



## The Afterschool Lab Report

Each quarter, we'll send you the latest policy news ([Introduction](#)), new resources ([Materials](#)), upcoming opportunities for advocacy ([Methods](#)), and new research ([Further Reading](#)). Thank you for your interest and support!



### INTRODUCTION: POLICY UPDATES

**Federal spending for FY 2018 is good news for afterschool:** On March 22 the Senate approved a \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending bill for FY2018. The bill includes many wins for out-of-school time education, including a \$20 million increase in funding to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (Community Learning Centers) – making afterschool and summer programming available for an additional 20,000 students across the country. It took more than 100,000 calls and emails to Congress, hundreds of town halls, dozens of site visits for members of Congress and their staff, and countless hours of hard work from bipartisan champions of afterschool on Capitol Hill, allied organizations and statewide afterschool networks, and advocates across the nation.

Along with Community Learning Centers many other funding streams that can be used to support afterschool and summer STEM learning were supported in the spending bill, including increases to the Child Care and Development Block Grant (\$2.37 billion), Title IV Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (\$700 million), the National Science Foundation (\$300 million), Youth Mentoring Initiative (\$14 million), and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (\$75 million). For more information on the 2018 omnibus spending bill [read more](#) on the Afterschool Snack!

**Building Blocks of STEM Act:** On February 13, the bipartisan Building Blocks of STEM Act (H.R. 3397) passed the House of Representatives with broad support. The bill would direct the National Science Foundation (NSF) to include funding for early childhood education in its Discovery Research PreK-12 program, which seeks to enhance the learning and teaching of STEM and address the immediate challenges that are facing PreK-12 STEM education. The Code Like a Girl Act (H.R. 3316) was added to the bill to better understand what contributes to the participation of young girls—under 11—in STEM and computer

## Toolkit

Are you ready to put the talking points and framing strategies into action? Our practical guides and resources are organized by common tasks relevant to staff in multiple departments. Dig in!



### Rework social media

Go beyond clicks, views, and shares: spread the right messages.



### Share visuals

Get ready-to-go videos and infographics for presentations, social media, and more.



### Tell your program's story

Find guidelines for writing about how learning happens.



### Talk to policymakers

Get prepared to communicate with elected officials and their staff.

## MATERIALS: NEW TOOLS & RESOURCES

**The Afterschool STEM Hub has had a makeover:** Our new design should make it even easier to adapt the recommended messaging strategies and share the importance of afterschool and summer STEM learning. Within a section called “The Toolkit” we’ve reorganized our many resources (plus a few new ones) into common tasks like “Tell your program’s story” and “Rework social media.” Over the next couple months, we’ll continue to add new items, so keep checking back!

[Visit the site](#)

## METHODS: UPCOMING ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

**Take action for summer learning:** [Summer Learning Day](#) (July 12) is right around the corner! Summer Learning Day is a national advocacy day aimed at elevating the importance of summer learning opportunities for students. Host an event at your program to draw attention and support for summer learning programs and start planning your event today!

Also on the agenda, tomorrow, advocates from around the country will come to Washington, D.C., to advocate for summer learning opportunities and Community Learning Centers as part of the [National Summer Learning Association’s Hill Day](#). Without this funding many of the students would be cut off from valuable opportunities for STEM learning and enrichment.

## RESULTS: IMPACTS OF COORDINATED ADVOCACY

**The Afterschool for All Challenge!** On April 18 and 19 advocates from around the country joined the Afterschool Alliance to remind our nation’s leaders why afterschool and summer learning programs are critical for youth, families, and communities. As part of the event, advocates from across the country meet with 200 members of Congress and their staff, and representatives from the Afterschool STEM Hub [leadership group](#) met with the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the Office of Science and Technology

Policy. Concerned citizens also logged more than 8,000 calls and emails to their members of congress to save Community Learning Centers. While the program received an increase in the FY2018 budget, it is still eliminated in the president's proposed FY2019 budget to congress.

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## FURTHER READING

**Crossing the boundaries: Mapping the gaps between expert and public understandings of bridging STEM learning environments** is a new report published by the FrameWorks Institute offering updated insights into how advocates can make the case for STEM learning in out-of-school-time settings. The report outlines public views on STEM learning and provides a strategy for advocates to overcome these challenges. This new report provides a distillation of the STEM field's priorities for communicating to the public and non-expert audiences, a summary of the shared patterns in public thinking about STEM learning, and a discussion of the implications of the FrameWorks work for communicating about informal STEM learning opportunities.

[Read more](#)

**Perceptions of science in America** explores the public's understanding of science and scientific research across different populations. The report shows that while public support for science is strong, the public's confidence in science varies based on age, race, educational attainment, region, and political ideologies, and shows that more research is needed to understand what drives skepticism in science.

[Read more](#)

**Techbridge Girls' Essential Elements** outline the crucial components of high-quality, equitable STEM programming for girls. Based on 18 years of experience in the field, internal and external research and evaluation, the five essential elements include providing gender- and culturally-responsive programming, providing access to programming, giving opportunity for youth empowerment, extensive career exploration, and broad networks of support for students' STEM interest. While these resources are girl-centric, the essential elements can be applied to any informal STEM program for students of all genders.

[Read more](#)

**Engaging Families in STEM** showcases the importance of engaging parents in their students' STEM learning. This new initiative of the STEM Next Opportunity Fund that explores the importance of family engagement in STEM learning, and provides promising practices for increasing family engagement. With these new resources from STEM Next, you can explore tips on engaging parents, tools for encouraging girls, and ways to share research to empower parents. The toolkit also provides case studies from programs and organizations that have worked to improve their family engagement strategies.

[Read more](#)

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## UP NEXT

Keep an eye out this May for a new checklist for framing your communications work and guidance on reworking your elevator speech to make the case for afterschool STEM. Coming soon on [afterschoolstemhub.org](http://afterschoolstemhub.org)!

