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# WHOLE CHILD

## KEY ISSUES IN ADDRESSING THE WHOLE CHILD MODEL

There is recognition that a child’s academic achievements can’t be separated from his or her mental health and social-emotional learning. Stemming from this recognition is a growing movement to encourage schools to refocus their educational efforts in a way that takes a “whole child approach.” This approach shifts away from simply targeting a child’s academic achievements and instead promotes the overall well-being of a child and considers ways to improve his or her physical and emotional health as well.

The *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child* framework, as adopted by the NC State Board of Education in 2016, supports the health behaviors and academic performance of students as inextricably linked to each other.

## INTRODUCTION

When discussing school reform, policymakers and educators have often focused on accountability standards, curriculums, and teaching styles. However, in recent years, the health and wellness of students has appeared more in the discussion. Extensive research and practical knowledge prove that physical health, nutrition, family and community environment, and social and emotional health are essential ingredients that can greatly contribute to, or greatly hinder, a child’s ability to learn. This section will focus on issues of supporting the whole child approach in North Carolina and address some current policies and programs that seek to support healthy, thriving children. While many factors contribute to the overall wellbeing of a child, we will focus on three aspects in this section: Nutrition, Expanded Learning/Afterschool, and Trauma-Based Learning.

## NUTRITION

In recent years, increased attention has been paid by school and district leaders and policymakers to improving student nutrition, and to making school food options healthier. While there is wide agreement about the importance of helping students be well-nourished, the issue still poses several challenges for schools and school systems.

- **Healthier foods cost more**, so eliminating foods with high sugar, salt, and fat contents reduces revenue for school food service groups.
- **Low participation leads to higher prices.** Federal programs provide more funding to schools with higher participation rates, so schools with lower participation rates lose out on two fronts: students are not fully served, and schools pay higher prices for participating students.

North Carolina and the United States face a dual dilemma: rising youth obesity and rising youth poverty. Rising poverty rates increase the need for schools to provide adequate meals to their students. At the same time, increasing rates of childhood and adolescent obesity oblige school agencies to limit student access to unhealthy food in exchange for more nutritious options. Improving child nutrition in schools is a vital factor in boosting student performance at all grade levels. Studies have shown that nutritious meals not only supply students with fuel for the school day, but also enhance attentiveness and improve school attendance and classroom behavior. Consuming a nutritious breakfast is especially important because students who eat a

filling breakfast exhibit general improvement in their school performance and enhanced cognitive abilities. Furthermore, researchers have found that students who eat breakfast pay attention longer, are tardy less often, have fewer absences, and visit the school nurse less frequently.

Despite the plethora of scientific research studies that speak to the great value of nutritious meals for improving students' academic performance, many students skip breakfast and/or consume high-fat and high-sugar foods in the morning. Since children can receive up to 50 percent of their daily food intake in school, it is vital that schools make healthy food more accessible to students.

## LEGISLATION REGARDING SCHOOL NUTRITION

North Carolina has passed several laws to ensure that students have access to nutritious foods at public schools and institutions. Recent legislation includes:

- North Carolina's Nutrition Standards for Elementary Schools
  - Oversees the distribution of food offered through the National School Lunch Program, the After School Snack Program, and a la carte items
  - Sets health requirements for school food offerings to control for fat and sugar calories, whole grain content, fruit and vegetable offerings, as well as milk varieties available
  - Prohibits the sale of a la carte items that do not meet minimum nutritional values and processed foods that are predominantly made from sweeteners, including soda, chewing gum, and candy
- Senate Bill 415 (2011)
  - Requires that school breakfasts must be provided "at no cost to children who qualify for reduced-price meals"
- General Statute 115C-264
  - Mandates that "all school food services shall be operated on a nonprofit basis, and any earnings therefrom over and above the cost of operation... shall be used to reduce the cost of food, to serve better food, or to provide free or reduced-price lunches to indigent children"
- General Statute 143-64
  - Allows local administrative units, community colleges, and other public institutions to set nutritional standards on the types of beverages sold at each respective institution

## OBESITY

- ✓ According to the 2017 Youth Risk and Behavior Survey, 15.5% of North Carolina high school students are overweight, and an additional 15.4% are obese. <sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Since 1995, the rate of childhood obesity in North Carolina has been increasing.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Recognizing the public school as a place where children both eat and learn, the federal government has created several laws, guidelines, and subsidy programs that help schools provide nutritious food and health education to students. Below is a brief overview of current federal school nutrition programs.

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<sup>1</sup> NC Healthy Schools, 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Graphs. Available at <http://www.nchealthyschools.org/docs/data/yrbs/2017/statewide/highschool/graphs.pdf>.

## GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR ALL NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

All public and non-profit private schools as well as residential childcare institutions that serve children are eligible to participate in federal school nutrition programs. National school nutrition programs offer United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) subsidies to schools serving meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Children at participating schools and institutions are able to receive meals at full price, reduced-price, or for free depending on family income.

## INCOME ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS (2018-2019)

Household Size	Annual Income	
	Free	Reduced
1	\$15,782	\$22,459
2	\$21,398	\$30,451
3	\$27,014	\$38,443
4	\$32,630	\$46,435
5	\$38,246	\$54,427
6	\$43,862	\$62,419
7	\$49,478	\$70,411
8	\$55,094	\$78,403
<b>Each additional family member add:</b>	\$5,616	\$7,992

NC DPI, Income Eligibility Standards for Free and Reduced-Price Meals. Available at <https://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/information-resources/eligibility/eligibility-income-eligibility-guidelines>.

The monetary subsidies that the USDA offers to participating schools and institutions increase as the price each student pays for a meal decreases. All school food authorities, which provide food to students in these qualifying schools and institutions, are allowed to set the prices for meals, but must operate as non-profit organizations.

At the federal level, school nutrition programs are administered by the Food and Nutrition Services at the USDA. At the state level, school nutrition programs are operated by State Education Agencies, which have agreements with school food authorities.

## NORTH CAROLINA'S PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

North Carolina school nutrition programs are administered and monitored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, specifically in the Child Nutrition Services (CNS) branch. All federal lunch and breakfast programs are available to students enrolled in public school. In 2016-2017, 370,957 students participated in school breakfast programs, and 636,748 participated in national school lunch programs.<sup>2</sup> In the 2016-2017

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<sup>2</sup> Food Research and Action Center, North Carolina. Available at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/north-carolina-breakfast-report.pdf>.

school year, approximately 789,643 students qualified for free meals and 61,006 students qualified for reduced price meals.<sup>3</sup>

North Carolina public and private non-profit schools offer both reimbursable meals and a la carte items through USDA meal programs. However, a la carte items do not necessarily comply with federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans and therefore do not warrant USDA subsidies.

## A LA CARTE DILEMMA

Although the USDA programs offer subsidies to schools that serve meals which satisfy federal dietary guidelines, many school food authorities also provide a la carte items which include beverages and foods that do not comply with federal dietary standards. Since the early 1990s, the sale of a la carte items has increased as students have developed a taste preference for high-fat and high-sugar foods. In response, school food authorities sell these products at increasingly higher rates to gain profits. Because of the student taste trend and greater profit from the a la carte items, there has been a recent shift from the USDA-subsidized meal to the a la carte meal. Due to this shift, state and local funds for food have been appropriated elsewhere. This reality creates a dilemma as school food authorities must find a way to best feed students while simultaneously earning sufficient profits to operate.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)

The National School Lunch Program helps provide nutritionally balanced meals to students in elementary, middle and high schools. Under the NSLP, school food authorities must serve meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans and must offer these meals at a reduced price or at no additional charge to students who qualify. In return, the USDA grants the school or institution a monetary subsidy for every meal served. In 2016, the NSLP operated in over 100,000 public and nonprofit private schools (grades K-12) and residential child care institutions across the country. The NSLP provided low-cost or free lunches to over 30.4 million children daily.<sup>4</sup>

Reimbursement rates for the NSLP are set based on the percent of free and reduced price lunches served by a school during the second preceding school year, meaning the actual meals provided by a school food authority in 2015-16 determine the reimbursement rates for 2017-18. Based on this model, in 2017-18, the reimbursement rates for a school food authority that served less than 60% free and reduced price lunches during the second preceding school year were:<sup>5</sup>

Free Lunch	Reduced-Price Lunch	Paid Lunch
\$3.23	\$2.83	\$0.31

## THE AFTER SCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM (ASSP)

Funding for the National School Lunch Program also serves food to children who participate in afterschool academic or care programs. Under the After School Snack Program, eligible schools and institutions, where at least 50% of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced meals, receive USDA cash subsidies for each

<sup>3</sup> NC DPI, 2016-17 Free & Reduced Meals Application Data. Available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/fbs/resources/data/freereduced/2016-17freereduced.xlsx>.

<sup>4</sup> USDA National School Lunch Program. Available at <http://ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/child-nutrition-programs/national-school-lunch-program.aspx#Uu-9GdLiiTM>.

<sup>5</sup> USDA, National School Lunch Reimbursement Rates. Available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-07-28/pdf/2017-15956.pdf>.

snack they serve in afterschool programs that are education or enrichment based. To receive the subsidy, the nutritional content of the snacks must meet federal guidelines. Currently, 27,000 schools nationwide participate in this program.

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Under the School Breakfast Program, schools and institutions that provide their students with breakfast meals that meet the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans receive monetary subsidies from the USDA.

The reimbursement rates for the 2016-17 school year were:<sup>6</sup>

Free Breakfast	Reduced-Price Breakfasts	Paid Breakfasts
\$1.71	\$1.41	\$0.29

All children can participate in the program and meals are offered at full price, reduced price, or no charge, depending on the student's family income. In 2016-2017, over 428,000 students participated in the School Breakfast Program in North Carolina; nearly 371,000 of them were low-income children who received a free or reduced-price school breakfast. While this program has expanded greatly, large numbers of eligible students still do not take advantage of the School Breakfast Program.

## SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

In the Special Milk program, the USDA provides monetary subsidies to all eligible schools and institutions that serve milk to children. The milk must meet state and local standards concerning fat content and flavoring options as well as comply with the fat and vitamin requirements set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Schools and institutions must offer milk at full price, reduced-price, or no charge, depending on students' household family income. Schools and institutions that do not participate in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program are still eligible to participate in the Special Milk Program. Schools or childcare facilities in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program already receive subsidies for the milk they offer students with breakfast and lunch meals; therefore, they are not eligible to receive additional USDA subsidies for milk. However, schools who participate in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program may participate in the Special Milk Program to provide milk to students in pre-K or Kindergarten. In 2017, over 3,500 outlets served 41.3 million half-pints of milk through the Special Milk Program, less than half of the amount served (85.85 million half-pints) in 2008.<sup>7</sup> Participation in the Special Milk Program is decreasing as more schools join the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

## SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) reimburses agencies that serve nutritious meals to children 18 years and younger that are on school summer vacation or during year-round school's off-track periods for at least 15 continuous days. The USDA offers subsidies for all meals and snacks served by eligible schools and institutions, given that the food offered meets federal health requirements. This program runs on a volunteer basis: schools and institutions such as public schools, non-profit private schools, public or private non-profit camps, municipal, county, tribal, and state governments can freely participate in the program. In most programs, children receive one or two reimbursable meals per day. Students in the program follow the same

<sup>6</sup> FRAC, North Carolina School Breakfast Report. Available at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/north-carolina-breakfast-report.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> USDA, Special Milk Program. Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/pd/smsummar-07.pdf>.

payment methods as they do during the year for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

States may determine eligibility requirements. In North Carolina, students are eligible for the Summer Food Service Program under the following requirements:

- Under 18 years of age or disabled individuals over 18 years of age
- Enrolled in public school district or county office of education, charter school, government or tribal, community-based organization, camp or private school<sup>8</sup>

## SEAMLESS SUMMER OPTION PROGRAM

The Seamless Summer Option Program offers meals to students in low-income areas through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Schools and institutions that are part of the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program may apply for the Seamless Summer Option Program, which allows them to continue to use the same food service and regulations from school year throughout summer months and track out periods. To participate in the Seamless Summer Option Program, schools must be area-eligible, meaning that 50 percent or more of the students in that area must qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Under this program, school food authorities are able to serve free meals to all children and youth under 18 years of age in low-income areas.

There are several types of schools and institutions that may run the program including:

- **Open sites:** all children eat free in communities where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.
- **Restricted open sites:** sites that meet the open site criteria, explained above, but are later restricted for safety, control, or security reasons.
- **Closed enrolled sites:** may be in any community for an enrolled group of low-income children and meets the 50 percent criteria explained above. This excludes academic summer schools.
- **Migrant sites:** serving children of migrant families.
- **Camps:** residential or non-residential camps.<sup>9</sup>

## STRIKEFORCE INITIATIVE FOR RURAL GROWTH

In 2013 North Carolina became a StrikeForce state as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity. This initiative was created to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Nationally, StrikeForce has invested more than \$23.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across more than twenty states.<sup>10</sup> Specifically in North Carolina, the initiative has provided 5,047,144 summer meals for kids. Participating Counties in North Carolina include:

Alleghany County	Edgecombe County	Montgomery County	Sampson County
Anson County	Gates County	Nash County	Scotland County
Beaufort County	Graham County	Northampton County	Swain County
Bertie County	Granville County	Pamlico County	Tyrrell County
Bladen County	Greene County	Pasquotank County	Vance County

<sup>8</sup> NCDPI, Summer Food Service Program Prescreen.

Available at <https://www.ncchildnutrition.org/snp/Prescreen/PrescreenOverview.aspx>.

<sup>9</sup> USDA, An Opportunity for Schools. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/opportunity-schools>.

<sup>10</sup> USDA, StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity North Carolina. Available at <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nc-strikeforce-info-0115.pdf>.

Caswell County	Halifax County	Perquimans County	Warren County
Cherokee County	Hertford County	Person County	Washington County
Chowan County	Hoke County	Pitt County	Watauga County
Clay County	Hyde County	Richmond County	Wayne County
Cleveland County	Jackson County	Robeson County	Wilkes County
Columbus County	Lenoir County	Rowan County	Wilson County
Duplin County	Martin County	Rutherford County	

Source: USDA, StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity North Carolina.

## FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM (FFVP)

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides fresh produce to select schools across the nation. The USDA finances this program and aims to combat childhood obesity by educating students about healthy food choices and offering healthy food to students. Eligibility of schools and institutions is need-based. Therefore, schools with a high proportion of students who receive reduced-price or free meals are selected for the program more frequently.

The program began as a pilot in 2002, and after experiencing success in exposing students to healthy food options, was expanded to all states and US territories in 2008. North Carolina has selected certain schools to participate in this program. In 2018-2019 school year, 200 schools will participate in the FFVP, marking the highest participation since the pilot program.<sup>11</sup> These funds provide fresh produce to students in the selected schools and allocate funds to help teachers incorporate nutrition education into lesson plans.

## HEALTHY, HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010

In December 2010, President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Included in this legislation were the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program, the Afterschool Meal Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). This legislation provides \$4.5 billion in new resources for those programs from 2010-2020. The law increased, for the first time in 15 years, the School Lunch and School Breakfast per meal reimbursement by six cents. Schools must meet the new nutrition standards in order to receive the meal reimbursement increase.

## NORTH CAROLINA INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR CHILDREN

In response to North Carolina's dual dilemma of high childhood obesity and food insecurity, the state has taken action to increase participation in meal programs and make the food offered in schools more nutritious. There are several initiatives housed in the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NC DPH) within the NC Department of Health & Human Services that further promote healthy eating and lifestyles for children and their families. The NC DPH offers assistance and resources for classroom lesson plans, course studies, nutritional information handouts, and access to further resources that parents, school administrators, school food authorities, and teachers can use to promote health and provide food to all of North Carolina's students.

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<sup>11</sup> NC DPI, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Applications Received for SY 2014-2015. Available at <http://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/ffvp/2schspercent.pdf>.

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST INITIATIVES

In regard to breakfast, North Carolina has tried various ways to make the food offered through the Innovative School Breakfast Program more accessible to students by using innovative distribution methods. Under this program, depending on home income levels, students may purchase breakfast at a full price, a reduced-price, or receive breakfast for free.

The methods of breakfast service that are either in use or that North Carolina Division of Public Health promotes include:<sup>12</sup>

<b>Breakfast in the Classroom</b>	Breakfast is delivered to the classroom by Child Nutrition staff, school staff or students. Breakfast is incorporated into academic instruction time.
<b>Grab n’ Go</b>	Handheld breakfast items are served. Items can be bagged or packaged for quick pick up. Students can eat breakfast in the cafeteria, classroom or another location on school campus.
<b>Satellite Breakfast or Breakfast Kiosk</b>	Breakfast is served in high traffic area away from cafeteria (i.e., school bus or carpool drop off, parking lot, entrance, or hallway).
<b>Breakfast Break</b>	Breakfast is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning.
<b>Second Chance Breakfast</b>	Breakfast is served after first period or at a scheduled time later in the morning for students who miss breakfast before school.
<b>Breakfast on the Bus</b>	Breakfast is served and eaten on the bus on the way to school.
<b>Universal Breakfast</b>	School districts with a higher percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price meals are able to balance expenses and reimbursements to offer breakfast at no charge to all students regardless of income.

In July of 2011, North Carolina ratified a bill allowing all students who qualify for reduced-price meals to receive breakfast for free. In doing so, North Carolina hoped to increase participation in the School Breakfast Program and to decrease food insecurity levels. The term food insecurity refers to the USDA’s measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household’s need to make trade-offs between necessities, such as housing or medical bills and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

## NO KID HUNGRY NC

In addition to innovative distribution methods, North Carolina piloted a program entitled “No Kid Hungry” in September 2011. Administrators introduced the program in 28 schools to increase participation in School Breakfast Programs. Under “No Kid Hungry,” free breakfast was widely offered and the number of children who could receive free meals during the summer was increased. Since only 13% of eligible students utilized free or reduced-price meal programs during the summer months, the “No Kid Hungry” campaign focused on expanding the number of students eligible for these meals.

“No Kid Hungry” campaigns have been launched in several other states. These campaigns have positively impacted childhood food insecurity by increasing student participation in school breakfast programs and decreasing overall food insecurity levels.

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<sup>12</sup> NC DPI, Innovative School Breakfast Programs. Available at <https://childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/programs/sbp/innovative-school-breakfast-programs>.



In 2014, No Kid Hungry NC became an initiative based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. No Kid Hungry now has 4 focus areas: school breakfast, summer meals, afterschool meals, and nutrition education.<sup>13</sup>

## ACTION AGAINST OBESITY

In response to the rising obesity rate and popularity of unhealthy a la carte items, North Carolina schools have also taken action to make healthier foods available to students. Many school systems have increased their fruit, vegetable, and whole grain offerings, limited fried food options, and reduced the types of available foods with high fat and sugar content levels. Schools are also eliminating whole milk and emphasizing the USDA-subsidized meal.

## EXPANDED LEARNING

Expanded learning programs are opportunities for children before school, after school, on weekends and during summers, including community programs such as those provided by the YMCA or Boys & Girls Clubs, community-based programs, faith-based programs, and school-led programs. Expanded learning programs have a proven ability to contribute greatly to a child's education and overall wellbeing. National and state research shows that quality afterschool and expanded learning programs have potential for significant positive impacts in society.

In 2014, 10.2 million K-12 children participated in afterschool programs in the United States. In addition, parents of 19.4 million children said they would participate in afterschool programs if a quality program were available in their community. Approximately 11.3 million of school-age children are on their own after school.<sup>14</sup>

North Carolina has seen a steady increase in afterschool program participation during the past 10 years and is often touted as one of the leading states for its high quality expanded learning programs. Below are statistics regarding afterschool and expanded learning in North Carolina.

- 15% (234,908) of North Carolina's K-12 children participate in afterschool programs, including students in programs supported by the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the only federal program dedicated exclusively to afterschool.<sup>15</sup>
- Approximately 39% (523,140) of children not currently in afterschool programs would likely participate if they had access to a quality program in their community.
- 55% of North Carolina children in an afterschool program qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program.
- On average, children spend 6.03 hours and 3.59 days per week in an afterschool program.
- 51% of afterschool programs in North Carolina are located in a public school building.

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<sup>13</sup> No Kid Hungry NC. Available at <http://nokidhungrync.org/>.

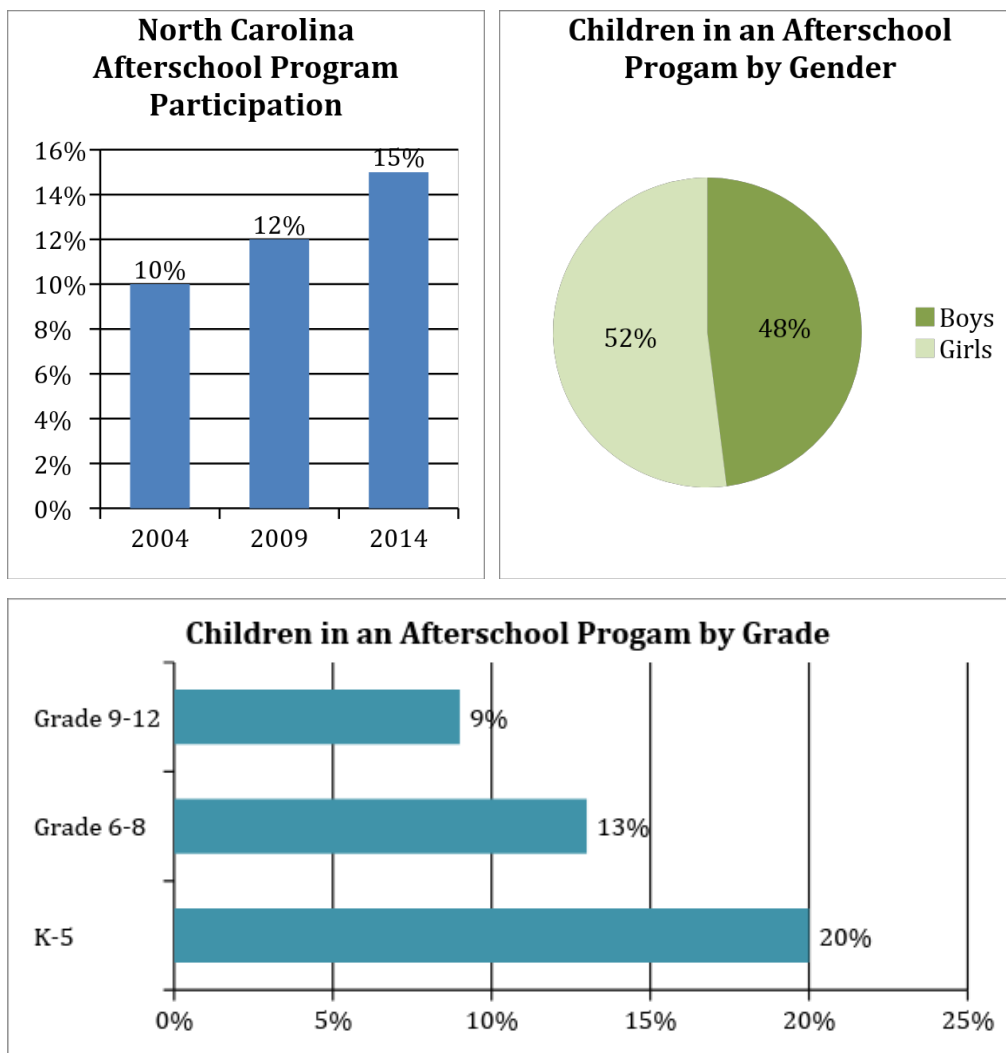
<sup>14</sup> Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM.

Available at [http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM\\_National\\_Report.pdf](http://afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: North Carolina.

Available at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/NC-AA3PM-2014-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

## QUICK LOOK: CHILDREN IN AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS 2014<sup>16</sup>



## BENEFITS OF EXPANDED LEARNING & AFTERSCHOOL: A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Expanded learning and afterschool programs capture many benefits, for students and parents, but also for society as a whole. Students in expanded learning programs often see multiple benefits, including improvements in personal, social and academic skills as well as their self-esteem.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the Promising Afterschool Programs Study found that regular participation in high-quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.<sup>18</sup> For example, a 2.5 year evaluation found that PROJECT LEARN (a

<sup>16</sup> Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: North Carolina. Available at [http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/NC/demand/p\\_of\\_children\\_in\\_programs\\_2014](http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/detail.html#s/NC/demand/p_of_children_in_programs_2014).

<sup>17</sup> Study completed by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Study completed by University of California at Irvine, 2007.

program of the Boys & Girls Clubs) participants increased their overall grade point average by 11 percent and increased their spelling grade point average by 22 percent.<sup>19</sup>

There are broader gains to families and communities when quality expanded learning programs are in place, specifically in the areas of economic development and safety & crime prevention. In North Carolina, eighty percent of parents agree that afterschool programs help them keep their jobs.<sup>20</sup> Without child supervision during afterschool hours, parents miss an average of eight days of work. On a national scale, this added stress can cost businesses up to \$300 billion annually in lost productivity.<sup>21</sup> For many children, expanded learning programs offer care and supervision; many of these youth would otherwise be unsupervised. Expanded learning programs provide gang and drug prevention initiatives, and access to mentors. The hours between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. are the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and sex.<sup>22</sup> Afterschool programs have been shown to decrease incidence of teen pregnancy and increase graduation rates.

Beyond the economic advantages of parents remaining at work and students being better prepared to enter the work force due to their afterschool involvement, investment in afterschool programming is a significant cost-savings for society. According to data from the Afterschool Alliance, teenage mothers cost society approximately \$8 billion annually in increased welfare costs and lost tax revenue, and high school dropouts earn 24 percent less over their lifetime than high school graduates. It is estimated that every taxpayer dollar invested in afterschool programs saves \$3 on future law enforcement and social services expenses.<sup>23</sup>

## SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

Summer learning loss is an important issue facing our public schools. According to a survey administered by the National Summer Learning Association, two-thirds of the teachers polled spend at least a month reviewing old material at the start of the school year.<sup>24</sup> This leads to the loss of valuable learning time in the classroom and the loss of critical skills over the summer. Summer programs, as a component of expanded learning programs, are one of the best strategies to combat this phenomenon.

Furthermore, students from low-income families are more likely than their peers from higher-income families to experience learning loss over the summer. Studies have also shown that part of the achievement gap between students of different income levels is due to the differences in learning rates over the summer. In a Johns Hopkins study, researchers found that summer learning loss was responsible for about two-thirds of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade achievement gap between low-income and more advantaged students.<sup>25</sup> Students are also more likely to experience a summer drop in mathematical skills than in literary skills.

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<sup>19</sup> National Youth Development Information Center, 2005, *Making a Difference in the Lives of Youth*.

<sup>20</sup> Afterschool Alliance, *America After 3PM: North Carolina*.

<sup>21</sup> Community, Families and Work Program at Brandeis University, 2004; Catalyst & Brandeis University, 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Afterschool Alliance, 2012 Candidate Guide. Available at [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate\\_guide%20final.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/candidate_guide%20final.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Education Week, *After Summer, Teachers Spend a Month Reteaching Students*. Available at [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/beyond\\_schools/2013/06/after\\_summer\\_teachers\\_spend\\_a\\_month\\_re-teaching\\_students.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/beyond_schools/2013/06/after_summer_teachers_spend_a_month_re-teaching_students.html).

<sup>25</sup> Education Week, *Programs Found to Stem Summer Learning Loss and Boost Achievement*. Available at [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/time\\_and\\_learning/2014/10/students\\_struggling\\_the\\_most\\_in.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/time_and_learning/2014/10/students_struggling_the_most_in.html).

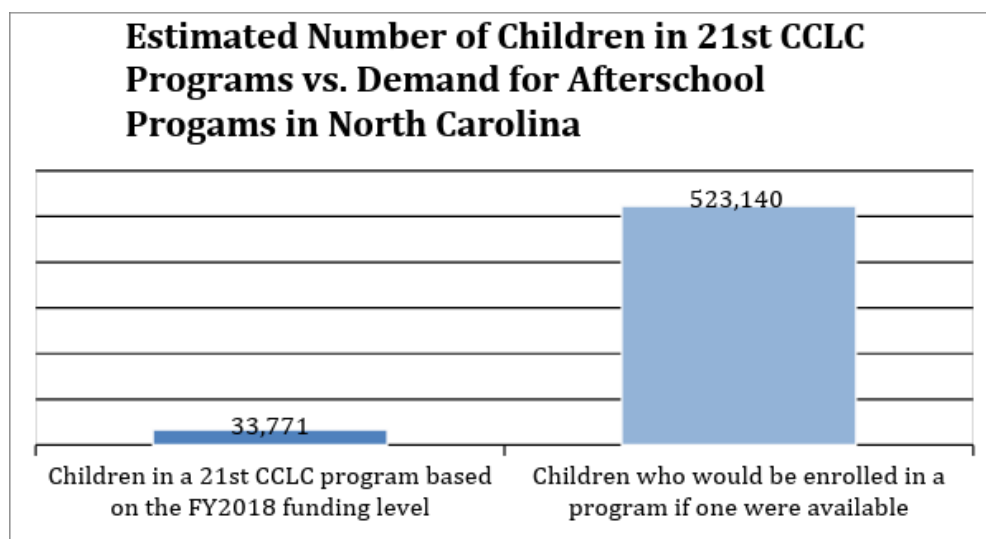
In North Carolina, 32% of families report at least one child is in a summer learning program, and 55% of families say they want their children enrolled in a summer learning program. In fact, 76% of parents agree that summer activities help maintain academic skills.<sup>26</sup>

## THE COST OF AFTERSCHOOL AND FUNDING SOURCES

According to a recent study by the Wallace Foundation, with all expenses considered, the cost of running an afterschool program during the school year for elementary and middle school students averages to \$7.40/hour per child. For high school, the cost is an average of \$10.30/hour per child. On average, the annual full cost per child for afterschool programming is \$4,320. A study conducted by the Wallace Foundation and the RAND corporation found that a high quality summer learning program costs between \$1,330 and \$2,801 per child for a six-hour-a-day, five-week program.<sup>27</sup>

### 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) federal program serves students in high-poverty communities across the country by giving them the opportunity to participate in academic enrichment and youth development programs. Centers do this by providing a wide range of activities including but not limited to tutoring, supplemental educational services, homework help, recreational activities, career training, drug and violence prevention programs, expanded library service hours, community service, and youth leadership activities. The 21st CCLC is the only federal funding source in North Carolina specifically devoted to before school, afterschool, and summer learning programs. In FY 2018, \$33,770,546 was appropriated to 21st CCLC in North Carolina.<sup>28</sup>



Source: Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool by the Numbers in North Carolina. Available at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/NC-afterschool-facts.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Afterschool Alliance, America After 3PM: North Carolina.

<sup>27</sup> Wallace Foundation, The Cost of Quality Out-of-School-Time Programs. Available at <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/after-school/key-research/Documents/The-Cost-of-Quality-of-Out-of-School-Time-Programs.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Afterschool Alliance, Afterschool in North Carolina. Available at: <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyStateFacts.cfm?state=NC>.

## CHILD CARE & DEVELOPMENT FUND

In addition to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, the federal government provides funding for the Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) which provides vouchers or subsidies for low-income parents to pay for childcare including preschool, before school, after school and summer care for children age 6 to 12. The total amount provided by the federal government for CCDF was \$6.08 billion. President Obama's most recent 2016 budget proposed an additional \$82 billion over 10 years in mandatory funding to CCDF that will be necessary to promote greater access to quality afterschool programs.<sup>29</sup> North Carolina received approximately \$214 million federal CCDF dollars in 2016. With the help of federal assistance, 65,600 children from 31,900 families in North Carolina can access child care. About 5,290 providers in the state served participating children.<sup>30</sup>

## NORTH CAROLINA AFTER-SCHOOL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

In the summer of 2014, The North Carolina General Assembly appropriated five million dollars (\$5,000,000) in state funds for the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program to be administered by the Department of Public Instruction as part of the Competitive Grants to Improve After-School Services Act [S.L. 2014-100].

Organizations are eligible to receive two-year grants of up to five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) a year, based on the proposed number of students served, with an option for a third year of funding. To determine the level of funding eligibility, organizations utilized the Wallace Foundation Out-of-School Time Cost Calculator and the NC Department of Commerce's 2014 Tier Designations. In accordance with the law, grant funds must be matched on the basis of three dollars (\$3.00) in grant funds for every one dollar (\$1.00) in non-grant funds. For 2014-15, 41 applications were submitted by the due date. Based on the final ratings for the applications, 17 were approved by the State Board of Education on January, 2015, for a total of \$4,784,539.

On September 9, 2015, the General Assembly appropriated six million dollars (\$6,000,000) in state funds through S.L. 2015-241 to provide a second-year grant to grant recipients approved under the After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program pursuant to Section 8.19 of S.L. 2014-100. Sufficient funds were appropriated to allow the State to fund the 4 program proposals representing the next four highest scores in rank order within the strong quality band for a total of \$1,108,480.<sup>31</sup>

The North Carolina After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program has \$6 million dedicated per year through 2018-19.

## NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Established in 2002, the North Carolina Center for Afterschool Programs (NC CAP) is a comprehensive statewide afterschool and expanded learning network, with key partners including afterschool providers, state agencies, state and local policymakers, law enforcement, universities and community colleges, business, and the philanthropic community, working together to increase access to high quality afterschool and expanded learning programs for all children and youth in North Carolina, especially for those at-risk of education failure.

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<sup>29</sup> Childcare Aware America. Available at <https://usa.childcareaware.org/2015/02/fy16presidentsbudget/>.

<sup>30</sup> USDHHS, Child Care Across America. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/child-care-across-america>.

<sup>31</sup> NC DPI, After-School Quality Improvement Grant Program. Available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/program-monitoring/after-school/>.

**Support:** With information coming from a multitude of partners, NC CAP is a clearinghouse for the latest research, current trends, and hot topics in the afterschool and expanded learning field.

**Inform:** Quality data collection and research are essential for afterschool and expanded learning programs to understand their impact on students. Research and Evaluation are critical to the sustainability of the program and help refine practices to better serve students and families in the community.

**Convene:** As a way to convene community, state, and national stakeholders in the afterschool and expanded learning environment, NC CAP holds its annual Synergy Conference.

**Advocate:** Afterschool and expanded learning opportunities can serve as links in the chain of building and developing top notch students and 21st Century citizens. Afterschool connects many communities: academics, health and wellness, juvenile justice, economic development, STEM, and college and career preparedness. NC CAP advocates for federal, state, and local opportunities for students and communities.

More information about afterschool and expanded learning programs and expanded learning can be found at [www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org) and [www.ncafterschool.org](http://www.ncafterschool.org).

## THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON LEARNING

### BACKGROUND

The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, conducted from 1995-1997, documented the high prevalence of traumatic experiences in childhood, with 64% of respondents reporting adverse experiences in at least one area and 22% reporting adversity in three or more areas.<sup>32</sup> More recent studies have confirmed these rates and determined that ACEs are even more common for youth from low-income homes and ethnic minority groups.<sup>33</sup> When adverse experiences are unpredictable, severe, or prolonged, resulting traumatic stress can impact both the chemistry and structure of a child's developing brain.<sup>34</sup> Too often, students arrive at school besieged by the neurological responses of a stress response system that is operating on high alert, with attention focused on scanning the environment for danger rather than concentrating on school work. Educators may see this manifest in negative or disruptive behavior, but students may be simply responding to their bodies' heightened vulnerability to experience the stress reaction of "fight" (e.g., violence; aggression), "flight" (e.g., absenteeism; dropouts), or "freeze" (e.g., shut down; withdraw).

Added to behavioral challenges, early adversity can take a significant toll on academic performance. Students who experience three or more ACEs score lower than their peers on standardized tests; are 2.5 times more likely to fail a grade; are up to 32 times more likely to be labeled as learning disabled; and are more likely to be suspended and expelled.<sup>35</sup> This group of high-need students suffers disproportionately under traditional approaches to education and discipline. Instead, these students need school-based supports and interventions to help them build resilience skills and persist through adversity.

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<sup>32</sup> Anda et al., 2006

<sup>33</sup> Busby, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2013

<sup>34</sup> De Bellis & Zisk, 2014

<sup>35</sup> Bethell et al., 2014; Perfect et al., 2016; Porsche et al., 2016

# NORTH CAROLINA RESILIENCE AND LEARNING PROJECT

To address the impact of trauma on learning, the Public School Forum of NC spent over a year studying this issue and researching other trauma-informed schools programs across the country through our 2015 Study Group XVI. Recommendations from this committee on trauma and learning led to the launch of the Forum's North Carolina Resilience and Learning Project. The Project began in the 2017-2018 school year as a pilot in two schools in Edgecombe County Public Schools and one school in Rowan-Salisbury Schools. The Project aims to design and implement **whole-school** and **district-wide strategies** to improve the academic performance and social-emotional wellbeing of students affected by trauma. The Project model involves two main components: (1) broad-based educator training for all school staff, with more intensive training for a core group of school-level leaders; and (2) intensive coaching across the school year to support trauma-sensitive strategy selection and implementation.

Broad training for all staff fosters unifying language, understanding, and expectations to promote climate and culture change, and helps staff recognize the neurobiological foundations of students' disruptive behaviors. In addition to training, we work with each school to create a steering committee, called a Resilience Team, and we provide regular on-site coaching to help staff go beyond training and awareness and actually implement trauma-sensitive, whole school strategies and create change. Some of these strategies and changes implemented in our three pilot schools have included "calm down corners" in each classroom, restorative discipline practices such as a reflection sheet for students in ISS, promoting staff self-care, encouraging stronger student-staff relationships, and a new check-in/check-out staff buddy program for students with the highest number of referrals.

In similar models being implemented in other states, early evidence has shown reductions in office referral and suspension rates, improved attendance, and improvements in various academic achievement measures. One teacher in one of the pilot schools shared: "I think we're all just trying to think about the reasons and trying to figure out why things are happening, not necessarily punishing for an action. So there are consequences, but [it's also about] looking at *What's the problem, [and asking] how can we help you?*" Making this mindset shift from "What's wrong with you" to "What happened to you" is one that takes time but with leadership, training, and ongoing coaching schools can create safer and more supportive learning environments for all students focusing on the needs of the whole child.

