

Afterschool in Utah: Supporting Student Needs and Strengthening Communities



Afterschool programs in Utah are committed to supporting the academic and social-emotional learning of youth. They are willing and ready partner to address students' needs.



Allowing more time for engaged learning. Even before the COVID-19 emergency exacerbated lost learning time, students spent only 20% of their waking hours over the course of a year in school. As schools develop strategies to help students make up for lost time, working with partners like out-of-school time educators who help support learning will be critical. Afterschool programs can help:

- ✓ Engage students with additional learning time in a way that feels valuable and rewarding, different but complementary to the school day
- ✓ Reduce the 6,000-hour learning gap between families with high income and low income



Focusing on how students feel and heal. Focusing on students' well-being is critical to helping them learn. Current research from the [National Academy of Sciences](#), the National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development demonstrates that learning depends on deep connections across a variety of skills, attitudes, and character traits. Positive, supportive relationships and rich, stimulating environments spur the brain to form and strengthen connections that promote further development and learning. Afterschool programs can help:

- ✓ Provide opportunities for athletics, arts, passions, and joys that keep students motivated
- ✓ Create opportunities for students to express their voices and lead in their communities
- ✓ Provide healthy snacks and/or dinner



Sustaining connections to families and communities.

During the initial response to COVID-19, many families first reached out to their afterschool programs to get information about the school and available resources. For families that struggle to develop connections with formal school day personnel, afterschool programs build bridges that help establish effective pathways of communication. Afterschool programs can help:

- ✓ Establish and strengthen bridges with families and communities
- ✓ Leverage resources and connect students and families to food, health, economic, and other types of support



Address inequities that are likely worsening.

The digital divide, the ability of parents to help students with homework, and the economic strain on families with low income make learning even harder for those traditionally underserved. According to UCLA education professor Pedro Noguera, "This virus is exacerbating the inequalities we knew were there before. The kids who have the least are getting the least now." Afterschool programs can help:

- ✓ Reach and serve a significant number of young people from families with low income and racially diverse backgrounds
- ✓ Provide the space for students from all backgrounds to gain confidence through hands-on, real-world learning experiences
- ✓ Promote opportunity and equity in employment fields where students of color and women are traditionally under-represented, such as women in STEM



AFTERSCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Serving Utah's Families and Communities

- **Afterschool Allstars** in Cedar City implemented new health and safety guidelines, maximized outdoor space, and offered creative activities, which allowed them to resume programming quickly after the unexpected school closure.
- The **YMCA of Northern Utah** served meals, provided virtual programming, established an emergency childcare program, and used social media to highlight mindfulness practices and summer programs.
- **Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Utah** served breakfast and lunch to 182 youth and contacted every Club member every week.
- **Dual Immersion Academy's** afterschool program set up virtual home visits to gather narratives on families' experiences while offering comfort and reassurance.
- **Spy Hop** launched a series of free online and on-demand workshops to keep young people connected and learning.



Utah Afterschool Network is a catalyst for building strong, safe, and healthy afterschool programs to support youth, families, and communities.

Contact

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