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**California Parents Value Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Learning Opportunities Provided by Afterschool Programs**

***Parents: STEM Skills Are Taught in Most California Afterschool Programs***

Washington, DC — At a time when many experts are concerned that U.S. students are not prepared for a changing economy that relies on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), parents of most children enrolled in afterschool in California report that their child’s program offers STEM learning opportunities, according to a household survey commissioned by the Afterschool Alliance. A special report released today, *Full STEM Ahead: Afterschool Programs Step Up as Key Partners in STEM Education**,* finds broad support among California parents for providing STEM learning in afterschool, and high satisfaction with afterschool STEM offerings among parents of children in afterschool programs.

Findings from the new report are based on responses collected for *America After 3PM* from 30,000 U.S. households, including in-depth interviews with more than 13,000 parents and guardians, and 854 parents in California.

“Afterschool is a dynamic, effective setting for innovative STEM education,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “With their focus on hands-on learning and youth development, and the time they can give students to experiment, afterschool programs are well positioned to help increase STEM skills. These new data make clear that parents in California recognize the value of the STEM education afterschool programs can provide. California and the nation will be better positioned to succeed in tomorrow’s economy if we make afterschool STEM education offerings even more robust.”

Key findings from *Full STEM Ahead*, which is based on *America After 3 PM*, the most comprehensive survey ever to ask parents about their children’s participation in afterschool STEM programs:

**Most California parents say afterschool programs *can* help students gain STEM skills.** Fully 74 percent of parents agree with that statement.

**Most California parents believe afterschool programs *should* offer STEM.** In all, 77 percent of parents in California believe afterschool programs should provide opportunities to explore and engage in hands-on STEM learning.

**Most California parents with children in afterschool say their child’s program offers STEM.** Some 74 percent of parents whose children attend afterschool programs say that their child’s program provides STEM learning opportunities.

**Most California** **parents with children in afterschool programs are satisfied with the STEM learning opportunities.** The afterschool STEM opportunities were deemed satisfactory by 75 percent of parents with children in afterschool in California.

“The economic realities of the new economy are clear: STEM skills are going to be essential for this generation,” said Dr. Gregory Washington, Dean of the UCI Samueli School of Engineering. “Tomorrow’s workers will be called on not just to keep up, but to innovate, which means they’ll need true mastery if they’re to excel in the workplace. Expanded learning programs offer an outstanding opportunity for children to dig into STEM subjects, to roll up their sleeves and learn vital skills, and become excited about STEM topics. That’s why it’s great to see so much energy in afterschool and summer programs around these critically important areas of learning.”

*Full STEM Ahead* offers recommendations to reduce missed opportunities in afterschool STEM education. They include engaging and educating parents about the important role afterschool programs can play in supporting STEM learning; increasing technology and engineering programming in afterschool programs; and increasing investment in afterschool programs so many more children can access the STEM learning opportunities these programs can provide.

In October 2014, the Afterschool Alliance released findings from [*America After 3PM*](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/), revealing a dramatic increase in participation in afterschool over the past decade, from 6.5 million to 10.2 million children. The survey also documented a vast and growing unmet demand for afterschool, with the parents of 19.4 million children reporting that they would enroll their child in a program *if one were available*. One in five students in the United States today is unsupervised after the school day ends. National and state results from that report are available at [www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/).

The *America After 3PM* survey was conducted by Shugoll Research; it is based on in-depth interviews with 13,709 households with children, completed via an online survey using a blend of national consumer panels. In order to participate, respondents had to live in the United States and be the guardians of a school-age child living in their household. All interviews were completed between February 28 and April 17, 2014.

*Full STEM Ahead* is sponsored by Comcast Tech R&D Fund, the Noyce Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The Comcast Corporation’s Internet Essentials program is the nation’s largest and most comprehensive program to close the digital divide. Internet Essentials has connected more than 500,000 low-income families with school-aged children, or more than 2 million low-income Americans, to the power of the Internet at home.

[*America After 3PM*](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM) is funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Noyce Foundation, with additional support from the Heinz Endowments, The Robert Bowne Foundation and the Samueli Foundation.

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*The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at* [*www.AfterschoolAlliance.org*](http://www.AfterschoolAlliance.org)*.*