



## For Immediate Release

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**Note:** *The Utah Afterschool Network will present the findings of the State of Afterschool Report at 1 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda. Speakers will include Tino Nyawlo, assistant professor and director of the REFUGES program at the University of Utah; Tami Pyfer, education advisor to the governor; Sydnee Dickson, Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Cori Groth, associate director of the Utah Education Policy Center; and Jeniya McCullar, the 2018 Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year.*

## Afterschool programs provide “incredible benefits”—but many Utah youth are missing out on them

*Utah Education Policy Center contributes to first report on afterschool programs in Utah.*

Jan. 30, 2019—As many as 99,000 youth may be left unsupervised when the school day ends and more than twice that many don’t have access to high-quality afterschool programs—a missed opportunity to improve the lives of Utah’s youth, a new report says.

The [\*State of Afterschool Report\*](#), released Wednesday during a press conference at the Utah Capitol, is the first to assess the landscape of afterschool programming in the state. It highlights best practices and positive outcomes associated with afterschool program participation.

The Utah Education Policy Center at the University of Utah contributed to the report prepared by the Utah Afterschool Network, a non-profit agency that works to ensure Utah youth have access to high-quality afterschool programs that keep them engaged, learning and safe.

The Utah Education Policy Center also authored many of the [evaluation reports](#) included in the assessment.

Research shows that after school programs improve students’ academic success, social and emotional learning skills, health and well-being, help them avoid risky behaviors and form more positive relationships, said Cori Groth, associate director of the Utah Education Policy Center in the University of Utah’s College of Education.

“Findings from our evaluation studies confirm that high-quality afterschool programs can make a powerful difference for the students who need support the most in Utah,” Groth said.

Groth also indicated the findings from the afterschool evaluation studies have immediate applicability.

“The evaluation results we now have on the impact of afterschool programs on students’ academic success can be used by educators and policymakers to leverage resources and design programs that will continue to work for our students statewide,” said Groth.

During the 2017-2018 academic school year, the Utah Afterschool Network worked with 303 afterschool programs around the state that served more than 43,000 youth. But the report found far more youth are left unsupervised or don’t have access to a high-quality afterschool program.

In addition, the Afterschool Alliance has found that while nearly 100,000 youth are unsupervised after school, another 257,000 youth would participate in a program if one were available in their communities, the researchers found. Access to high-quality afterschool programs is particularly a problem in rural Utah.

But there is not enough funding in Utah to meet demand. In 2018, 45 programs sought state grants through the Afterschool Program Quality Improvement program, but only 14 received funding.

“This is a significant missed opportunity, not only for helping our youth avoid risky behaviors and make smart decisions, but also for providing learning opportunities that teach key skills that help students become successful in school, career and life,” said Rich West, chair of the Utah Afterschool Network Board.

One example: Classroom teachers reported 65 percent of students who attended an afterschool program offered by the Community Education Partnership of West Valley City for 30 days or more increased their academic performance.

Engaging in afterschool programs provide “incredible benefits for our students across the state,” said Lt. Governor Spencer Cox.

“Whether it’s working in a makerspace, on a robotics project, in team-building activities or on extended academic learning, after school programs help students develop those 21<sup>st</sup> century work skills that are critical not only to their future careers, but to a healthy economy as well,” Cox said.

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