



The Afterschool Lab Report



INTRODUCTION: POLICY UPDATES

Just before Washington, D.C. emptied out for the holidays, a flurry of priorities for congress were wrapped up and delivered with a bow to the STEM education community. The FY20 budget was finally agreed to by the House and Senate on December 17, and included increases to many of the education programs that support afterschool STEM Learning, including a \$28 million increase to 21st Century Community Learning Centers, \$25 million to Title IV-A, a \$60 million increase to the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program, and a 3 percent increase to NSF's Education and Human Resources directorate.

The end of 2019 also saw the introduction of a new bipartisan STEM education bill, the Rural STEM Education Act (H.R 4979), sponsored by Science Committee Ranking member Lucas (R-OK) and Chairwoman Johnson (D-TX). The legislation aims to enhance STEM Education in rural areas by providing funding for the National Science Foundation to create several research grants to identify effective STEM practices and programs for both educators and students in rural areas. And just before the holiday break, the Building Blocks of STEM Act was signed into law, instructing NSF to prioritize research on STEM learning in early childhood education, including promising practices for effecting educator training and professional development. Among the allowable

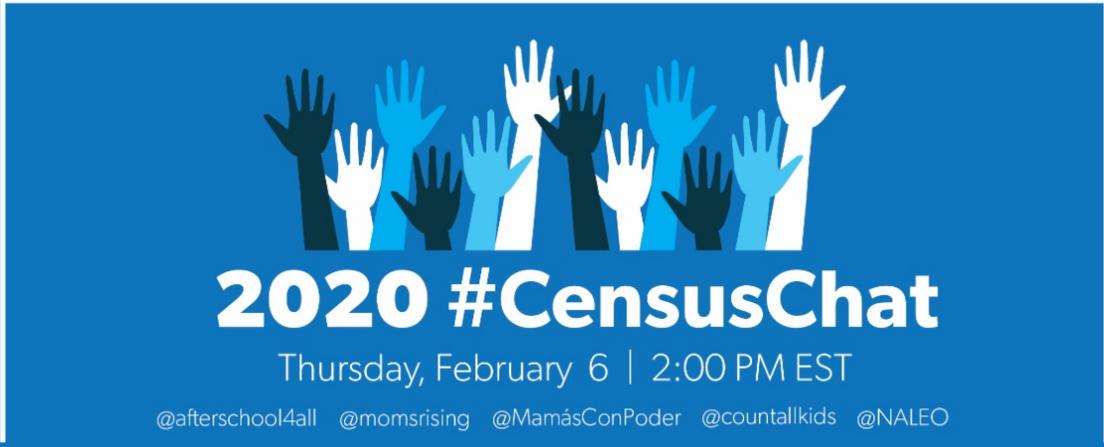
uses of research grant funds is investigating the role of informal and out-of-school STEM learning opportunities on girls' perception of and participation in STEM activities.

MATERIALS: NEW TOOLS & RESOURCES

Briefing at the Department of Education: Join Jodi Grant, Executive Director at the Afterschool Alliance, Daniela Grigioni, Executive Director of After-School All-Stars DC, Chris Neitzey, Director of STEM Initiatives at the Afterschool Alliance, for a conversation on the importance and impact of afterschool STEM programs. Facilitated by Patti Curtis, Noyce/Lettvin STEM Education Fellow at the Department of Education the briefing will take place on February 4t 10-11 a.m. ET. RSVP to attend in person to patti.curtis@ed.gov or join the live stream using the link below.

Join the live stream!

METHODS: UPCOMING ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



The banner features a blue background with a white border. At the top, there are several stylized hands in white, light blue, and dark blue, raised as if participating in a chat. Below the hands, the text "2020 #CensusChat" is written in large, bold, white font. Underneath that, "Thursday, February 6 | 2:00 PM EST" is written in a smaller white font. At the bottom of the banner, a row of social media handles is listed: @afterschool4all @momsrising @MamásConPoder @countallkids @NALEO.

Hosted by:



A row of logos for the organizations hosting the chat: Afterschool Alliance (a blue circle with a white 'A'), M (a red circle with a white 'M'), iHazme Contar (a blue and red logo with a person icon), COUNT ALL kids (a green and blue logo with a person icon), and PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN (a blue and red logo with a person icon).

Census Twitter Chat: Join the Afterschool Alliance, MomsRising, NALEO, Partnership for America's Children/Count All Kids, and more youth-focused organizations on Thursday, February 6, for a Twitter Chat to get the word out about the active role afterschool programs can and should take in ensuring the 2020 Census count is fair, accurate, and — most importantly — safe.

Historically, children between the ages of 0-5 are the most undercounted group, meaning that those children will lose out on innumerable benefits and social services over the next ten years—particularly children living in concentrated poverty where those resources are most needed. With a lot of misinformation about the census stoking mistrust in the process, we believe that afterschool providers, as trusted community partners, can play a meaningful role to spread information, instill confidence in the process, and

ensure access in hard-to-count communities.

Our conversation will be tweeted under the hashtag #CensusChat. We'll see you there!

Afterschool for All Challenge: On March 18, afterschool advocates from across the country — including many brave young people — will visit Washington D.C. to share one message with their elected officials: Afterschool works for our kids. Join us in bringing the case for afterschool to the halls of Congress! On Wednesday, March 18, reach out to your representatives and urge them to maintain or increase funding the programs that keep our kids safe, inspire them to learn, and give working families peace of mind.



Visit our website

RESULTS: IMPACTS OF COORDINATED ADVOCACY



From Common Measures to Measures in Common Convening: Seventy two practitioners, researchers, evaluators, and other stakeholders came together in Washington, D.C. from December 11 to 13 2019 to engage in a field-wide exploration of the current state of evaluation and measurement tools for use in afterschool STEM programs. The convening, which was funded by the National Science Foundation Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) program (award #1811487) and hosted by the Afterschool STEM Hub, University of Washington, and the National Girls Collaborative Project, provided a structure for practitioners from national organizations and leading researchers to do intra-group work with peers, with overlapping sessions designed for the communities to work together. The convening highlighted many opportunities for new work and partnerships surrounding afterschool STEM measurement.

Learn more about the convening and its outcomes in the blog post below, from Jamie Bell, Project Director, at the Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education.

FURTHER READING

Girls Inc. presents trend analysis of major factors affecting girls and guidance on nurturing the next generation: Girls Inc. this month released "Stronger, Smarter, Bolder: Girls Take the Lead," a research report highlighting critical issues, trends and key factors that shape the lives of girls. Informed by findings from a rigorous comparative study by the American Institutes for Research, which demonstrates that girls thrive at Girls Inc., the report also puts forth four crucial supports that create the conditions for girls to overcome challenges and become strong leaders.

[Access the report here!](#)

From quality to outcomes: a national study of afterschool STEM programming: To better understand the efforts made by state afterschool STEM networks, researchers in [this study](#) explored the relationship between afterschool STEM program quality and socio-emotional outcomes. Results showed that most youth reported increases in STEM attitudes, including STEM engagement, career interest, career knowledge, activity participation, and identity. Perseverance, critical thinking, and quality of relationships with adults and peers also increased. The study highlights the importance of STEM program quality and the positive effects they have on youth, and demonstrates how collaborative efforts in research and practice can target resources, understand successes and challenges of programs on various scales, and to increase capacity-building efforts.

[Read the issue!](#)

