

# Spring Virtual ✕ Connections

Recruiting, Retaining, and Recognizing Staff



**Beyond School Bells™**  
nebraskachildren





**Welcome!**

**We're here to:**

- **Learn**
- **Grow**
- **Connect!**

# Introductions

In the chat share:

- Your name
- Program
- If you had to recruit a fictional character to work in your afterschool program, who would you hire and why?

# Investing in the Success of After-School Professionals



*Program quality lives in the moments staff create with students.*

After school teams need PD that is:

*Flexible. Relevant. Immediately Useful.*

One way to provide that:

## Video Library

*2,500+ real-world examples to help staff see effective practice; easy to use in meetings or independently*

## Professional Learning Courses

*Hundreds of courses on practical topics like engagement, behavior, and student support; designed for educators in a variety of roles, including after-school professionals*



**TRUSTED BY OVER 1 MILLION EDUCATORS  
FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS.**

[www.teachingchannel.com](http://www.teachingchannel.com)

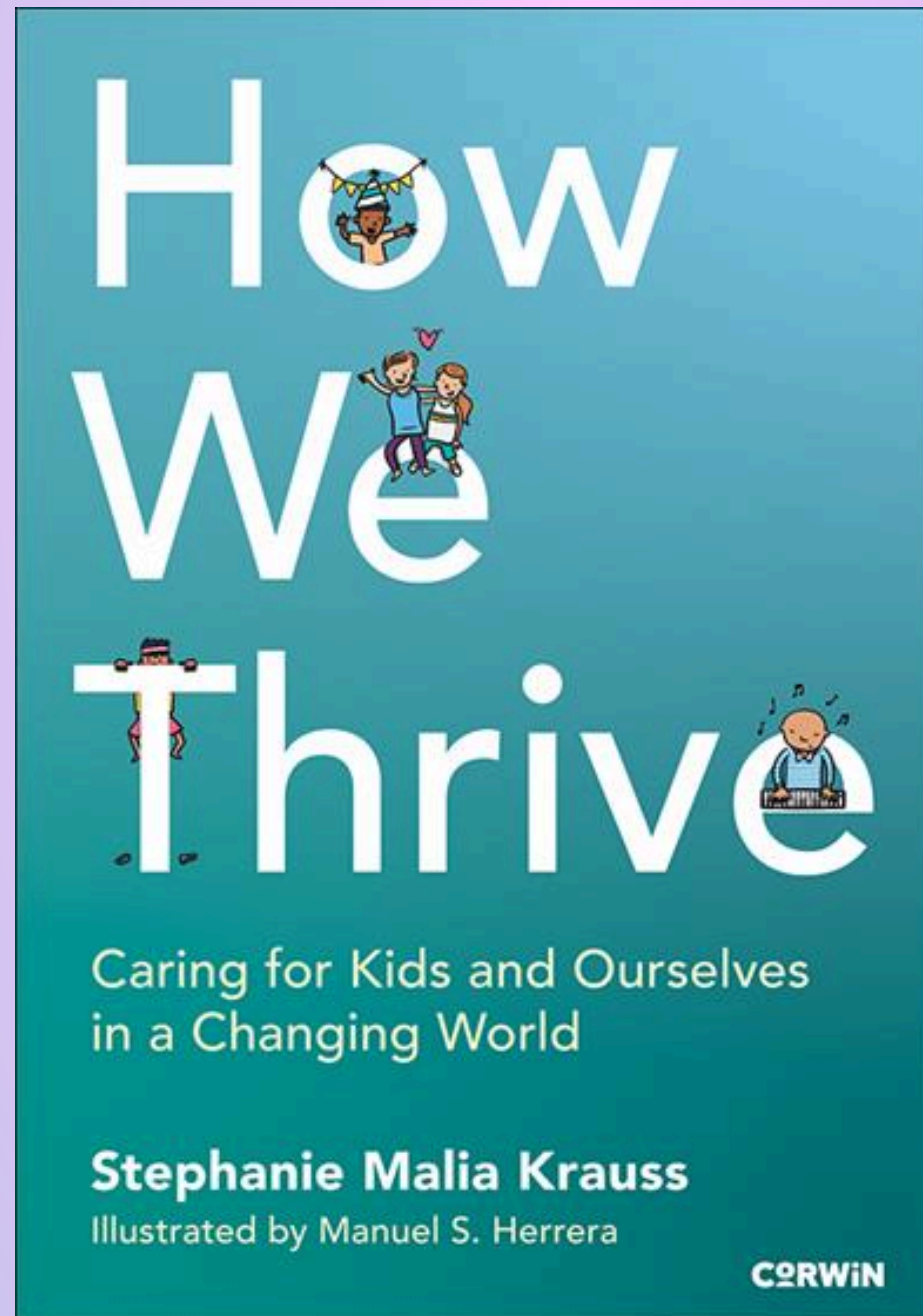
**As a thank you for joining today..**



**Teaching Channel**<sup>™</sup>  
Formerly **Learners Edge**

**One month FREE access to  
Teaching Channel!**

# Exciting Announcement!



- How We Thrive Book Club!
- Once a week in June, 11 hour on Zoom
- The author will join us for part of the first and last meeting
- Focus: Caring for yourself so you can care for kids
- If you currently have BSB funds, you can use them to purchase books for you/your staff
- First 10 people to sign up will receive a free book!

# Quick Poll



This online forum is your place to share ideas, ask questions, and exchange resources with others who are passionate about creating enriching and engaging environments for children and youth. Whether you're a program leader, school administrator, community partner, or frontline staff member, Connect Now offers a space to learn from one another and grow together.

# The Staffing Challenge

- Demand for the program is strong, but limited staffing is making it difficult to keep up, resulting in waitlists or scaled-back programming
- Competing labor market, limits the pool of candidates
- Same positions have high turnover
- Afterschool field may feel like a temporary job—not a long term career



**Whole Group Question:**

**What are some other staffing challenges specific to your program?**



# Recruitment: Finding the Right People



Whole Group Question:

- Where have you had the most success finding afterschool staff?

# Recruitment: Finding the Right People

## 1. Reframe the Role

- Present the role differently to attract candidates who are motivated by purpose

- “youth development professional”
- “help mentor and shaping futures”
- “flexible, lifestyle-friendly work”
- “leadership opportunity”
- “community impact role”
- “building relationships that matter”
- “extending learning beyond the classroom”
- “resume-building skill development”

## 2. Reducing Barriers

- Remove obstacles that prevent potential afterschool staff from applying.

- Simplify the application
- Work history instead of resume
- Remove degree requirements
- Offer paid training upfront
- Speed up the hiring timeline
- Provide pay ranges upfront
- Offer flexible scheduling
- Allow alternative interview formats

## 3. Expand the Talent Pool

- Rethink who belongs in your program

- Recruit high schools
- Tap into community colleges
- Engage retired educators
- Partner w/workforce dev. agencies
- Create roles for artists and hobbyists
- Partner with AmeriCorps
- Recruit parents and caregivers
- Offer practicum placements

## 4. Leverage Community Partners

- Recruitment becomes a shared community effort and invitation to join

- Libraries
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Youth-serving nonprofits
- Parks and recreation
- Cultural centers
- Alumni

### Recruitment Plans:

- What would you like to implement?

### Ideas for future recruitment efforts:

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# Recruitment: Finding the Right People

- Reframe the role: How are positions described and experienced?
- Reduce barriers: What are some systems that filter possible afterschool staff out?
- Expand the talent pool: Rethink about WHO belongs in your program.
- Leverage community partnerships: How can recruitment be a shared effort?

List Possible Afterschool Staff

# Group Question:

If you could change or improve one part of your recruitment process, what would it be?

OR

- What's one strategy you've used to recruit afterschool staff that's worked really well for you?

# Retention: Keeping your Staff

## 1. Onboarding Matters

- Making new staff feel capable and supported early.

- Start before day one
- Create a warm first-day experience
- Assign a peer mentor
- Break training into bite-sized pieces

- Build in reflection time
- Train on behavior management
- Introduce new staff to families and students intentionally
- Normalize mistakes and learning

## 2. Creating a Supportive Culture

- A place staff choose to stay

- Offer flexible scheduling options
- Build schedules around real life
- Normalize asking for help
- Prioritize emotional support

- Encourage team connections
- Involve staff in decision-making
- Provide Breaks
- Address conflict quickly

## 3. Provide Professional Development

- Help staff see a future, not just a job

- Create individual growth plans
- Use peer learning opportunities
- Recognize strengths
- Training on behavior management often

- Pay for certifications
- Ask staff what they want to learn
- Create a resource library
- Support attendance at conferences

## 4. Creative Compensation

- Recognizing time and contributions

- Offer retention bonuses
- Provide attendance incentives
- Offer referral bonuses
- Reimburse certifications

- Partner with local businesses for discounts
- Use bonuses for going above and beyond
- Provide childcare discounts
- Provide paid time off opportunities

### Retention Plans:

- What would you like to incorporate?

### Ideas for future retention efforts:

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# Retention: Keeping your Staff

- Onboarding matters: Make new staff feel capable and supported early.
- Create a supportive culture: Turn a job into a place people choose to stay.
- Provide professional growth : “You matter here, you have a future“
- Provide creative compensations: Valuing staff beyond the paycheck

# Group Question:



**What keeps you in your role?  
How can that same reason be used to  
better support and retain staff?**

**OR**

**In your experience, why do staff leave and  
what's one solution that can help address  
that?**

# Recognition: Making Staff Feel Valued

- **Frequent and specific: Make staff feel seen, not just elevated**
- **Build a culture of appreciation: Connect recognition to your program's value**

# Recognition: Making staff feel valued


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## Recognition and Appreciation

- **Staff Spotlights:** Feature staff on social media, newsletters, or bulletin boards with their photo, fun facts
- **Thank-You Notes:** Have students, families, and colleagues write notes and display them in a "Wall of Appreciation."
- **Shout-Outs:** Dedicate a moment each day for students to share why they appreciate their leader.
- **Thank-You Videos:** Have students record short videos or create artwork expressing gratitude.

## Recognition and Appreciation

- **Surprise Snack & Coffee Bar:** Set up a breakfast or snack station with coffee, donuts, or healthy treats.
- **Team-Building Game Day:** Organize a fun challenge, trivia, or mini-Olympics for staff.
- **Dress-Up Days:** Plan themed dress-up days (e.g., "Favorite Superhero," "Wacky Hat Day") to bring fun to the week.
- **Raffle or Prize Giveaway:** Enter staff into a raffle for small prizes like gift cards, self-care items, or books.
- **Staff Lunch or Potluck:** Host a catered lunch or potluck where families and community partners contribute.
- **Professional Development Day:** Offer a training session or wellness workshop as a way to invest in staff.
- **Invite Special Guests:** Have school principals, local officials, or community leaders visit and personally thank staff.
- **Self-Care Gift Bags:** Put together small self-care kits with items like candles, teas, journals, or stress-relief items.
- **Gift Cards or Small Tokens:** Even \$5 coffee shop gift cards or personalized mugs can be a meaningful gesture.
- **Proclamation or Community Recognition:** Request a local government official to declare "Afterschool Professionals Week" in your area.



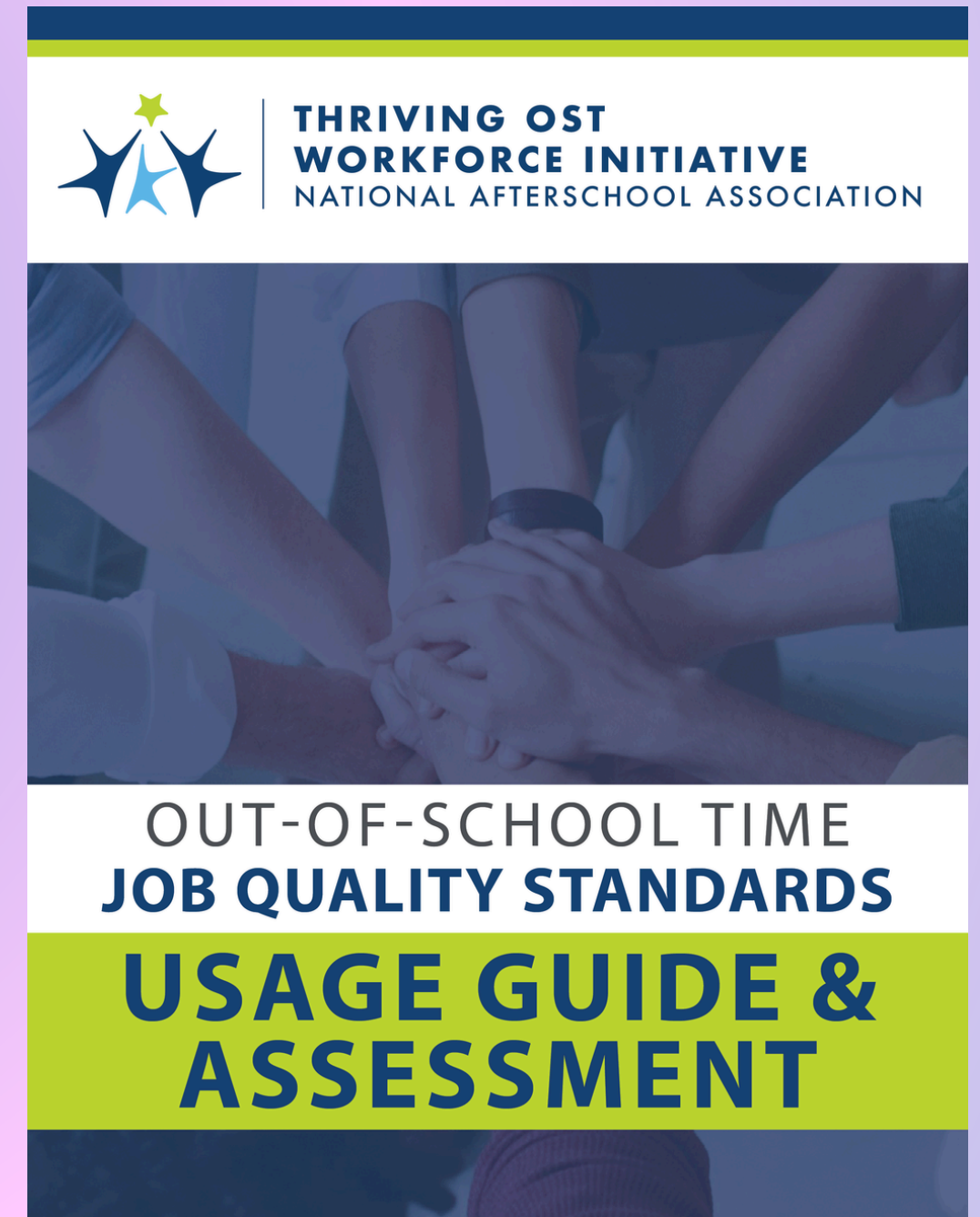
**Group Question:**


**How do you like to be  
recognized?**

**OR**

**How do you incorporate  
recogniton into your program?**

# One more quick poll





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Happy Afterschool Professionals  
Appreciation Week  
April 20-24

We appreciate you!!

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# One more quick poll (but really this time)

Please select  
"Other" and fill in:

"Spring Virtual  
Connection"

