment at Atlanta Technical College. I’m on a computer technology and computer science track, which helped me branch out with my knowledge.” Parents also appreciated that HYPE exposed students to different aspects of the STEM field, with one parent seeing that her child “homed in on her specific field” and another finding that her child’s “two interests came together.”

Successes

Using BOOST funding, afterschool programming capacity was expanded by hiring a Program Director in January 2023, adding nine formal partnerships, and increasing HYPE educational partnerships by 70% since 2022. Building on these expanded partnerships, HYPE served more students than ever in the 2022-23 school year, with 77 graduating participants and a 23% increase in fall-to-spring retention. HYPE provided Train the Trainer facilitation training to 20 school educators to support the sustainability of these changes. With BOOST funding, these changes were made possible without any cost to students for attending the program.

Youth Academic Improvement



Summer programming expanded, including three new sites, twelve newly trained staff members, and a new robotics curriculum for high school students. The Newton County Schools summer partnership also led to an afterschool partnership in the fall of 2023. **These programmatic improvements resulted in serious outcomes, including stronger attendance and retention, increased student survey participation, and nearly all summer participants (94%) improving academically from the beginning to the end of their program experience.**

HYPE staff, parents, and students testified to these gains' impact on students. HYPE parents witnessed students “come out of [their] shells” in a computer science field that can otherwise be seen as lacking social interaction. As observed by one parent, HYPE allowed her daughter to “get in her happy place, but still collaborate with girls of color around her age about something she's excited about.” Students were self-aware of this increased socialization, but students drew further connections to attribute their increased confidence in STEM to their opportunities to socialize in a supportive community through HYPE. A student who shared her project at the HYPE graduation ceremony, surrounded by family, staff, and friends, recalled that the experience “basically made me realize how much potential I have.”

We hear those stories and see that students feel more confident after going through the HYPE program. They're choosing computer science degrees.

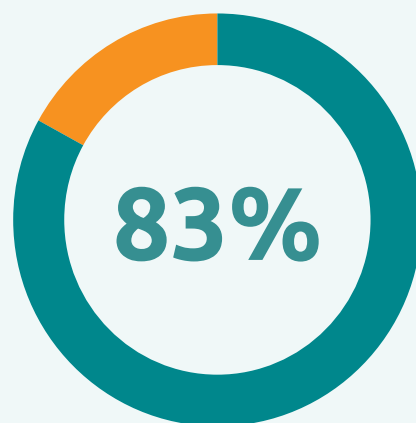
— HYPE Staff Member

Satisfaction

HYPE uses pre- and post-program surveys to measure participant satisfaction along a five-point Likert scale, with five being the most positive. Among the ten HYPE sites supported by BOOST funds, 72 students responded to the surveys, with 83% indicating satisfaction with their program. In the HYPE Project afterschool program, 89% of students felt they had accomplished their goals. In comparison, 78% of summer respondents responded that they believed in their ability to use their creativity, talents, and gifts to solve real-world problems using technology.

Students emphasized their satisfaction with HYPE'S ability to develop a lasting STEM community for participants, from peers to instructors to networking events. One student reflected on lasting instructor support, noting that her instructor had “been a great mentor, helping me get an internship, navigate it, and navigate conflict in my current work field.” As another student recalled, she found that sharing her project at an end-of-program event with her community of peers and family members was “important for growing my career, just being able to have those people support me, like ‘Hey, I remember you did this, maybe I can recommend you for this internship or job.’” Students also offered examples of how HYPE supported their peer-to-peer relationship skills. These students' stories represent the impact of HYPE's design, empowering girls of color in STEM and connecting them to provide representation and support that will last into their future careers.

Youth Satisfaction with their HYPE Program



SPOTLIGHT DATA SOURCES

- Case study interviews & focus groups with HYPE participants, parents staff, and administrators
- End-of-year grantee report – HYPE



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Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) is a competitive grant program administered by the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network (GSAN) and operated in partnership with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). BOOST offers \$85 million via three-year grants, renewed annually, with funding made available through the American Rescue Plan. The grants program is aimed at promoting evidence-based practices and whole child supports in afterschool and summer learning programs. BOOST is designed to expand access, reduce barriers to enrollment, and increase programmatic quality to improve outcomes for students and families throughout the state. GSAN provides recommendations for grant awards based on rigorous application criteria and offers technical assistance and training to grantees to ensure successful implementation. All grants are approved by GaDOE, ensuring alignment with statewide priorities and goals.