

State of Access and Equity of Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs in Oregon

Afterschool and summer programs offer expanded learning opportunities that help children and teens gain new academic, social, and leadership skills; pursue new passions; and develop meaningful relationships within their communities. They provide enrichment opportunities ranging from science and engineering to sports, arts, and theater; academic support for struggling students; a safe place for youth to be; peace of mind for working parents; and a sense of belonging.

Oregon's Student Success Act offers an opportunity to improve outcomes for students who have been historically underserved, as the Act targets expanding services for these children. Afterschool and summer programs, as they provide expanded learning hours, are allowable investments under the Act, and they provide essential support to underserved youth and communities.

A new statewide report, *State of Access and Equity of Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs in Oregon*, shows that access to afterschool opportunities is not equitable or fair: families and youth who live in underserved communities face significant barriers that prevent them from participating in afterschool programs, such as the lack of programs, cost of programs, and cultural issues. And yet, decades of research show the very students who face the greatest barriers to accessing afterschool programs stand to gain the most from them.

Addressing the Opportunity Gap

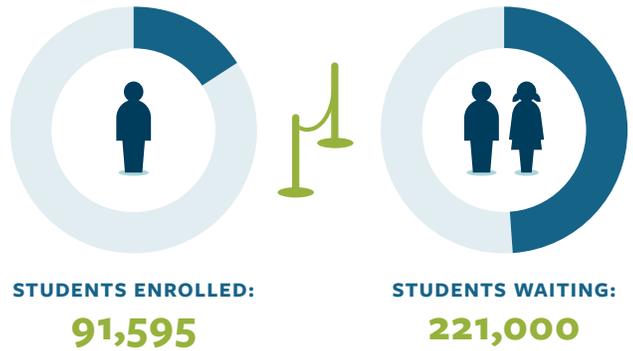
The opportunity gap aligns with the academic achievement gap: by the sixth grade, middle class students have spent 4,000+ more hours in afterschool and summer learning opportunities than students from families who have low-income ([America After 3PM, 2014](#)).

In Oregon, the opportunity gap persistently affects student achievement levels, and race and income both remain significant predictors of educational challenges for our kids (Sinkey & Curry-Stevens, 2015). Quality afterschool programs are a proven strategy to combat the opportunity gap and can help eliminate the achievement gap (America After 3PM, 2014); however, "while access is on the increase, the field [of afterschool] has yet to meet the needs of the most underserved communities" (Hill, S. & Vance, F., 2019).



Oregon Needs More Afterschool

For every Oregon student in afterschool, **2 more would participate** if a program were available.



16% of all Oregon's children (91,595 kids) are enrolled in an afterschool program

Another **44%** (221,000 kids) would participate if an afterschool program were available

There are **1,211** afterschool program sites across the state.



About the Report

In early 2018, [OregonASK Expanded Learning Partnership](#) embarked on a two-year, exploratory data collection project on issues of access and equity in Oregon's afterschool programs, with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. This is the first study of its kind in Oregon, and it offers the first Oregon-specific recommendations for increased access to afterschool backed by data gathered from Oregon's afterschool providers, families, and youth.

Key Findings

The report identified more than 1,200 afterschool programs operating throughout Oregon. A map of the programs, as well as characteristics of them, including days and hours of operation, costs, transportation, and language fluency of participants, are included in the report. Through surveys, focus groups, and quantitative data, OregonASK found both benefits of these programs and barriers to accessing them.

Benefits of Afterschool

Families and youth agree that afterschool programs:

- Offer academic support, particularly in math and reading. Youth of color and those participating in free afterschool programs report academic improvement and skill development from their afterschool programs.
- Provide youth with invaluable exposure to new experiences, such as learning new skills and socializing with students of other cultures.
- Offer youth opportunities to develop social skills and build meaningful relationships.

Barriers to Participating in Afterschool

- Afterschool programs are prohibitively expensive for many Oregon families. Costs to participate can be as much as \$635 per month, per child.
- Parents and families from underserved communities (particularly Spanish speakers) encounter cultural barriers, including language and transportation, that prevent their children from participating.
- There are not enough programs to meet the demand among Oregon families. There are too few programs, and the ones that exist may not be conveniently located for families to access.

Recommendations

Afterschool programs are proven effective for helping kids learn and grow, and they should be integrated into statewide efforts for addressing the learning opportunity gap in Oregon. Effective solutions must be comprehensive and multi-faceted. The report details full recommendations, which can be summarized as:

- Create a legislative workgroup charged with investigating and developing creative, effective policy solutions to address the high cost and limited availability of afterschool programs.
- Address cultural barriers at both the individual program and state-wide levels through a variety of strategies, including resources and professional development for afterschool program staff; and coordination between state agencies, community foundations, school districts, early care and education centers, and afterschool and summer programs on development and implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies.



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