

# Grant seeking funding for After-School ELL, an ELL afterschool program for elementary students in Holyoke, MA



Written on behalf of After-School All-Stars

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The Mott Foundation  
800 Boylston St  
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Dear Board of Trustees members,

It is with great pleasure that I submit to you this grant on behalf of After-School All-Stars for the creation of After-School ELL, a new afterschool program in Holyoke MA. After-School All-Stars is a nonprofit with a proud history of helping students in low-income communities succeed through targeted and engaging afterschool programs. With 725 total sites in 78 cities at present, After-School All-Stars is excited to expand their reach to open a new site in Holyoke at Lawrence Elementary School. This new program clearly aligns with the Mott Foundation's values of Advancing Afterschool.

The purpose of this grant is to establish After-School ELL at Lawrence Elementary School. This program will serve English language learners (ELLs) in third through fifth grade, providing the extra support these students need to succeed in the classroom. Because ELLs need more time to learn content, afterschool programs provide the perfect environment for ELLs to continue to learn so that they do not fall behind their native English-speaking peers. Ultimately, After-School ELL aims to close the achievement gap between ELL and native English-speaking students. By locating the program in Holyoke, a high poverty school system with a high population of ELL students, After-School All-Stars is confident that they can make a real difference in children's lives.

After-School All-Stars has a proud history of working with the Mott Foundation. Grants from the Mott foundation in the past have allowed After-School All-Stars to expand their reach and improve the quality of existing afterschool programs. This new program once again supports the Mott foundation's mission of improving access to quality afterschool to low-income and underserved communities.

After-School All-Stars is excited to once again work with the Mott Foundation to improve children's education.

Sincerely,  
Katharine Axon

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## I. Statement of the Problem

English language learners (ELLs) face significant challenges in the classroom compared to their peers. They have to learn the same concepts as their peers, but through a language they may have limited proficiency in. In addition, according to the Afterschool Alliance, ELLs are “more likely to live in low-income families and attend schools that are under-resourced and employ teachers with the least amount of training” (Afterschool Providing”). Because of the combination of these different challenges, there is clear data showing that ELLs fall behind their peers in school.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, ELLs in fourth grade scored 36 points below their peers in reading and 25 points below their peers in math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In eighth grade, the disparities grew to 42 points below non-ELL peers in reading and 37 points below in math (Goldenberg). This data clearly shows that ELLs have special needs that need to be addressed. It also specifically shows how early on differences in achievement can be exacerbated over time; when ELLs fall behind in elementary school, they carry this with them throughout the rest of their schooling. Afterschool programs are one way to close this achievement gap.

Afterschool programs are one proven way to help ELLs succeed. One reason ELLs fall behind is that it takes them longer than their peers to learn the same material because they have to both learn the material and learn the language the material is in. According to a study done by Stanford University, native English speaking students make average gains of about 10 months worth of material each school year, while ELLs only gain about 6-8 months (“How Long”). Because ELLs need more time to learn the same amount of content, ELL afterschool programs that extend the school day provide one method of making up this gap. According to the same Stanford study, “there is simply not enough time in a regular school day for most ELL’s to keep

up with the curriculum. By adding extra programs, it will help give ELL's the extra time they need to learn" ("How Long"). Existing afterschool programs have proven that this is true. In an ELL afterschool program in DC, ESL After the Bell, reading proficiency rates of students participating in the program rose by 35 percentage points after only one year, and math proficiency rates rose by 30 percentage points. In addition, half of the ELLs in the program exited formal ELL classification after one year ("ESL After the Bell").



*Figure 1. Students at Lawrence Elementary School.*

It is especially important for ELL support to begin in elementary schools because disparities in elementary schools can be exacerbated over time. In fact, the gap between ELLs and their peers specifically begins to widen after fourth grade ("How Long"). This happens because during this time, students have mostly mastered their reading proficiency and are beginning to use more academic language to read and discuss more complex topics. This is why it is essential for this ELL program to serve third through fifth graders. Learning academic vocabulary is one significant reason ELLs fall behind, and it is only helpful to support this after teachers start use this academic vocabulary in class, which happens starting in third grade. Therefore, an ELL afterschool program serving third through fifth graders is an especially vital need.

In addition to specifically helping with ELL and literacy needs, afterschool programs in general have clear benefits to students and families, and there is currently a disparity between the number of available afterschool programs and number of families who want to use these programs. In Massachusetts, demand for afterschool programs is high among parents. 88% of parents support public funding for afterschool in their community (“Afterschool in Massachusetts”), and working parents especially support the need for more afterschool programs (“This is Afterschool”).

Despite this, there is a paucity of afterschool programs in Massachusetts. For every child there is in one program, 3 children are waiting for an available program (“Afterschool in Massachusetts”).

Holyoke, a city with a large base of ELLs and high rates of poverty, is particularly in need of investment into a new afterschool program. 34 percent of students in Holyoke have a first language that is not English, with 18.2 percent classified as ELL. In Lawrence Elementary School specifically, 20.7 percent of the school population has a first language other than English and 13.5 percent are classified as ELLs (“H.B. Lawrence School”). Of these students, most come from a Spanish speaking background; 84.1 percent of students at Lawrence Elementary School are Hispanic, and 81.3 percent of the Holyoke district altogether are Hispanic. Because there are such high rates of ELLs, specifically coming from Spanish speaking backgrounds, there is a high need for investment into services specifically targeted at Spanish speaking ELLs. In addition, 91.6 percent of students at Lawrence Elementary are identified as low-income. As low income levels can exacerbate inequality within schools, particularly for ELLs, it is especially important for there to be more investment into the students of Lawrence Elementary.

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	20.7	34.0	26.0
English Language Learner	13.5	18.2	13.1
Low-income	91.6	85.1	42.2
Students With Disabilities	19.8	30.5	20.2
High Needs	93.1	89.5	55.8

*Figure 2. Holyoke Demographic Data.*

## II. Statement of Request

After-School All-Stars is seeking a grant of \$95,000 from the Mott Foundation in order to establish After-School ELL, an afterschool program in Holyoke, MA. This afterschool program is necessary because it will provide much needed support to ELLs to help them thrive in their classes. ELLs face many challenges that their native English speaking peers do not, and afterschool programs have been proven to have a tangible effect on ELL's ability to learn content, and on ELL's English literacy in general. This program will take place at Lawrence Elementary School in Holyoke, MA and it will serve third through fifth graders. While this program is starting with a small and targeted audience, however, it has the potential to expand and reach more schools and grade levels within Holyoke.

This program is of urgent necessity. Holyoke is a deeply underserved school community, with a majority of low income families and families of color. Students in Holyoke are currently far behind their peers in the rest of Massachusetts when it comes to standardized tests in math and English ("Next Generation"), and ELLs are especially lacking in the resources they need to succeed. An investment into this community is urgently needed, and this afterschool program has

the potential to make real change. After-School All-Stars currently runs over 700 sites, reaching over 100,000 students. Because of our success with past afterschool programs, we know that through this grant, we would be able to once again create real change for young students.

### III. Description of the Proposed Program

#### A. Objectives

The objectives of After-School ELL are to:

- Increase ELL's English literacy, especially through academic vocabulary
- Decrease the achievement gap between ELLs and native English speakers
- Set students up for success in middle school and high school
- Promote community among ELLs
- Help students feel more confident and engaged in their learning

#### B. Program logistics

After-School ELL will run throughout the school year, starting in September 2024. The program will meet directly after the school day ends at 3:30, running from 3:30 to 5:30 Monday through Thursday. Due to location constraints and the limited hours of the public library, the program will not meet on Fridays. All English learning students in grades three through five at Lawrence Elementary School are welcome to attend. Based on current demographic data of Lawrence, there are around 40 eligible students. We expect around 20 students to enroll in the first year, although the program can easily be scaled up or down depending on the number of families who end up enrolling. The program will be staffed by one lead director, one assistant teacher, and



three to five student interns. Because Lawrence Elementary is directly across the street from the Holyoke Public Library, students are able to gather at the school and walk over together to the library, eliminating any need for transportation.

### C. Curriculum

After-School ELL's curriculum will draw from the successful curriculums of current ELL programs, including ESL After the Bell and La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street. It will also draw from current After-School All-Stars curriculums and philosophies.

After-School All-Stars has already developed many successful afterschool curriculums based on the organization's values. Current After-School All-Stars programs are focused in the areas of health and wellness, STEM learning, visual and performing arts, career exploration, and academic readiness. While none of these programs tailor solely to ELLs, many current programs have high levels of ELLs and adapt their curriculums to best serve these students. After-School ELL specifically will focus on the pillar of academic readiness, working to prepare students for their academic futures. However, it will also draw from After-School All-Star's philosophy of making learning fun and accessible because students both learn more and have better mental and emotional health when they are able to focus on things they care about. Therefore, in addition to standard literacy and academic content, After-School ELL will also have group games, arts and crafts, and community building activities.

Because After-School All-Stars has no current ELL specific programs, the curriculum for After-School ELL will also draw from ESL After the Bell and La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street, two ELL afterschool programs with similar philosophies to After-School All-Stars. Based on these two programs, After-School ELL will have four main tenets to its curriculum: learning academic

English, learning core content, supporting students' native language development, and project-based learning.

The first two tenets of After-School ELL's curriculum are learning academic English and learning core content. These two tenets are important for keeping students up to date with their class material, and they are two places where ELLs often fall behind their native English speaking peers. Academic English is important because ELLs often master conversational English much faster than they master academic English; research shows that ELLs master conversational English in two to three years and master academic English in five to seven years ("ESL After the Bell"). This means that many ELLs gain the skills they need to have conversations in English with their classmates, but they lack the academic vocabulary that teachers use to explain content in class. Explicitly teaching this academic vocabulary in afterschool programs is one way of not just improving ELL's literacy, but also helping them to understand content. This is why learning academic English is closely tied to the second core tenet of After-School ELL: learning core content. Many ELLs fall behind on course content because it is taught in a language that they do not fully understand. Therefore, ELLs need extra time to spend focusing on this important content, especially since future classes build on the foundations learned in elementary school, and if ELL students don't have the basics down early on they can fall behind later in school.

The third core tenet of After-School ELL's curriculum is to support development of students' native language and culture. While it is important to give students the information they need to understand the academic English used in school, this should not come at the expense of students' diverse literacy backgrounds. When students are forced to ignore their native languages and cultures, they can feel disconnected from their own identities, or feel like their native languages

and cultures are not fit for academia. Therefore, students will be encouraged to use their native languages in After-School ELL, especially where it helps them to better understand core content. In addition, there will be a focus on students sharing and learning about their different cultural backgrounds. This also helps students to feel like they are a part of a meaningful community.

Finally, the curriculum of After-School ELL will focus on project-based learning. Project-based learning is “an instructional approach that puts student interests at the center, with substantive projects that solve an authentic problem or answer a pressing question” (ACSD). By focusing on real world problems that interest students, students are able to learn about complex, relevant topics in engaging ways. The successes of project-based learning are clear from La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street, an ELL afterschool program in Wisconsin. In this program, students investigate topics that interest them and write articles about them. The entire program functions together as a student-run newspaper, where ELLs improve their literacy by focusing on specific subjects that they care about. This project-based learning has had clear successes: around 80 percent of students had improved school attendance and 90 percent had improved reading comprehension within the first year (“La Prensa Libre”). Therefore, an important part of After-School ELL’s curriculum will involve students reading about and creating projects related to subjects they personally find interesting.

All in all, After-School ELL will focus on helping students to develop academic language, learn core content, develop their native languages, and learn about topics that interest them through project-based learning. All of these tenets have been shown to have clear outcomes for ELLs, as seen through the successes of ESL After the Bell and La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street. This curriculum will help students succeed in the classroom, but it will also help them to feel more confident and to feel like they are part of a meaningful community.

#### D. Schedule

With this funding, After-School ELL will be ready to begin at the start of the 2024 school year.

In order to be ready to start within the next year, the following schedule will be followed:

- Applications for Program Director due June 1, 2024
- Program Director starts work July 1, 2024
- Teacher and intern training begins August 14, 2024
- Program begins first day of school, September 3, 2024

#### IV. Description of Measure of Project Success

The success of this program will be measured by several factors, including feedback surveys, standardized testing, and school data on retention and graduation rates.

The first measure of the project's success will be through teacher, student and parent feedback surveys. Teacher surveys will be given to the third, fourth and fifth grade classroom teachers at Lawrence Elementary School. Teachers will be asked to reflect on if they have noticed any change in their students and their ability to engage with content. Afterschool allstars has used this as a measure in the past and has found it helpful. Surveys will also be given to students and parents. Because students are the center of this program, it is important to hear their direct feedback. In addition, it is important to hear from parents to see if they notice any change in their students' behavior at home, or if they have any feedback for the program. These surveys will be distributed halfway through and at the end of the program.

Another way of measuring the program success is through the ACCESS test given to all ELLs. The ACCESS test is a standardized test aimed at evaluating ELL's proficiency in speaking,

listening, reading and writing. Currently, most ELLs at Lawrence Elementary are in the Emerging or Developing range of the test (ACCESS). If the students who participate in After-School ELL move up to the higher proficiency levels, to the Expanding, Bridging or Reaching levels, this would prove that the program is successful. We can also compare the scores of the ELLs who participate in the program to those at other schools, or those who choose not to participate, to see how much the program specifically makes a difference. In addition, other standardized tests such as the MCAS can be used as metrics to assess students' literacy levels. These standardized tests are one helpful metric because they are statewide, so they provide a unified standard of comparison. However, this unified standard also has its drawbacks, as it often doesn't actually accurately assess students' knowledge. Therefore, these standardized tests should not be the only measure of students' success in the program.

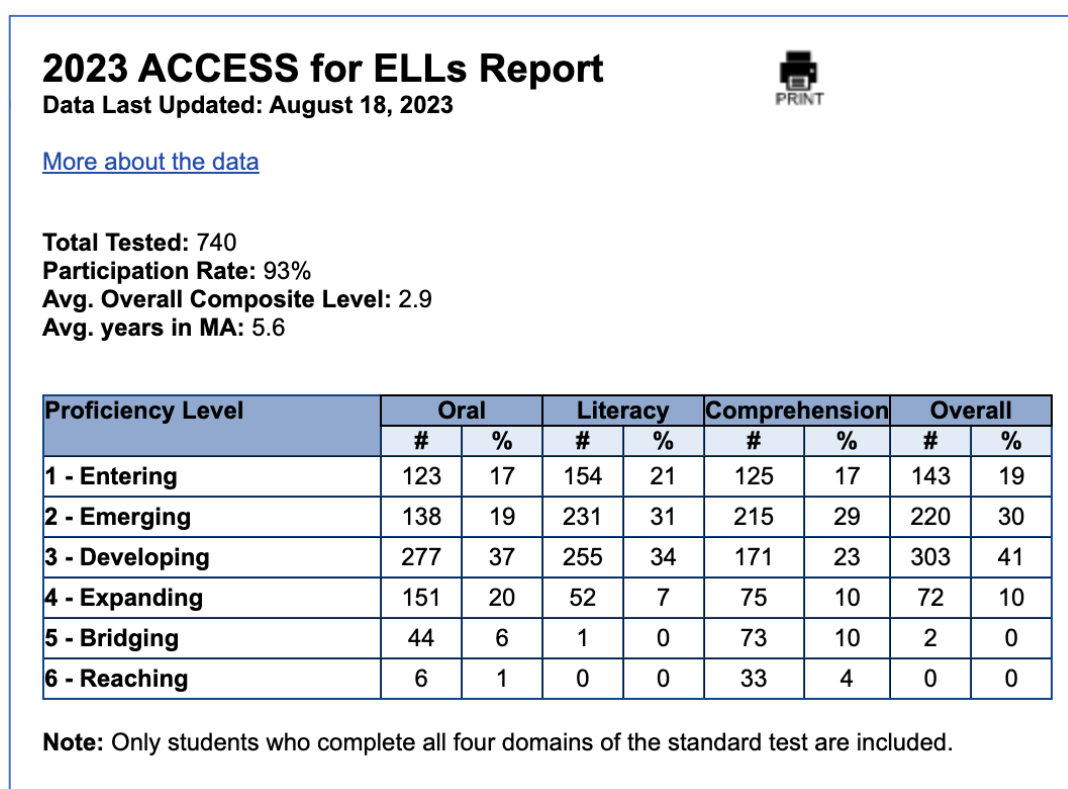


Figure 3. 2023 ACCESS for ELLs Report for Holyoke school system. Most ELLs are in the Emerging or Developing range.

Finally, school and district data on attendance, completion of common core, and graduation rates can provide important data on the success of the program. Attendance is one measure of how engaged students are in school, so if the number of absences for students in the program decreases, this would be evidence that these students are more invested in their classes.

Completion of common core standards is another measure of how successful students are in the classroom. Currently, ELLs in Holyoke have lower completion rates of the MassCore curriculum than their peers, with 28.1 percent of ELLs completing the curriculum and 40.3 percent of total students completing it. This data, however, will only be measurable after several years, once the students in the program have graduated. Still, as this program is expected to last a long time, this metric will eventually be an important measurement of the program's long term success.

Graduation rates, too, will eventually be used to measure the program's success.

## V. Description of Available Facilities

After-School ELL will take place in the community room of the Holyoke public library. This is an ideal location for this program because of the library's standing as a community center, its location, and the resources available in the library. The library has a long history as a community center, and it already has ELL programs such as English language tutors. After-School ELL clearly aligns with the library's mission and values, and it would further expand the library's use as an important community center.

The Holyoke Public Library is conveniently located directly across the street from Lawrence Elementary School. This means that there is no need for any transportation costs, as students can easily walk across the street to the library building. Within the library, After-School ELL will

meet in the Community Room. This room is on the first floor of the library and it has adequate space for up to 75 people, so there will be plenty of space for 20 students. This room also has its own kitchenette and bathrooms; the kitchenette will be especially helpful for storing snacks for the program. This room is specifically open to “Massachusetts-based educational, cultural, civic, or charitable (nonprofit) groups” (Holyoke Public Library). As an educational non-profit, After-School ELL clearly aligns with this policy. In addition, since this room is available to rent for free, this will save substantially on program costs.



*Figure 4. Holyoke Public Library.*

Finally, the Holyoke library is an ideal location for After-School ELL because the many free resources available in the library. Students are able to access books and computers for free, saving on books and technology costs. The library’s children and teen sections in particular have large collections of books that students can engage with, both helping to develop students’

literacy skills and providing them with interesting content that helps to make learning fun. The library's resources, available community room and convenient location all make it the ideal location for After-School ELL.

## VI. Qualifications of Personnel

After-School ELL will be staffed by a team of highly qualified individuals, each bringing expertise and dedication to the program's success. Overseeing the whole program will be Taryn Davis, the Executive Director of After-School All-Stars' New York chapter. Because After-School All-Stars does not have a specific Massachusetts chapter, After-School ELL will be integrated into the New York chapter. Taryn is well qualified to oversee this integration. With a distinguished career spanning progressive leadership roles in education and nonprofits, Taryn has notably held positions such as the Dean of Students at Harlem Village Academies, Founding Dean of Students/Assistant Principal, and Interim Acting Principal at Baystate Academy Charter Public School. Her extensive experience also includes roles at the Center for Supportive Schools and the United Federation of Teachers-United Community Schools, culminating in her recent role as Director of the Youth Empowerment Unit with the Office of the District Attorney in Queens County. Taryn's academic background includes a B.S. in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies and a Master's in Education in Psychology, both earned from Springfield College. Under her leadership, the New York chapter has thrived, demonstrating her exceptional capabilities in program management and community engagement, and her ability to provided the needed oversight for this new Holyoke location.





*Figure 5. Students at After-School All-Stars.*

Another Program Director will be hired through After-School All-Stars to lead the new Holyoke chapter specifically. This director will be hired as a full time staff member, working closely with both the Holyoke school system and After-School All-Stars. They will be hired based on their experience in afterschool program management, their experience working in high-need public schools, and their expertise in ELL education. Because the majority of ELLs in Holyoke are Spanish speaking, this director will be expected to be able to communicate clearly in both Spanish and English. The director will be in charge of developing the program’s curriculum, training new teachers and interns, and working directly with students in the program itself. They will be hired by the beginning of the summer of 2024, allowing plenty of time for program preparation and coordination with the school community.

Another integral member of After-School ELL will be the role of Assistant Teacher. This teacher will support the program director, teaching the curriculum and working directly with students. Evidence has shown hiring classroom teachers for afterschool programs “can create more

continuity for students and ensure that the activities and material covered after school are in line with content standards and address the goals for that school's population" (Jacobson). Because of this, the Assistant Teacher will be hired directly from Lawrence Elementary school. There are many qualified teachers at Lawrence currently, and we are confident that their experience working directly with the students of Lawrence means that they will bring valuable perspective to After-School ELL. This collaboration aims to integrate the afterschool program seamlessly into the academic curriculum, fostering a cohesive learning environment that aligns with classroom instruction.

Finally, the program will also be staffed by interns from local colleges including Holyoke Community College and the schools within the Five College System. This collaboration between After-School ELL and local colleges brings benefits to both college students and elementary ELLs. College students will have the opportunity to engage directly with their local community and gain valuable skills in teaching, ELL theory, and nonprofit work. ELLs will benefit by having more adults working with them in the program, allowing them to get more one-on-one instruction. Intern applicants will be expected to be proficient in both English and Spanish, and preference will be given to students with experience in teaching programs, personal ELL background, and a history of working with children in this age group. Because college students have to balance both classes and jobs, interns will likely not be able to work each 3:30-5:30 shift throughout the week. Therefore, the program is planning to hire between three and five interns, giving them the opportunity to work alternating shifts that work best with their class schedule. Interns will be hired by August 1.

Collectively, this assembled team will bring a wealth of experience, expertise, and passion to ensure the After-School ELL program in Holyoke delivers impactful and enriching experiences

for elementary ELLs. With the experienced leadership of Taryn Davis, the support of a qualified Program Director and Assistant Teacher, and the passion of a group of dedicated interns, we are confident that we have the needed personnel to make After-School ELL a successful program.

## VII. Budget

The budget for After-School ELL is split into into several sections: staff pay, materials, field trips and snacks. In total, the budget will be \$95,000.

The largest part of the budget is the salaries of the program director and assistant teacher. Based on average afterschool program director pay, the program director will be offered a salary of \$65,000 per year (“After School Director”). With an expected 20 percent of added benefits, this salary comes out to \$78,000. This program director is being offered a competitive full time salary because of the amount of work they are expected to contribute to the program, both developing the curriculum and logistics of the program and working directly with students. The assistant teacher, because they are not expected to work outside of program hours, will be paid hourly. Based on average wages for afterschool teachers, the assistant teacher will be paid \$25 per hour. Because the program runs 8 hours/week for 36 weeks, with an addition 16 hours included for training, this comes out to a total of \$7,600. Interns will be paid through federal work study, so their pay does not need to come from the program budget. In total, staff pay takes up \$85,600.

The remainder of the budget will be taken up by necessary school materials. These materials include books, notebooks, pencils, markers and other supplies. Books are especially important. Because After-School ELL takes place in a public library, the students will already have access to many free books. However, it is also important for students to have books that they can take

home and keep permanently, and that they have access to ELL specific books in their own developing stage. Therefore, \$500 will be set aside from the total budget for books specifically, an equivalent of \$25 per student to be used as needed. In addition, students in afterschool need materials such as paper, notebooks, pencils and markers. Since After-School ELL has a project based curriculum, students will also need materials like posterboard and paints. In total, we are setting aside \$50 per student, or \$1,000 altogether. Therefore, \$1,500 will be set aside in the budget for books and supplies.

An additional \$2,000 will be set aside for occasional field trips. According to Charter Support Unit, it costs around \$260 to charter a bus for a local field trip (“Field Trip”). Most field trip locations cost around \$5-10 per person; with students and chaperones, this comes to 25 people, or a maximum of \$250. Altogether, each field trip will cost an average of \$500. With a planned four field trips throughout the school year, this comes out to \$2,000.

Finally, another important part of the budget is snacks. It is important that students have snacks since they are staying afterschool, and providing students with snacks means that parents do not have to pack extra food for their kids’ lunches or buy extra food. This reduces the barrier to entry. The remaining \$5,900 of the budget will be reserved for snacks, averaging out to about \$41 per day. Since snacks and materials like paper plates and paper towels can be bought in bulk, this is a very reasonable amount of money to spend on snacks each day. The breakdown of the total budget is seen in the table below:

Expense	Cost
Program director	\$78,000

Assistant teacher	\$7,600
Books and supplies	\$1,500
Field trips	\$2,000
Snacks	\$5,900
Total	\$95,000

Altogether, with \$95,000 After-School ELL will be able to provide quality afterschool to the students of Lawrence Elementary. Many factors that are typically involved in afterschool budgets, such as transportation, technology and space rental costs, were able to be cut because of the program's location at the Holyoke library. In addition, by hiring interns through work study programs, After-School ELL is able to serve on staffing costs. This budget allows for students to engage in the topics that interest them through books, crafts and field trips, supported by quality teaching staff.

## VIII. Summary

In summary, funding for After-School ELL is essential to support elementary ELLs at Lawrence Elementary School. Afterschool programs in general have been proven to have substantial impacts on students' lives, and ELL programs specifically provide the unique services ELLs need. Because achievement gaps in elementary school can be exacerbated as students move on to the middle and high school, it is necessary to work to support ELLs from a young age. Because of the high numbers of ELL in Holyoke, and in Lawrence Elementary School specifically, this is

the ideal target audience for an ELL afterschool program. While the program is expected to begin with just twenty students, there is room for the program to expand after the first year and reach a wider audience.

Through its detailed curriculum, After-School ELL aims to address various objectives essential to the success of ELL students including enhancing English literacy, narrowing the achievement gap between ELLs and native speakers, fostering a sense of community, and building students' confidence and engagement in learning. Running throughout the school year from September 2024, the program will operate Monday through Thursday, from 3:30 to 5:30 at Lawrence Elementary School, targeting eligible students from grades three to five. With an initial expectation of enrolling around 20 students, the program's structure allows scalability based on demand. The curriculum draws inspiration from successful models like ESL After the Bell and La Prensa Libre de Simpson Street, emphasizing academic English, core content learning, native language development, and project-based learning. This comprehensive approach ensures academic improvement and community inclusion while acknowledging the significance of native languages and cultures.

The success of the After-School ELL program will be assessed using multiple measures to gauge its effectiveness in aiding ELL students, including feedback surveys, standardized tests and other metrics. After-School ELL will operate within the Holyoke public library's community room, chosen for its suitability, accessibility, and alignment with the program's goals. The personnel for After-School ELL, including the executive director, program director, assistant teacher and interns are carefully selected to ensure expertise and dedication to the program's success. All of these factors demonstrate the feasibility and necessity of this project.

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## B. List of Figures

Cover Photo:

RDNE Stock project. “Students smiling inside the classroom.” *Pexels*.

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Figure 1:

“H.B. Lawrence School.” *Holyoke Public Schools*. <https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/o/Lawrence>.

Figure 2:

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Figure 3:

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Figure 4:

“Holyoke Public Library.” *Holyoke Public Library*. <https://www.holyokelibrary.org/>.

Figure 5:

“After-School All-Stars.” *After-School All-Stars*. <https://afterschoolallstars.org/>.