Afterschool STEM Social Media – Before and Afters

Use these examples as inspiration for incorporating framing into your own social media.

Our pubic square is now largely virtual, and most nonprofit organizations use social media to communicate with the public. But social media is not just about spreading messages through clicks, views, and shares; it's about spreading the right messages. Framing social media posts around tested values and metaphors helps audiences think about afterschool STEM learning in productive ways. These sample posts show how to reframe your tweets using the values of *Collective Prosperity*, *Future Preparation* and *Fairness Across Places*, and the metaphors of *STEM Ecosystem*, *Weaving Skill Ropes*, *Activation*, and *Charging Stations* into organizational feeds.

Collective Prosperity

Before:
The United States is falling behind in #mathandscience. http://read.bi/2l2dyNs
High-quality #afterschoolSTEM programs help our kids—and our country—remain competitive in the world economy. Here's how: ow.ly/RqRn309u60f

After:
ALL kids are #mathandscience kids—& ALL need #STEMlearning programs in school, after school, on weekends, & in summer. Investing in their #21centuryskills in science, technology, engineering, and math = a strong future for us all! ow.ly/RqRn309u60f

Advocates often argue that we need to prioritize STEM so we can keep up with the rest of the world. Research shows this causes people to think that US economic dominance is either a given or that we can't keep up anymore.

Instead of *Global Competition*, appeal to *Collective Prosperity*, an inclusive value that primes people to focus on the big-picture, shared benefits of ensuring all children have access to STEM learning opportunities.

Future Preparation

Before:

Parents take note: New US Dept of Ed report finds that #STEM majors have a higher employment rate and salary than kids who study other subjects. http://read.bi/1jtsvTP. Afterschool #STEMlearning programs prepare our kids to succeed in the global economy.

After:

Afterschool Alliance @afterschool4all · 6 Mar 2017
Learn how high-quality #afterschoolSTEM programs help prepare students for future success in school and work. ow.ly/RqRn309u60f

Afterschool STEM inspires young people, builds their confidence, and ignites a passion for learning.

#AfterschoolSTEM

Advocates often argue that we need to prioritize STEM so we can keep up with the rest of the world. Research shows this causes people to think that US economic dominance is either a given or that we can't keep up anymore.

Replace appeals to individual success with an appeal to the value of *Future Preparation*: the importance of helping kids develop the skills our 21st-century workforce needs.

Fairness Across Places

Before:

#STEMedchat @panelists tackle big Q: How can we encourage more girls and women to pursue #STEM careers and narrow gender disparities in STEM careers? Short A: #afterschoolSTEM
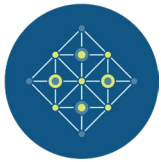
In discussions of disparities, STEM advocates tend to focus on groups, like women or students of color, that aren't well represented in STEM careers. This causes the public to think of STEM as only appropriate for certain groups and to dismiss calls for better STEM education for all students.

After:

#STEMedchat @panelists tackle big Q: How to encourage all kids everywhere to pursue science, technology, engineering, and math careers? A: #STEM programs after school, on weekends, & in summer 4 ALL communities. Gardens, music concerts, nature hikes, computer labs all teach critical thinking & problem-solving. #STEMeverywhere

Research shows that discussions of place-based, rather than group-based, disparities boosts support for policies to address inequities in education.

To strengthen the understanding that children learn in all kinds of environments—not just classrooms—show the wide range of places, times, and ways in which children learn STEM.

STEM Ecosystem

Before:

#STEMLearning takes place in and out of school! We need to make sure all kids—wherever they live—have opportunities to participate!

After:

#STEMLearning is like an ecosystem! Just as an ecosystem relies on a variety of plants and animals to thrive, #STEMlearning relies on a variety of opportunities to learn—in school and after school, on the weekends, and in summer. #AfterschoolSTEM

This tweet uses the *Fairness Across Places* value, but there is more framing work to do to explain that STEM skills can be developed in many ways and places.

Use the *STEM Ecosystem* metaphor to help people think of out-of-school environments as "pollination points" within the learning ecosystem—important locations where children develop STEM knowledge and skills.

Weaving Skills Ropes

Before:

#AfterschoolSTEM teaches kids curiosity, problem-solving, and exploration. What other skills do kids need to develop #21centuryskills? #STEMchat

The public doesn't understand how different skills develop in tandem and support each other. This tweet misses a chance to boost that understanding with a concrete explanation.

After:
#AfterschoolSTEM braids together: curiosity / problem-solving / exploration. What other skills do kids need to weave strong skill ropes for the 21st century? #STEMchat

The *Weaving Skill Ropes* metaphor helps people understand how STEM learning develops multiple critical skills that work together to support learning.

Charging Stations:

Before:
You never know which kids will benefit from #STEM. Let's make sure every student has a chance to access #STEMlearning opportunities—in school and out of school. Here's how: http://samplelink #afterschoolSTEM

This tweet aims to promote inclusivity and equitable access, but the language cues preexisting ideas that STEM is only for certain kinds of children.

After:
All kids have what it takes to light up from science, technology, engineering & math. Let's make sure all have enough outlets to plug into #STEMeducation, so they can brighten our future as innovators, critical thinkers, leaders. Here's how: http://samplelink #afterschoolSTEM

Use the *Charging Stations* metaphor to help the public understand that all kids have the raw materials to benefit from STEM learning--but not all have the opportunity to transform their curiosity into STEM skills development.

Activation:

Before:
#STEMedchat @panelists tackle big Q: How can we persuade more kids to pursue #STEM careers?

This language cues the belief that willpower – not access, opportunity, and mentoring – determines who studies and excels in STEM subjects.

After:

#STEMedchat @panelists tackle big Q: How can every community provide quality programming to activate all kids' natural curiosity & spark their STEM skills development? Kids' curiosity is like kindling; good STEM programs are the fuel. #STEMactivation

Swap out words like "motivate," "persuade," and "inspire" for the language of *Activation*. Emphasize that STEM programs activate kids' curiosity; this helps people understand that all kids can be good at STEM--if they have enough STEM learning opportunities.

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