

YEAR 2024

# LESSONS AFTER THE BELL

THE REMARKABLE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL +  
SUMMER PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



Afterschool Labs

“Alabama’s students should take full advantage of our tutoring, after-school, and summer programs. Last summer, less than half of all eligible students attended summer literacy programs. We need that to be 100 percent - not fifty - especially for those who are reading below grade-level.”

**KAY IVEY**  
Alabama Governor





## INTRODUCTION

The importance of foundational education cannot be overstated, with early literacy and numeracy skills being critical predictors of long-term academic and career success. Recent studies have highlighted concerning trends of widespread learning loss due to seasonal breaks and the unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This loss is not confined to academic performance but extends to broader socioeconomic outcomes, including employment. In fact, many scholars and educational leaders suggest that improving outcomes in early education may play a significant role in reducing unemployment rates.<sup>1</sup>

This white paper presents a comprehensive analysis and compelling evidence of how prescriptive after-school and summer learning programs contribute to significant improvements in students' reading literacy and math proficiency, a critical step in addressing today's socioeconomic challenges.

The study spans three school systems and incorporates data from the 2022-23 academic year. The results of the study reveal groundbreaking statistics that underscore the significant role that extended learning programs play in mitigating summer learning loss, closing the COVID-19 learning gap, and enhancing overall student performance. **Prepare to be inspired.**

“All students lose learning in the summer - an average of one month's worth.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Willis, Alexander, (2023). Improving early education performance key to improving workforce shortage, experts say: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/01/14/high-dosage-tutoring-opt-in-pandemic-learning-loss/>

<sup>2</sup> Cline, Seth, (2018). Is summer breaking America's schools?: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/01/14/high-dosage-tutoring-opt-in-pandemic-learning-loss/>





“If you can't do the basics on the front end, like read on grade level at third grade, then the chances of graduating from high school and getting that credential are greatly diminished.”

Alabama Department of Education | Former State Superintendent

**JOE MORTON**





## ADDRESSING LEARNING LOSS

### **Summer Learning Loss**

Research consistently shows that during the summer months, students across all demographics tend to lose approximately one month's worth of academic progress. This phenomenon, however, disproportionately affects students reading below grade level during critical educational milestones, such as the third grade.

At this critical juncture, reading skills are foundational for future learning, and falling behind can set a trajectory of continued academic struggle. The

loss not only impedes immediate learning progress but also compounds over time, significantly diminishing the affected students' chances for long-term academic success and hindering their ability to meet subsequent educational milestones.

### **COVID-19 Learning Deficit**

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly intensified existing educational disparities, particularly affecting students in high-poverty districts. The sudden shift from classroom to remote learning created



## THE REMARKABLE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL + SUMMER PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

unprecedented challenges, as many students lacked access to the necessary resources and support for effective distance education. Consequently, these students faced steep declines in academic performance, most notably in foundational reading and math skills.

The absence of in-person instruction removed critical structures and supports integral to student learning

and achievement, leading to a pronounced increase in learning loss and widening the achievement gaps between socio-economic groups.

To combat these setbacks, education leaders have emphasized the importance of high-impact tutoring, short-term interventions during school breaks, and "double-dose" math courses as effective strategies for academic recovery.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ward, Micah, (2023). 3 practices leaders should avoid when focusing on student academic recovery: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2023/01/14/high-dosage-tutoring-opt-in-pandemic-learning-loss/>





“Since the pandemic, district leaders and administrators have been working tirelessly to help students get back on track academically after remote learning tremendously impacted teachers’ ability to provide effective instruction. However, test scores—particularly in math and reading—paint a grim picture as researchers continue to uncover steep declines among young learners.”<sup>3</sup>





# EXTENDING LEARNING

In response to the pressing need for supplemental educational services, Afterschool Labs has developed after-school and summer learning programs that aim to fast-track student achievement and mitigate learning loss. These programs are meticulously designed to provide students with comprehensive academic support and enrichment, integrating hands-on, STREAM-based (Science, Reading, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities to bolster student engagement and ensure a profound grasp of foundational academic principles.

By offering a prescriptive approach and an interactive learning environment, Afterschool Labs not only aids students in recuperating from academic setbacks but also **propels them beyond standard grade-level expectations**. In fact, students participating in Afterschool Labs' extended learning programs during the 2021-22 school year showed a significant growth differential of 20.4% compared to non-participating students.

Designed to counter the educational interruptions caused by summer breaks and other disruptions, Afterschool Labs' extended learning programs deliver a consistent and comprehensive educational program, equipping students across the nation with the tools needed for continuous academic achievement and success.



“Afterschool Labs directly targets students’ deficiencies, and when we’re able to do that, we’re able to meet each student’s individual needs.”



# EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL + SUMMER

## Data + Methods

For the second consecutive year, a comprehensive and independent evaluation was conducted on Afterschool Labs' after-school and summer learning programs, aimed at understanding their academic impact on student recovery and achievement.

The study focused on the academic outcomes of students across three Alabama school systems—Fort Payne City Schools, Gadsden City Schools, and Walker County Schools—who participated in Afterschool Labs' extended learning programs for the 2022-23 academic year.

Using district-specific assessment tools, such as the i-Ready Diagnostic and STAR Assessments, the study compared the academic performance of students involved in these programs to their peers who did not participate. Data from both groups of students were analyzed to determine the programs' effectiveness in accelerating reading and math proficiency.

This approach allowed for an in-depth evaluation of how effectively these extended learning programs boost reading and math skills, offering valuable insights for educators on the potential of after-school and summer





learning programs to accelerate student recovery and achievement.

To ensure the integrity and relevance of the data, all student records were filtered to exclude those with less than 80% attendance during the regular school day, as well as those lacking test scores from either the beginning or end of the school year. Additionally, within the cohort of students in the Afterschool Labs after-school and summer learning programs, only those with at least 60% attendance were retained for analysis. Test scores were then averaged for both the start and end of the academic year to ascertain the average growth rate. This method facilitated a comparison between the academic outcomes of students who participated in the programs and those who did not, providing a clear basis for assessing the impact of program participation on student achievement.

Each program was reviewed separately due to the differences in testing instruments.

### **Data for Fort Payne City Schools**

Fort Payne City Schools supplied i-Ready Diagnostic reading and math scores, along with percentile rank data, for students in kindergarten through fifth grade at both the beginning and end of the academic year.

The i-Ready Diagnostic, an adaptive assessment, dynamically adjusts the difficulty level of questions based on each student's performance, thereby offering a tailored testing experience that increases in complexity with correct answers and eases with incorrect ones. This assessment employs a vertical scaling method to track and compare individual and group growth over time, providing a scale score and percentile rank with each administration.

In the context of the after-school program evaluation, data from 1,528 students were analyzed, including 213 participants of the Afterschool Labs after-school program, focusing on their reading scores and percentile ranks. Similarly, for math, data from 1,568 students were examined, with 214 attending the Afterschool Labs program.

The summer program evaluation involved 1,569 students, with 169 enrolled in the Afterschool Labs program, assessing both their reading and math scores and percentile ranks.

### **Data for Gadsden City Schools**

Gadsden City Schools provided STAR Assessment math scores and percentile





rank data for students in kindergarten through fifth grade, recorded at the commencement and conclusion of the academic year.

The STAR Assessment, an adaptive instrument, evaluates a child's proficiency in reading and math, calibrating its difficulty level in response to each student's answers. This design facilitates a nuanced understanding of students' growth, high achievement, and potential areas of difficulty.

Within the framework of the summer program evaluation, STAR Assessment math scores and percentile rank data for 113 students enrolled in the Afterschool Labs summer program were analyzed to assess the program's impact on student math achievement.

**Data for Walker County Schools**  
Walker County Schools submitted

STAR Assessment data for reading and math, including scores and percentile ranks, at both the beginning and end of the school year for students in kindergarten through seventh grade.

In the context of the after-school program evaluation, the dataset encompassed STAR Assessment reading scores and percentile ranks for 2,646 students, including 409 participants in the Afterschool Labs after-school program. Additionally, math scores and percentile ranks were available for 3,429 students, with 629 enrolled in the program.

For the summer program evaluation, reading scores and percentile ranks were provided for 3,526 students, with 508 participating in the Afterschool Labs summer program, and math scores and percentile ranks were available for 4,084 students, including 712 program attendees.







If you're looking for something to improve your math, if you're looking for something that's going to make a difference in either your students or in the way your teachers teach, then Afterschool Labs is the way.



**PATRICE MAXWELL**  
Gadsden City Schools | Principal



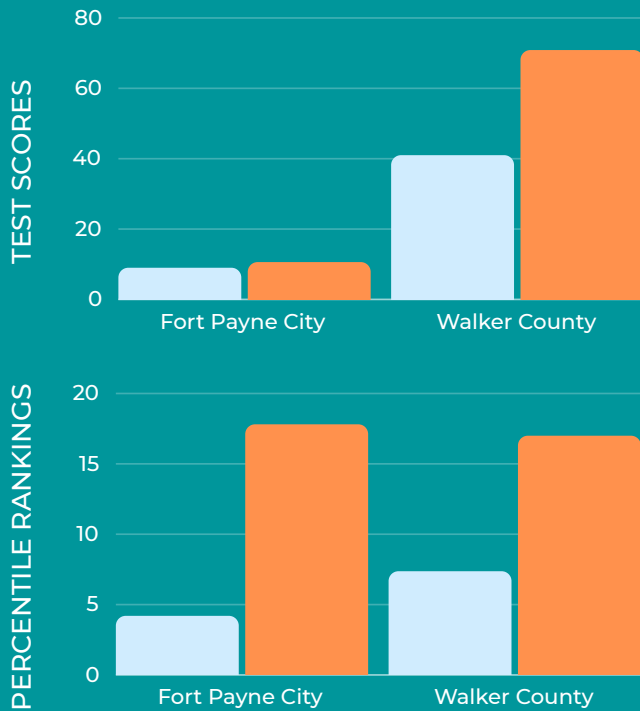
Non-participating student scores



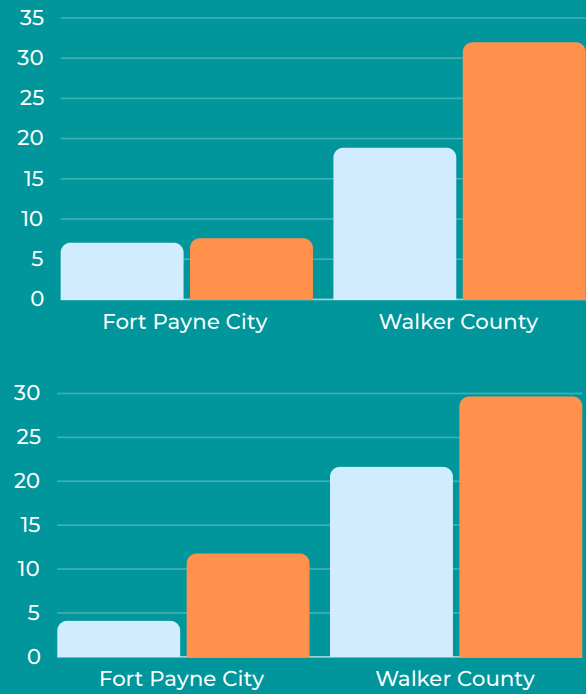
Participating student scores



## READING RESULTS



## MATH RESULTS



# AFTER-SCHOOL RESULTS

### After-School Reading Results

- In the evaluation of after-school reading programs across various educational systems, participants demonstrated significant academic progress.
- The data indicate that students enrolled in these programs attained **a test score increase ranging from 1.85% to 29.89%**, surpassing the results of non-participants.
- Furthermore, these students exhibited percentile rank advancements of 9.09% to 13.61%, highlighting the program's effectiveness in enhancing academic performance relative to their peers who did not participate in the program.

### After-School Math Results

- In a comprehensive analysis of after-school math programs across different educational systems, participants showed marked improvements in their academic outcomes.
- The analysis revealed that these students achieved an average test score increase ranging from 0.56% to 13.12% compared to their non-participating peers.
- Additionally, there was **a notable rise in percentile ranks, with improvements between 7.67% and 8.02%**, demonstrating the substantial impact of the after-school math programs in enhancing student academic performance.



# SUMMER RESULTS

## Summer Math Results

- In its inaugural year, the summer math program, a month-long, full-day intensive course, led to positive participant outcomes.
- The data showed that **all enrolled students made more significant progress in both test scores and percentile rankings than non-participants**. These students exhibited an average percentile ranking increase ranging from 5.52% to 8.55% higher than their non-participating peers, highlighting the program's effectiveness in enhancing academic performance relative to their peers who did not participate in the program.
- Even though there were some slight declines by the beginning of the next school year among participants, these were minor compared to the more significant drops in students not attending the summer math program, highlighting the program's effectiveness in curbing academic decline and its potential to address educational challenges over the summer.

## Summer Reading Results

- Traditionally, students in the summer reading program performed better than non-participants with **an average 24% increase in percentile rankings**.
- However, during the 2022-23 academic year, the program was condensed into a two-week, full-day schedule from its previous one month, half-day format. This change led to a slight decrease in performance for participants compared to non-participants. The decline indicates that the shorter program duration impacted its effectiveness.
- It is also important to recognize that the students enrolled in the Afterschool Labs Summer Reading Program were those lagging behind their grade-level benchmarks, in contrast to their counterparts who were on or above grade-level. This demographic typically exhibits a higher rate of academic regression, necessitating a nuanced interpretation of their progress and program impact.







# 15.7%

Students attending the Afterschool Labs after-school program showed a remarkable 15.7% average growth differential increase in reading test scores compared to non-participants, highlighting the program's strong impact on boosting student literacy.

# 7.8%

Students engaged in the Afterschool Labs after-school program achieved an outstanding average increase of 7.8% in math percentile rankings compared to non-participants, highlighting the program's exceptional effectiveness in enhancing mathematical proficiency.

# 6.9%

Students participating in the Afterschool Labs summer program demonstrated a significant 6.9% average growth differential increase in math percentile rankings over non-participants, showcasing the program's significant success in boosting math skills.

# 2 YRS.

Afterschool Labs boasts two consecutive years of student data that demonstrates that its after-school and summer programs significantly enhance reading and math skills, underscoring their transformative educational impact.



A young girl with dark hair, wearing a purple shirt, is looking upwards and to the right with a curious expression. The background is a dark, starry space scene. Overlaid on the scene are several hand-drawn chalk sketches: a large rocket ship with flames, a five-pointed star, and a planet with a ring. The girl's face is framed by a chalk-drawn arch.

# 71%

Students in the Afterschool Labs after-school program experienced an astonishing average increase of up to 71% in reading test scores throughout the school year, showcasing the program's outstanding efficacy in enhancing reading abilities.





# 32%

Participants in the Afterschool Labs after-school program achieved an extraordinary average increase of up to 32% in math test scores from the beginning of the school year, demonstrating the program's remarkable success in elevating math proficiency.







“Afterschool Labs would be a good fit for other school districts as it has been for the Barbour County School district based on its success record. As I looked at other districts that had utilized its services, all of those districts had phenomenal gains.”

**DR. KEITH STEWART**  
Barbour County Schools | Superintendent





## UNDERSTANDING THE WIDESPREAD OUTCOMES

### Accelerating Student Achievement

After-school and summer learning programs, notably those provided by Afterschool Labs, significantly enhance academic achievement and curtail absenteeism. These programs are finely tuned to individual student needs, effectively addressing educational deficiencies.

Alberville City Schools' data illustrates this success, where third graders in the

program witnessed phenomenal gains —**87% in reading and 92% in math, with over half advancing more than one grade level in both areas.**

Evaluations across various educational systems echo these successes. In reading, students in Afterschool Labs' after-school programs saw test score increases between 1.85% and 29.89%, with percentile rank improvements of 9.09% to 13.61%, higher than their non-participating peers. Afterschool Labs'



---

## THE REMARKABLE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL + SUMMER PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

math programs mirrored these achievements, with participants registering score increases of 0.56% to 13.12% and percentile rank rises of 7.67% to 8.02% higher than their non-participating peers, further proving the programs' profound impact on academic performance.

Moreover, students in the Afterschool Labs after-school program recorded a staggering 71% average increase in reading test scores and an

extraordinary 32% average increase in math test scores from the school year's start, underlining the exceptional ability of these programs to boost reading and math proficiency.

This comprehensive approach to after-school and summer learning stands as a testament to the transformative power of targeted educational programs in fostering substantial academic growth and sustained student engagement.







The after-school program is a game changer in my opinion, and I certainly hope we have the funding to continue it. I am optimistic the state will supplement lost funds with their commitment to the Literacy and Numeracy Acts.



**DR. BART REEVES**  
Albertville City Schools | Superintendent



## Reducing Student Absenteeism

The dynamic and varied offerings of Afterschool Labs' extended learning programs have also markedly boosted student attendance, capturing and sustaining students' interest throughout the school year and summer. This engagement marks a notable enhancement over prior years, where traditional programs often saw dwindling participation as the summer progressed.

The unique appeal of Afterschool Labs lies in its ability to provide a constantly evolving educational experience, ensuring that each day brings new and exciting learning opportunities. This approach has led to unprecedented levels of attendance, with students eagerly participating from the beginning to the end of the summer session.

Gadsden City Schools' Principal Patrice Maxwell's observation reinforces this point: students historically lost interest and dropped out of summer programs, yet with Afterschool Labs, attendance remained robust. The consistent high attendance rates in these programs, from start to finish, underscore the captivating nature of the curriculum and its success in keeping students engaged. Unlike traditional summer schools where interest wanes, Afterschool Labs maintains a vibrant and engaging atmosphere, encouraging students to attend every day and thereby significantly enhancing their academic journey and mitigating absenteeism.

## Increasing Teacher Retention

Afterschool Labs is revolutionizing both



“The students have never come to school for the entire summer because they just lose interest and stop coming. With ALabs, they came the entire time.”

**PATRICE MAXWELL**  
Gadsden City Schools | Principal





student learning and educator enrichment by integrating teachers into its innovative after-school and summer programs. This integration offers substantial professional development and potential financial gains, with teachers able to **increase their earnings by over \$10,000 during the academic year and \$8,000 in the summer**. Such initiatives significantly enhance teachers' educational impact and personal growth.

Elena McCrory and Camille Wright, seasoned professionals at Afterschool Labs, lead in delivering targeted, hands-on professional development. Elena leverages her math coaching experience to provide practical, classroom-ready strategies that elevate math teaching and learning. Camille, an expert in educational leadership, conducts workshops that span instructional techniques to organizational change, equipping teachers with cutting-edge tools and methods. Their combined efforts at Afterschool Labs forge a supportive and innovative educational community, where continuous learning and excellence are the hallmarks, empowering teachers to excel and inspire student success.

The enhanced professional development and financial benefits provided by Afterschool Labs significantly boost teacher satisfaction and retention. These opportunities not only reward educators monetarily but also cultivate a sense of fulfillment and growth in their professional lives.

As teachers engage in Afterschool Labs' comprehensive training programs, they acquire new skills and

“I highly recommend teaching with ALabs because of the extensive professional development opportunities that they provide for you as a teacher.”

CALEB WIGLEY  
Fort Payne City Schools | Teacher



methodologies that invigorate their teaching practice, leading to a more dynamic classroom experience and improved student outcomes. This professional enrichment, coupled with the substantial supplemental income, creates a compelling incentive for educators to continue with Afterschool Labs. As a result, the organization maintains a stable and motivated teaching workforce, deeply committed to educational excellence and student achievement, thereby fostering a positive and sustainable educational environment.

### **Supporting Parents + Communities**

Afterschool Labs is revolutionizing extended learning, generating exceptional satisfaction among parents and the broader community with its all-encompassing, dynamic, and academically focused programs. By addressing the whole child, providing nutritious meals, and ensuring safe

transportation home, Afterschool Labs relieves parents of significant worries, enabling them to have increased confidence in the growth and advancement of their children's academic and social abilities. This program isn't just an after-school option; it's a community-centric solution that aligns with the needs of students, parents, teachers, and administrators, creating a seamless and enriching educational experience.

The transformative impact of Afterschool Labs is palpable. Students engage in activities that not only remedy academic gaps but also foster the development of soft skills, building their confidence and self-efficacy.

Parents rave about the consistent, quality educational support and the robust communication from the program, knowing their children are in an environment that extends high-quality learning beyond the school day.





---

## THE REMARKABLE IMPACT OF AFTER-SCHOOL + SUMMER PROGRAMS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

For administrators, Afterschool Labs alleviates the operational burdens of extended learning programs, enabling a sharper focus on the regular school day. Administrative staff praise Afterschool Labs for its all-inclusive services, which span staffing, curriculum development, and daily operational management, greatly reducing the logistical complexities of after-school and summer programs.

By handling these aspects, Afterschool Labs allows school leaders to focus more on strategic educational goals rather than administrative tasks. This comprehensive approach ensures that programs are not only well-staffed with qualified professionals but also equipped with a curriculum that is both engaging and educational. As a

result, administrative burdens are lessened, allowing schools to dedicate more resources and attention to enhancing the quality of education during the regular school day, thus optimizing the overall learning environment for students.

This end-to-end management and the creation of a curriculum rich in STREAM and hands-on learning have led to notable academic improvements, earning Afterschool Labs a nomination for the Excellence in Education award from Gadsden City Schools. This recognition at a significant educational awards ceremony in Northeast Alabama underscores the program's substantial impact and success in fostering an environment conducive to educational excellence.

“Students in Afterschool Labs have no discipline problems. I’m seeing kids come out of school all excited with something that they've created. They just feel a sense of accomplishment. In terms of the parents, they are just really excited that their children are learning, and they feel that they're getting the support that they need.”









Discover firsthand from fellow school districts how Afterschool Labs has transformed their educational landscape, driving student success, bolstering teacher retention, and elevating parent satisfaction.

**Scan now** to hear these inspiring stories and envision the potential for your schools. We can't wait to work with you.



 [helloafterschool.com](https://helloafterschool.com)

 [info@helloafterschool.com](mailto:info@helloafterschool.com)