

Subject: Beyond School Bells Newsletter-October 2023
Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 7:30:29 AM Central Daylight Time
From: Beyond School Bells
To: Lauren Clark



October 2023

News & Announcements

GetConnected 2023 Come Play
You came and played!





It's a wrap! **GetConnected 2023: Come Play**, Nebraska's statewide afterschool conference was attended by 450 afterschool professionals, advocates and supporters from across Nebraska on September 23rd. This was the biggest turnout ever at a *GetConnected* conference and we were thrilled to experience all the networking and learning that took place during this important gathering.

This annual, all-day conference, hosted jointly by Beyond School Bells, the Nebraska Department of Education 21st CCLC program and Nebraska Extension, was kicked off by NDE Commissioner Dr. Brian Maher with a strong acknowledgement of the vital role afterschool and summer programs play in educating youth communities across the state. Noting his experience as Superintendent of Kearney Public Schools, Dr. Maher observed that high quality programs make a tremendous difference in the educational and social development of children and



NDE Commissioner, Dr. Brian Maher

are critical to families and communities across the state. Sylva Raker, the CEO of the Luminarium, introduced participants to the state of the art, hands on science center and challenged attendees to think about how we can utilize this amazing new resource to support informal learning across the state. Over lunch, Dr. Stephanie Jones discussed research from Harvard University about how Nebraska's 21st CCLC programs are providing youth with the support they need to meet a diverse array of challenges and preparing youth for success in school and in life.



We encourage you to visit the [conference website](#) where we will be posting follow up information about the conference.

We also encourage you to **save the date** – *GetConnected 2024* will once again be held in Kearney on September 27th. You do not want to miss it!

Visit the Conference Website

Lights On Afterschool – October 26th



We are excited to announce on Friday, October 6th Governor Pillemer recognized October 26th as Lights on Afterschool Day in Nebraska. This national celebration recognizes the vital role that thousands of afterschool and summer programs play in communities across the nation to support healthy youth development. See the proclamation [here](#).

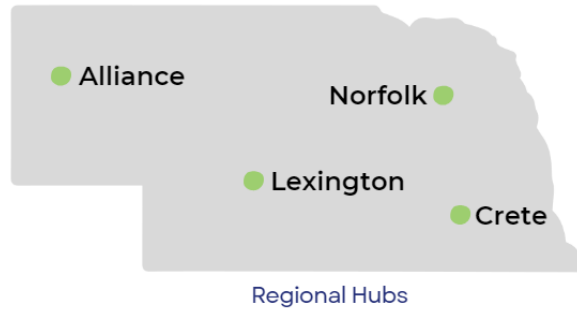
In Nebraska, Lights On Afterschool will start in Omaha on October 14th with a city-wide celebration at the Luminarium in RiverFront Park. It will continue in communities across the state throughout the month.

This is the only national celebration of afterschool programs and we encourage you to participate and show your support. If you are a provider, we encourage you to hold your own Lights On event and if you are an afterschool supporter, we encourage you to visit an event in your community. The [Lights On Afterschool website](#) has important information and a registration form you can fill out to make sure your program is recognized at the national level.

Resources & Opportunities

Statewide Professional Development—Register now for upcoming Regional Connection meetings in your area of the state!

Initial Regional Connection meetings are being held this month and in early November.



Beyond School Bells, NDE 21st CCLC and Nebraska Extension are partnering to provide FREE regional professional development to afterschool providers. The in-person and virtual professional development and networking sessions will be held across the state in four regional hubs during the 2023-24 school year.

The Regional Connections PD will focus on three areas:

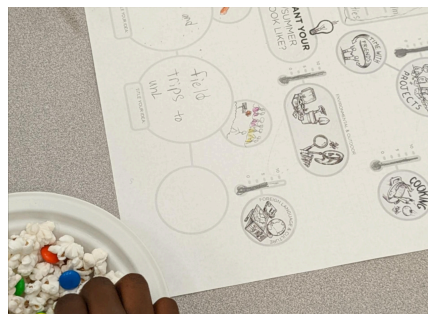
- *The essentials of running an afterschool and/or summer program.*
- *Fostering identity, purpose and hope for students in afterschool programs.*
- *Program partnerships and sustainability.*

For more information and to register for your regional PD, visit the Beyond School Bells website <https://beyondschoolbells.org/resources/regionalconnect.html>

Register

Fall 2023 Youth Brainstorming Sessions

Sign up today!



Beyond School Bells is committed to cultivating and harnessing the valuable insights of youth across the state of Nebraska to help communities build ELO programs that meet the needs and excite the passions of youth participants. Our Youth Brainstorming Sessions offer a unique opportunity for youth to identify interests that can shape afterschool and summer programs in their own communities as well as statewide.

- **Sign up** for the Information Session is due **Monday, October 16**

- <https://forms.gle/6pcKSxJGyoqNfC1Q9>
- The **Information Sessions** will take place **Monday, October 16 at 10am and 2:30pm CT** (9am and 1:30pm MT)
- **Youth Brainstorming Sessions** will take place **the week of October 30**

Beyond School Bells wants to hear from more youth in more communities. If you are interested in participating, here are the important dates to remember:

For more information, check out the [Youth Brainstorming Sheet page](#) on our website or contact: Stephanie Vadnais at svadnais@nebraskachildren.org and Alison O'Toole at aotoole@nebraskachildren.org.

Interest Form

Share Your TMC Lab Experience!



Do you love your TMC Lab and want to voice what this looks like in the future? Beyond School Bells is creating TMC 2.0, but we need your help. If you are interested in helping us plan this out, please contact Alana Pearson at apearson@nebraskachildren.org. We are hoping to put together a learning community of TMC users from across the state.

Crunch Off!

OCTOBER 2023

NEBRASKA CRUNCH OFF

DATE OF YOUR
CHOICE
DURING THE
MONTH OF
OCTOBER

October is Farm to School Month. Join thousands of Nebraskans as we compete against other states in our region to Crunch Off! Take a bite into local, CRUNCHY fruits or vegetables.

Register your team today so your Crunch is counted!



www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/mountain-plains-crunch



Beyond School Bells encourages you to Crunch Off this month! Nebraska is part of a multi-state competition to celebrate Farm to School Month in October. States compete to achieve the most per capita “crunches” into local produce— like apples, carrots, nuts, seeds, and more. Nebraska schools and childcare centers have accepted the challenge by crunching to higher levels year after year and we’ve been the 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 Mountain Plains Crunch Off Champions. Let’s keep it going!

Visit the [Nebraska Crunch Off – Nebraska Department of Education](https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/farm-to-school/mountain-plains-crunch) website for information about how your afterschool program can participate and keep Nebraska at the top of the charts!

Register Today!

National Geographic Slingshot Challenge



National Geographic's [Slingshot Challenge](#) is back! This is a global challenge calling 13- to 18-year-old students to identify a local environmental challenge, design a solution for it, and then submit a 60-second video to National Geographic telling the story of that challenge and the identified solution. Students can participate individually or in groups of up to six students. NatGeo will select winners to receive various prizes including up to \$10,000!

Beyond School Bells funding and support is available for programs interested in taking on the Slingshot Challenge, including support for programs that engage K-8 students in a Slingshot-focused club or programs who have submissions which focus on food waste, agriculture, and energy independence.

Please reach out to Dakota Staggs, dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org with any questions or to sign up for Beyond School Bells support!

Food Systems Afterschool – Grow ELO

Beyond School Bells Funding Opportunities

You may have noticed that the days are getting shorter, leaves are changing, and gardens are wrapping up. Even so, that does not mean Food Systems programming has to end! Beyond School Bells (BSB) has learned over the last 3 years that engaging in food systems programming year-round is not only feasible with tools like hydroponic gardens, LED grow lights, or clubs like Grow NE, it is an essential way to keep students engaged in food systems programming. In order to support Afterschool Programs to keep their momentum going even after wrapping up summer gardens, BSB is offering the following supports for Food Systems Afterschool:

- **Food Systems Club Mini-Grant**
 - BSB will offer funding for curriculum, supplies, and HS and College staff wages for your program to utilize curriculum like [Learn Grow Eat and Go](#), [Jr. Master Gardener](#), [Grow NE](#), Food and Mood, [Ag in the Classroom](#), or your own food systems activities.
- **Food Systems Slingshot Mini Grant**
 - BSB will offer funding to support [National Geographic Slingshot Challenge](#) submissions. See story above!
- **Afterschool to Table**
 - BSB will provide a hydroponic system such as [Fork Farms Flex Farms](#) for students to operate and use to contribute to local food systems.

Click the button below to complete an interest form to take advantage of these great funding

opportunities! Please reach out to Dakota Staggs, dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org with any questions or to sign up for BSB support.

Interest Form

Nebraska Farm to School

Attend a Listening Session this Month!

The Nebraska Department of Education with statewide partners is embarking on a process to learn what's happening with farm to school in Nebraska communities and what key barriers are standing in the way. Together we'll build a network that will take strategic, collective action to move farm to school forward in the state.

Beyond School Bells wants to ensure that Afterschool and Summer programs are represented in the Farm to School Network and work moving forward. We know that afterschool programs can be food systems leaders and are key stakeholders in these efforts. We encourage you to attend a listening session and to invite your school's Food Director!



October 10, 6:30 – 7:30pm Central Time
October 11, 12:30 – 1:30pm Central Time
October 12, 7:00 – 8:00am, Central Time
October 14, 9:30 – 10:30am, Central Time
In-person, Alliance, NE October 18, 2:00 – 4:30pm, Mountain Time

Register for a Listening Session

Million Girls Moonshot (MGM) October Resources

Engineering Mindset and Earth Week 2023

[Earth Science Week 2023](#) - Earth Science Week, celebrated each October, reaches millions of people annually with activities, materials, and information about the geosciences. The theme of Earth Science Week 2023, is "Geoscience Innovating for Earth and People." The event (October 8-14, 2023), will emphasize the many ways that innovations in geosciences are helping communities create healthier and increasingly sustainable lives, while accelerating environmental problem-solving around the world. Find resources and learn more on the official website!

NASA's Surprisingly STEM Career Awareness Series

In partnership with NASA's Office of STEM Engagement, we are kicking off the MONTHLY [Surprisingly STEM](#) career awareness series. [Flier here](#). This series is designed to inform students about the broad range of career opportunities at NASA outside of the typical associations of rocket scientists and astronauts – and to break down perceived barriers for working at the agency. This resource includes:

- Monthly Release of new prerecorded 5-minute career episode
- Associated STEAM Activities
- Monthly Live Session with NASA expert to answer Student Questions

For the full collection of October MGM resources, [please join our Facebook group](#) and access the September post!

TMC Regional Spotlight

TMC Regional Spotlight: City Build 2040 in Oakland-Craig Nebraska



Students at Oakland-Craig Public School had the privilege to take part in City Build 2040 during their summer program. The activity was led by two Oakland Craig high school students over the course of four days. The first three days focused on designing and building. Students were put into groups of three to four to build a section of their city. On the fourth day, students rushed to complete their section of the city so they would be ready to present to parents and community members about

how they envision Oakland, NE to look like in year 2040. They also rehearsed our speeches and collaborated with their classmates to see how each of their sections interconnected.

Parents and community members arrived around lunchtime and were greeted by students. Participants stood in a large circle around the city so that each group could say something about their section. We concluded the event with a nice lunch and conversation.

One other group leader said “I worked with the 1st and 2nd graders. Every day the students loved walking into the commons to see what had been added to the City Build. They loved seeing what had been built and commenting on what they would have done. They hope to do it when they are older!”

– Alana Pearson, Beyond School Bells



Our Contact Information

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