

Youth Brainstorming Activity 2025 Summary Report



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2025 Youth Brainstorming Activity

Summary Report

Background

Nebraska is fortunate to have high quality afterschool and summer Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) in communities across the state. The demand for these programs is substantial; for every young person who is enrolled in a program, four are waiting to get in. While this gap is significant, families who do have access consistently report positive experiences. Ninety-one percent (91%) of Nebraska parents rate their children's afterschool programs as excellent or very good.

Decades of research confirm what common sense suggests, we see results when Nebraska youth regularly participate in high-quality ELO programs outside of the traditional school day. Student attendance, behaviors, and ultimately their grades in school improve. According to the most recent America After 3PM¹ data, 68% of Nebraska parents report that afterschool programs excite their children about learning and attending school, 83% of parents see gains in social skills and responsible decision-making, and 79% observe improvements in teamwork, critical thinking, and leadership skills.

Additionally, Nebraska's ELOs provide coordinated programs that are safe, caring places for young people to interact with mentors and caring adults when their parents or caregivers are at work. ELOs provide nutritional snacks, meals, and much needed exercise and movement. Opportunities are created for youth to have fun with their classmates and make new friends as they explore new ideas, build real-world skills, and explore career interests. Indeed, the benefits of ELO programs are multi-faceted, but they only work when youth want to be in the programs.

Simply put, for ELO programs to attract and retain youth, they must engage youth in programs that reflect their interests and provide opportunities they might not otherwise have access to. Youth voice and leadership represent a cornerstone of quality programming. Research consistently demonstrates that young people are more likely to stay engaged when their ideas and contributions shape program design. When youth have meaningful opportunities to plan, implement, and evaluate activities, programs support essential skill development alongside improved attendance and retention.

¹ Retrieved from <https://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/landing/> on November 12, 2025.

That is why Beyond School Bells (BSB), Nebraska's statewide afterschool network and a public/private partnership of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, decided to ask Nebraska youth in ELO programs across the state to identify the types of learning opportunities and experiences they enjoy and would like to see more of in their ELO program. Rather than use a standard questionnaire, we created interactive brainstorming tools specifically designed for youth. Beyond School Bells pledges to continue centering youth voice in all aspects of quality improvement. By systematically gathering, analyzing, and acting on youth input, we support programs statewide in integrating authentic youth voice into their programming. This report represents not an endpoint but a beginning: a foundation for ongoing dialogue with Nebraska's young people about the experiences that will help them thrive.

Method of Data Collection

During the spring of 2025, ten school districts or communities and 11 different schools across Nebraska participated in an activity with youth in afterschool programs to gather their interests for afterschool and summer activities. Additionally, during the summer of 2025, four school districts or communities and 13 different schools participated. In total, 14 school districts or communities and 24 schools participated.

The Youth Brainstorming Activity sheet (Appendix A), Administration Guide and Information Form (Appendix B), and Parent Information Letter (Appendix C) were created by Beyond School Bells (BSB) staff to facilitate the data collection process. School Community Coordinators at each program site who agreed to participate were provided a 30-minute training workshop on administering the data collection activity. Each facilitated Brainstorming Activity lasted from 45 minutes to one hour.

The Youth Brainstorming Activity was structured by Beyond School Bells staff and implemented by a facilitator at the site who was also a staff member and familiar to the students. The activity started with the facilitator reading a purpose statement to the students (see Administration Guide in Appendix B) and reviewing the images on the Brainstorming sheet. To get the students thinking about interesting clubs or opportunities, they were asked to list the top three clubs or activities they experienced in the past. After writing down their top three past activities, the students were then asked to share those experiences with someone sitting next to them.

The next step of the activity had the students look at each bubble on the Brainstorming Sheet with a graphic and a theme in it, then rate that theme by coloring in the thermometer up to the number that shows how interested they were in participating in a club with that theme. A zero means the student was not at all

interested, a five means the student was kind of interested, and a ten means the student would sign up for a club with that theme. The last step of the activity was for the students to put their own ideas into the empty bubbles on the brainstorming sheet, putting one idea into each bubble.

After the activity was over, facilitators completed an information form and mailed the completed brainstorming sheets and information form back to the Beyond School Bells offices using a pre-stamped envelope.

Data Analysis

Each completed brainstorming sheet was assigned a unique number and the student data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS. Individual identifiers were removed. Staff from EquiMeasure Consulting LLC identified themes during the analysis of student results after the first administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity in the fall of 2022. Those themes were updated during the administration of the activity in 2023, with an addition of the theme *mindfulness*. The updated themes were applied to the student data for the spring and summer 2025 administrations.

The themes emerged based on how the suggested club or opportunity might be implemented. For example, there were many field-trip type activities that were suggested and the type of field trip varied widely across the student suggestions. Instead of grouping all field trip suggestions under the heading “field trips” a student’s suggestion was coded based on any specifics the student might have included. For example, “trip to the library” was coded as the theme *literacy*. The student suggestion of a “trip to Mexico to watch a soccer match” was coded as the theme *experiential* because the student was seeking a unique experience. If student responses were uninterpretable, they were excluded from analysis.

The list of themes from the 2022 administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity included Arts, Board Games, Crafts, Culture, eSports, Experiential, Gender Specific, Life Skills, Literacy, Sports, and STEM (see Appendix D). During the 2023 administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity, several students suggested opportunities that were categorized as *mindfulness*, so that category was added to the 2023 list of themes. Each student suggestion for future clubs/opportunities was coded based on the identified theme that best matched each student suggestion.

Student suggestions were grouped together and are reported in aggregate. Student suggestions were disaggregated by grade level bands (elementary & middle level); however, one district administered the activity to students in grades 3 through 7

without identifying which responses were elementary or middle level. That set of students (n=8) were included in the middle level set of responses. For the 2025 administrations, all participating school districts were considered small (student population < 30,000).

There were no changes between the methods of data analysis from the 2023 administration to the 2025 administrations of the Youth Brainstorming Activity.

Description of Student Participants

A total of 24 afterschool programs in 14 communities in Nebraska collected data from 228 youth in their programs. Grade levels of student participants ranged from kindergarten grade through 8th grade, with most of the participants in the elementary grades (kindergarten through grade 5).

Students were specifically asked to *not* provide demographic information on the brainstorming sheets. The facilitators were asked to complete an information form for the purpose of providing details about their administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity and general descriptions of the student participants. We recognize this was not a perfect collection of how students self-identify. However, using the information sheet, encouraged the facilitator to ensure the group of students invited to participate were representative of the students at that school and separated the student demographics from the students' individual responses on the brainstorming sheets.

Table 1 shows the demographic summary (count and percent) of the student participants based on data provided on the information forms from the 2025 administrations of the Youth Brainstorming Activity compared to the percent of school aged student demographics across Nebraska. Demographic data were reported as a group of students by the activity facilitators. Therefore, we cannot disaggregate individual student results by student demographic variables.

Table 1: 2025 Student Participant Demographics (N=226*)

Demographic Group	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants	Percent of Statewide Youth²
Girls	126	56%	48%
Boys	100	44%	52%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	7	3%	1%
Asian	2	<1%	3%
Black	18	8%	6%
Hispanic/Latino	43	19%	22%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	0	<1%	<1%
White	127	56%	62%
Two or More Races	8	4%	5%

*Demographic data were missing for two students.

The student sample is representative of Nebraska's students in the demographics of gender and ethnicity. Fifty-six (25%) of the students were English language learners. All students in this administration were from small school districts (< 30,000 students).

Two hundred twenty-eight (228) completed Youth Brainstorming sheets from the 2025 administrations were returned and summarized. On those sheets, students provided 680 top three past experiences and 905 suggestions for clubs or opportunities they wish to experience in their afterschool or summertime programs in the future.

Results

The graphs on the following pages summarize the three different data collection steps from the Youth Brainstorming Activity, which include a) past experiences, b) thermometer ratings, and c) suggestions or ideas for future programs.

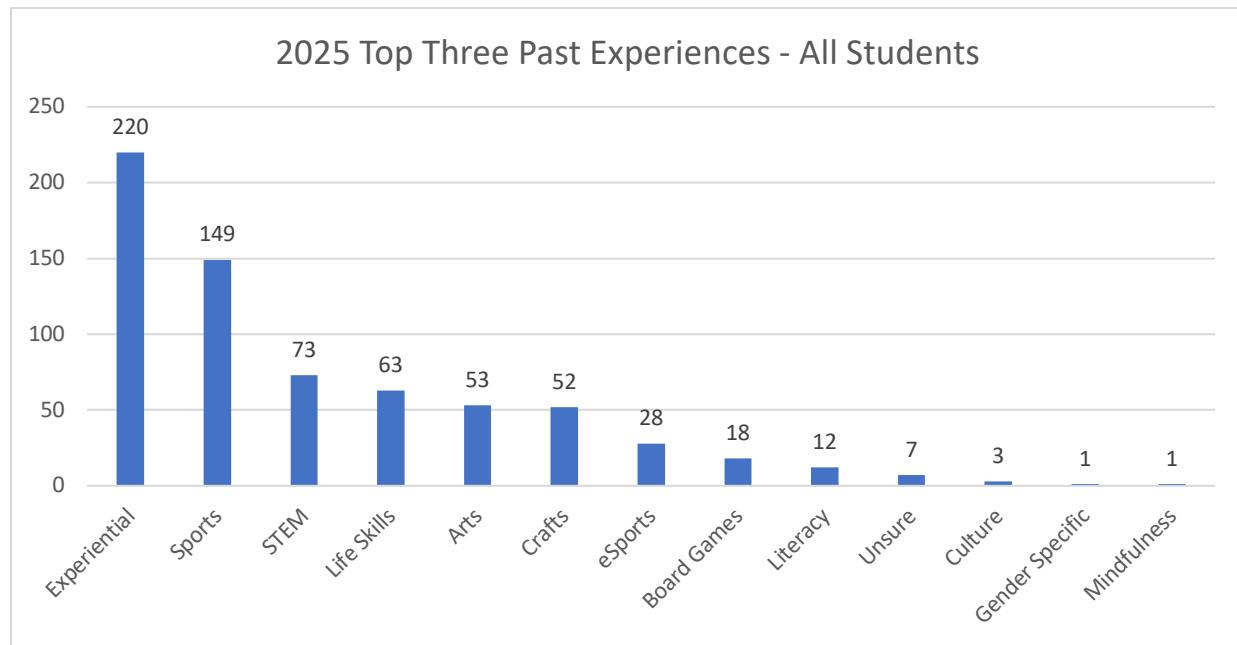
² Percent of Nebraska School-aged Youth during the 2025-2026 School Year found at:
<https://www.education.ne.gov/dataservices/data-reports/>

Top Three Past Experiences

The Youth Brainstorming Activity began with the facilitator prompting students to consider previous out-of-school-time experiences and identifying the best they have had. Students were asked to list up to three of their top experiences and to write those on their brainstorming sheet.

Graph 1 shows the summary data from the *Top Three Past Experiences* of all student participants.

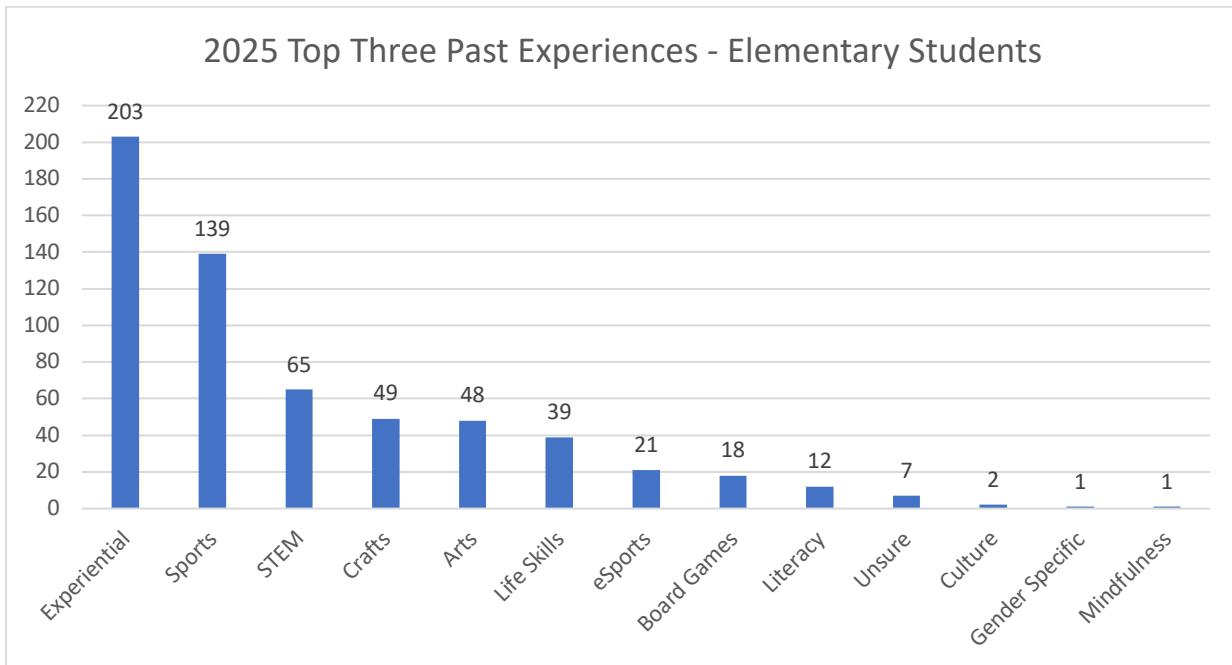
Graph 1: 2025 Count of Top Three Past Experiences for All Students



For the 2025 administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity, students overwhelmingly valued *experiential* activities the most (see Table 2 on page 11 for a list of examples). *Sports* and *experiential* experiences have consistently held the top spots for youth across Nebraska as outcomes from this data collection activity over the past three years.

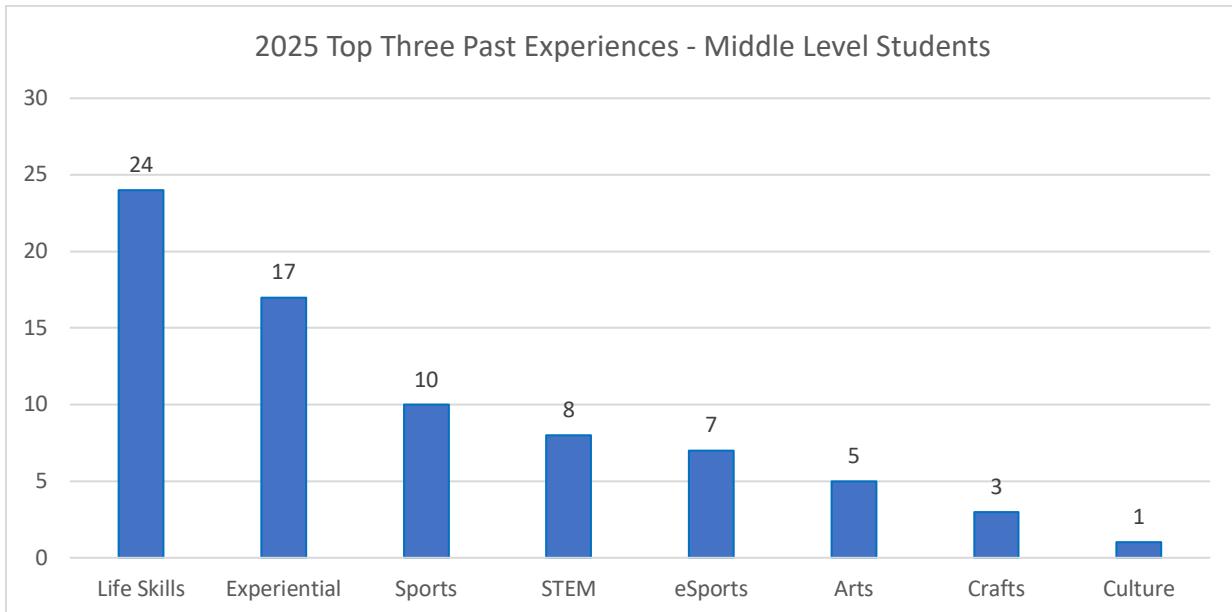
When disaggregated by elementary or middle level students, however, we see some differences in the top past experiences (see Graph 2). Elementary students continue to overwhelmingly identify experiential activities as their top experiences, with 34% of the responses falling in this category. A distant second category is sports, with 23% of the responses. The following responses in order are STEM (11%), Crafts (8%), Arts (8%), Life Skills (7%), eSports (4%), Board Games (3%), and Literacy (2%).

Graph 2: 2025 Count of Top Three Past Experiences for Elementary Students



Middle level students identified *life skills* activities as their top past experiences, with 33% of the students' identifying activities in this theme (see Graph 3). The theme *experiential* (23%) was the second most popular theme for middle level students. Sports came in third with 13% of the students identifying activities that fell into this theme.

Graph 3: 2025 Count of Top Three Past Experiences for Middle Level Students

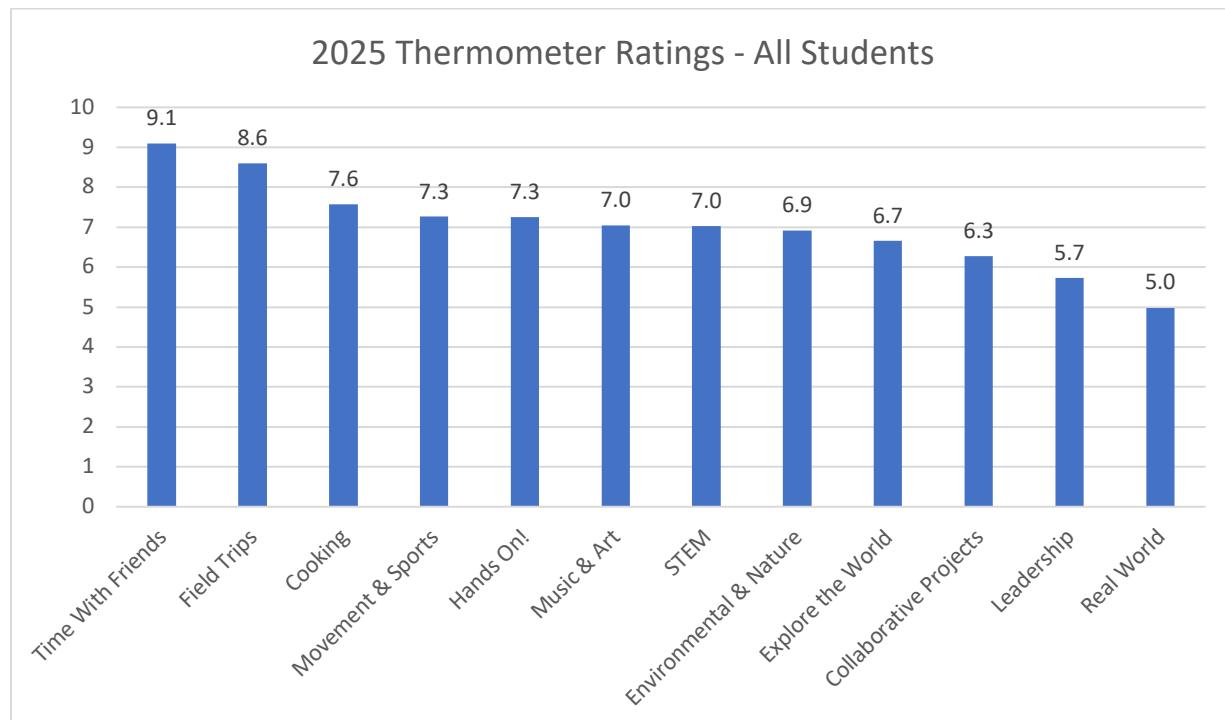


Thermometer Ratings of Categorical Programming Options

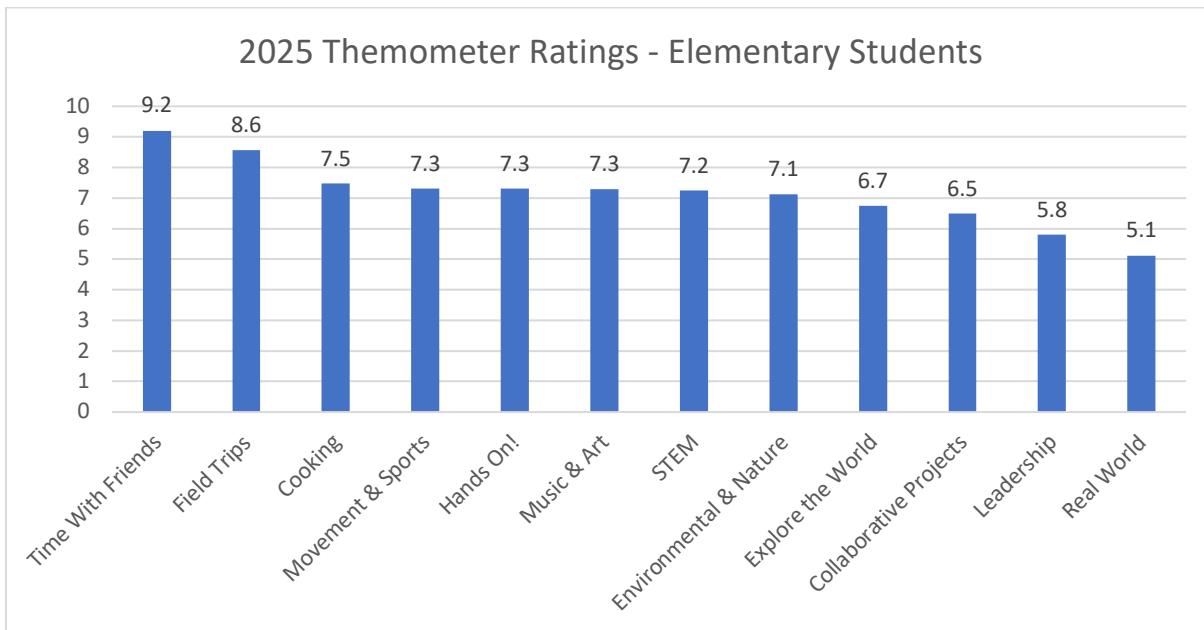
The next set of graphs show data from the second step in the Youth Brainstorming Activity: *Thermometer Ratings*. The Youth Brainstorming sheet (Appendix A) presents to students a set of graphics of various possible themes or activities that could occur in out-of-school programs. Each graphic was linked to a thermometer, and students were asked to shade in the thermometer up to the number that shows how interested they would be to sign up for a club with that theme. On a scale of 0 to 10, a zero means not at all interested, a five means kind of interested, and a ten means they would “definitely sign up” for a club with that theme.

For the 2023 Youth Brainstorming Activity, the titles of the graphics were simplified based on feedback from the facilitators of the 2022 administration. Some students were confused by some terms used, which resulted in some graphics not getting ratings. Differences between the thermometer ratings for the 2022 and 2023 administrations include changing *civic & community engagement* to *leadership* and *foreign language and culture* to *explore the world*. Additionally, *time with friends* and *hands-on* were added as categories as they were common suggestions in the 2022 administration. The 2025 administration of the Youth Brainstorming Activity used the 2023 updated version, without any additional changes. Data from the thermometer ratings are presented in Graphs 4 through 6.

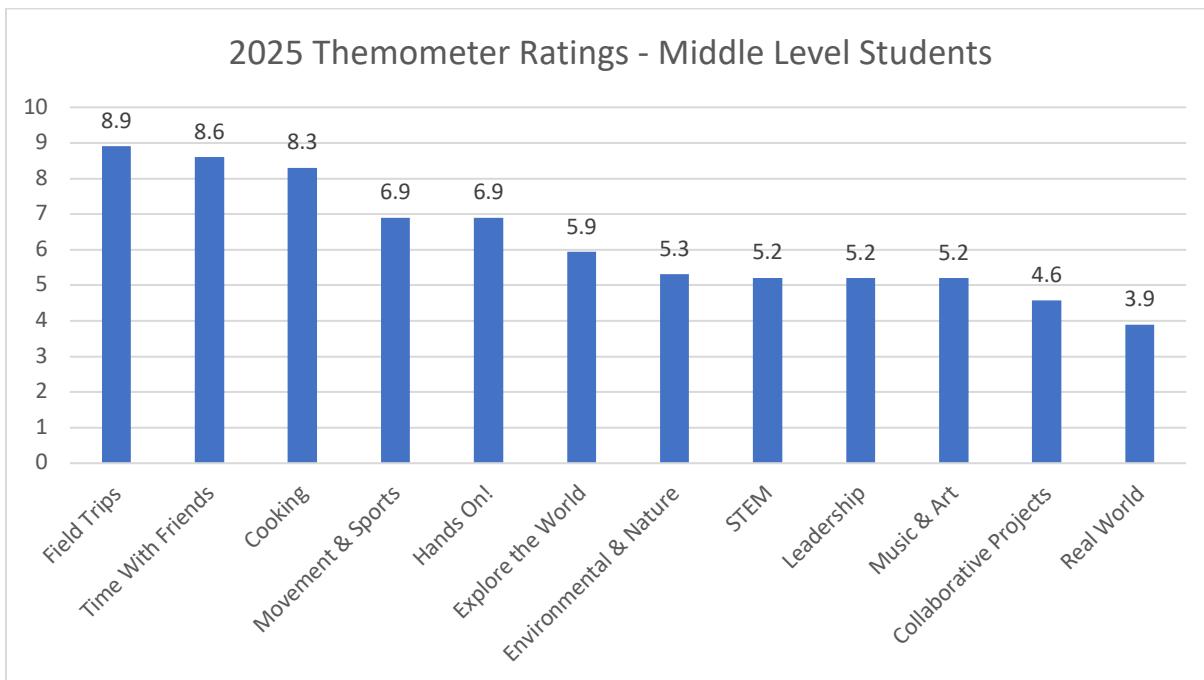
Graph 4: 2025 Thermometer Ratings of Pre-Identified Themes, Means for All Students



Graph 5: 2025 Thermometer Ratings of Pre-Identified Themes, Means for Elementary Students



Graph 6: 2025 Thermometer Ratings of Pre-Identified Themes, Means for Middle Level Students



Time with friends consistently has been the highest rated theme for all students, which was added as a thermometer rating for the 2023 administration (see Graph 4). Time with friends is clearly important to all students and should be a consideration as sites develop their out-of-school programming schedules. *Field trips* was also a highly rated theme. Both *time with friends* and *field trips* continue to rise to the top of the thermometer ratings for students.

It is important to note that all categories received an average above 5 on the 10-point scale, which is the tipping point for interest in an activity. *Field trips, time with friends, field trips, and cooking* averaged 7.5 or higher, and *movement & sports, hands on!, music & art, and STEM* averaging between 7.0 - 7.4.

Results for middle level students (see Graph 6) varied from the elementary (see Graph 5) with *field trips* the highest rated, followed closely by *time with friends* and *cooking*.

Student Suggestions for Future Activities

The last set of graphs show data from the students' suggestions for what they would like to learn more about, and opportunities they would like to experience or something they want to explore but can't on their own. Table 2 (page 11) is a comprehensive sample of student suggestions by theme.

The themes, or categories, of the student suggestions were determined by considering how the students' suggestions would be implemented. How would a club or opportunity be administered in the afterschool or summer group-like setting? For example, several students suggested going to a swimming pool and others suggested swimming lessons or swimming competitions. Those suggestions range from *experiential* (going to a swimming pool) to *sport* (swimming competition) to *life skill* (swimming lessons). The different swimming experiences would be introduced to students in very different ways, and we wished to categorize the suggestions accordingly.

The theme *experiential* identifies activities that provide students with unique opportunities that are outside of the program site (e.g., laser tag, horseback riding, going to a college sporting event). The theme *sports* includes structured, or organized, physical activities (e.g., basketball, softball, swim team). The theme *life skills* is defined as learning how to do something that leads to self-help or self-care (e.g., how to drive a car, hair and nail care, learning about jobs).

A list of the themes with a brief definition/explanation for each was created to lead to consistency across and within raters as each student suggestion was categorized into a theme. Each student suggestion was matched with one theme that best fit the suggestion. See Appendix D for the list of themes with definitions/explanations.

Table 2: Variety of student suggestions for clubs/opportunities by theme

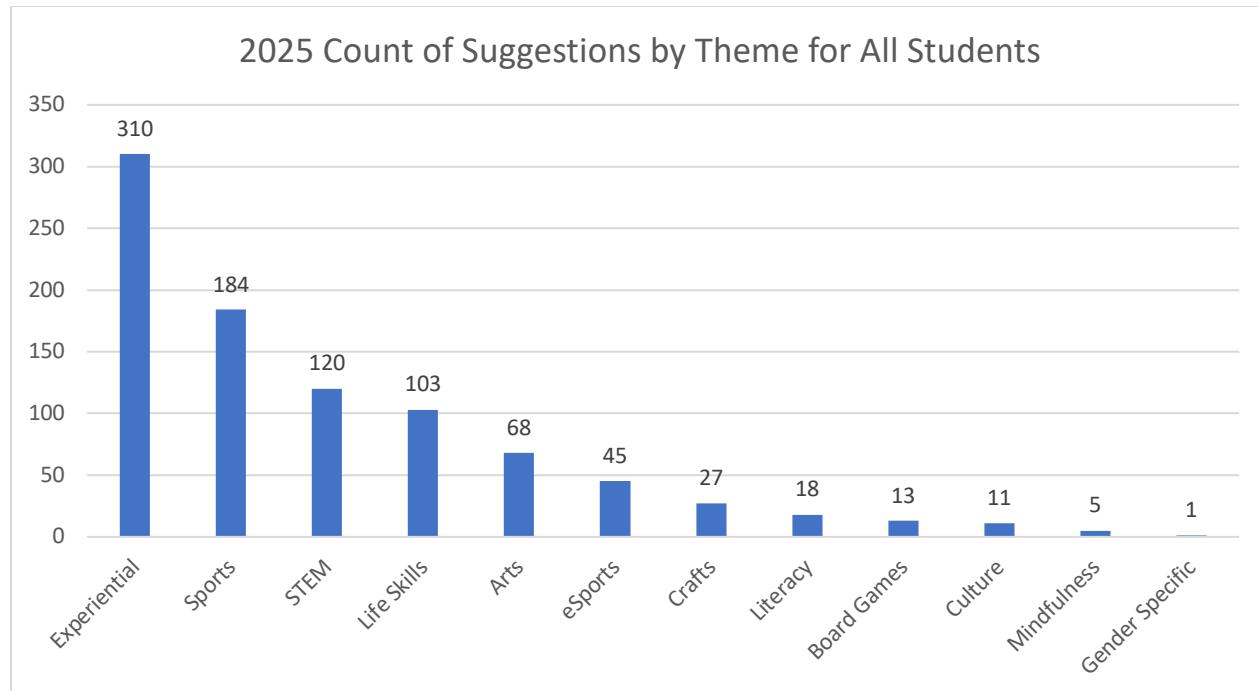
Sports	Soccer, swimming, gym/P.E., snowball fight, biking, running/racing, walking, gymnastics, soccer, football, basketball, archery, group games, tournaments, cheer, volleyball, hockey, bowling, recess, tag, dance, roller skating, golf, Kratos (fitness), ice skating, softball/baseball, water games
Experiential	Harry Potter club, field trips, Chipotle, McDonald's, laser tag, Camp Kitaki, fishing, movie theater, pool, pizza, shopping/going to the mall, going to the zoo, go karts, puppies, rope a fake cow, chat club, Husker game, go to the YMCA, camping, friendship club, dog walking, sledding, free choice, humor club, nerf club, trampoline, make a snowman, drink soda, Urban Air, axe throwing, lemonade stand, water fights, downtown walk, nap time, visiting a farm, get food from local fast food/ice cream shop
STEM	Building/construction club, math, nature, volcanos, engineering, science experiments, crystals, astronomy/stars, crime investigation club, garden plants/gardening, Legos, robotics, gadgets, coding, scientists, Earth science, slime, make rockets, learn about animals, tech skills, bubbles, how to create water, insects, make hair products, geology, catching insects, animal science, inventing
Arts	Art club, pottery, music, acting in plays, drawing, theater/drama, photography, clothing design, musicals, painting, clay, piano, animation, guitar, watching plays, jazz club, carving
Life Skills	Cooking, choosing recipes, sewing, volunteer club, paint a house, baking/make cake pops, babysitting, how to make money, how to ride a bike, how to use tools, about our bodies club, 4-H, how to do nails and hair, how to drive a car/motorcycle, swim lessons, civic engagement, talk about jobs, cleaning, learning about the military, horseback riding, how to be a teacher, leadership, help janitor/staff, candy making, volunteering
eSports	Roblox club, gaming, tournaments, game room, PS5, virtual reality
Crafts	ring making, woodworking club, bracelets/necklaces, coloring sheets, make stuffed animals, make ornaments, basket weaving, gingerbread houses
Board/Table Games	Pokémon, Dungeons & Dragons, chess, game nights, Connect Four
Culture	Pride club, Japanese, Spanish, French, sign language, Bible study, trying foods from other cultures, Portuguese
Gender Specific	Boys' club, Boys on the Run, Girls on the Run, men's fashion
Literacy	Comic books, book club, reading club, library visits, English, time to read
Mindfulness	Calming, being happy, learning/talking about feelings, take a break from society, time to be alone

The 2025 student suggestions for future clubs or opportunities are presented in Graphs 7 through 9. Graph 7 displays the responses for all students who participated in the 2025 Brainstorming Activity.

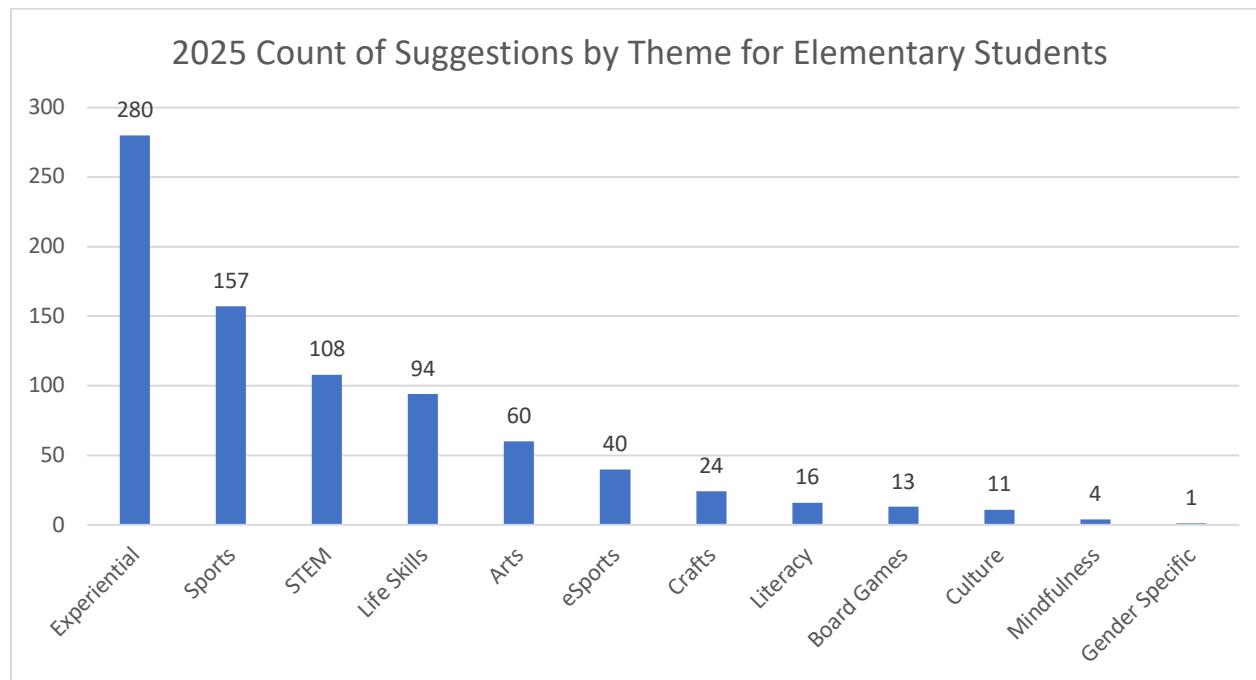
Overwhelmingly, *experiential* activities were the most suggested activities with 310 suggestions that included field trips to the zoo, attending football camp, going to fast-food restaurants, horseback riding, going boating, and touring museums. *Sports* was the second most popular category with 184 suggestions that included swimming, football, volleyball, riding bikes, pickleball, and rock walls. Examples of *STEM* activities suggested by students included learning about space, robotics, marble mazes, math clubs, creation stations, dinosaurs, and learning about STEM jobs such as veterinarian and astronaut. *Life Skills* activities continue to be of high interest to students. Suggestions from this administration include cooking/baking, self-improvement, gardening, fire safety, tent making, hair styling, babysitting, and nail care. *eSports* is an increasingly popular requested activity with suggestions that included virtual reality, Fortnite, EA Sports, Madden, and video gaming in general.

Disaggregating the student responses by grade level did not identify any differences between the elementary and middle level students. Overwhelmingly, students would enjoy engaging in experiences, especially those they might not otherwise have an opportunity to experience in their school, family, and community.

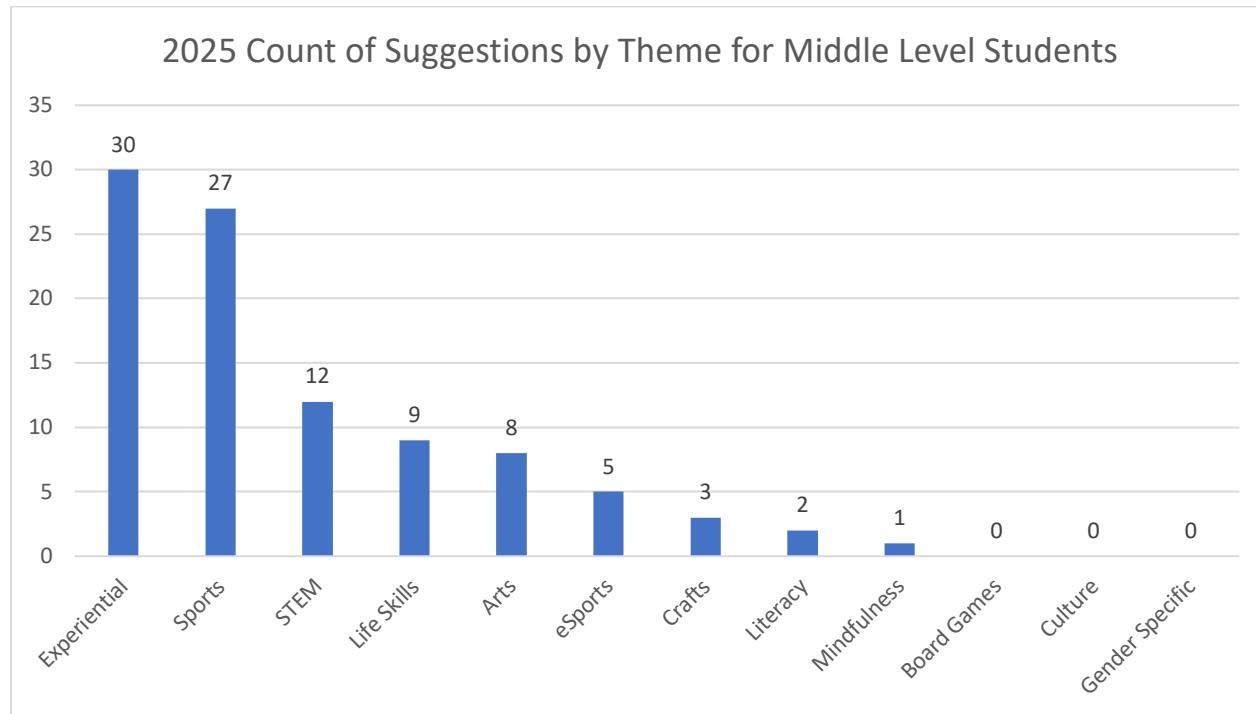
Graph 7: 2025 Count of Suggestions by Theme for All Students



Graph 8: 2025 Count of Suggestions by Theme for Elementary Students



Graph 9: 2025 Count of Suggestions by Theme for Middle Level Students



Summary Comments

The 2022 Youth Brainstorming Activity was carefully constructed and modified in 2023 based on feedback from facilitators of the 2022 administration. The development of the brainstorming sheet took many weeks of consultation with a graphic designer and program evaluator to result in the final version presented in Appendix A. Once the brainstorming sheet was developed, consultation with program managers occurred in order to consider best how to implement the activity with students in the afterschool setting. From those conversations, an implementation guide for facilitators was developed (see Appendix B).

A Beyond School Bells program manager field tested the Youth Brainstorming Activity in a local elementary school with a group of students during the afterschool time. The program manager identified questions to ask students, which facilitated feedback on the brainstorming sheet and the implementation of the activity. The students generously provided their feedback, and the process was improved.

A 30-minute training activity was developed and provided to facilitators prior to administering the Youth Brainstorming Activity and contact information for BSB staff was available if concerns or questions arose throughout the process. Self-addressed and stamped envelopes were provided with the activity materials to make the process of returning materials easier.

The three components of the Youth Brainstorming Activity were designed to stimulate student thinking about their interests in afterschool and summer programming opportunities. The Youth Brainstorming Activity began with reflecting about past experiences that were of high interest and some discussion about those experiences and what students liked most about them. The students identified their top three favorite past experiences on the brainstorming sheet.

Then, students moved to the thermometer ratings. The categories for this component were chosen based on what BSB staff have heard from program leaders and students about what is of high interest, along with considerations for activities they may not have previously considered. The categories were presented as images and succinct words as we did not want language barriers to hinder creative thinking. The thermometers were added to the images as a quick way to gauge student interest on the pre-determined themes.

Finally, students were asked to provide their own suggestions in the empty bubbles on the brainstorming sheet. These empty bubble suggestions are where BSB staff will focus their interpretations and suggestions moving forward.

The decision to not ask students directly for their personal demographics on the brainstorming sheet was multifaceted. We did not want to hinder students' willingness

to be candid with their suggestions, nor to hinder our interpretation of students' suggestions based on any demographic characteristic. Keeping the students' responses anonymous also made it easier to access students for this data collection event. Even though the information we were gathering from students was not considered sensitive in nature, we do recognize student demographic characteristics as sensitive data. The data from the facilitator on the information form is not perfect as it is not self-report data from the student. However, we focused our summary data on the schools and grade levels of students and used the racial and gender data as benchmarks for inclusion of a diverse student sample in this data collection event. The data were not disaggregated by gender or race as those data are not matched to individual student responses.

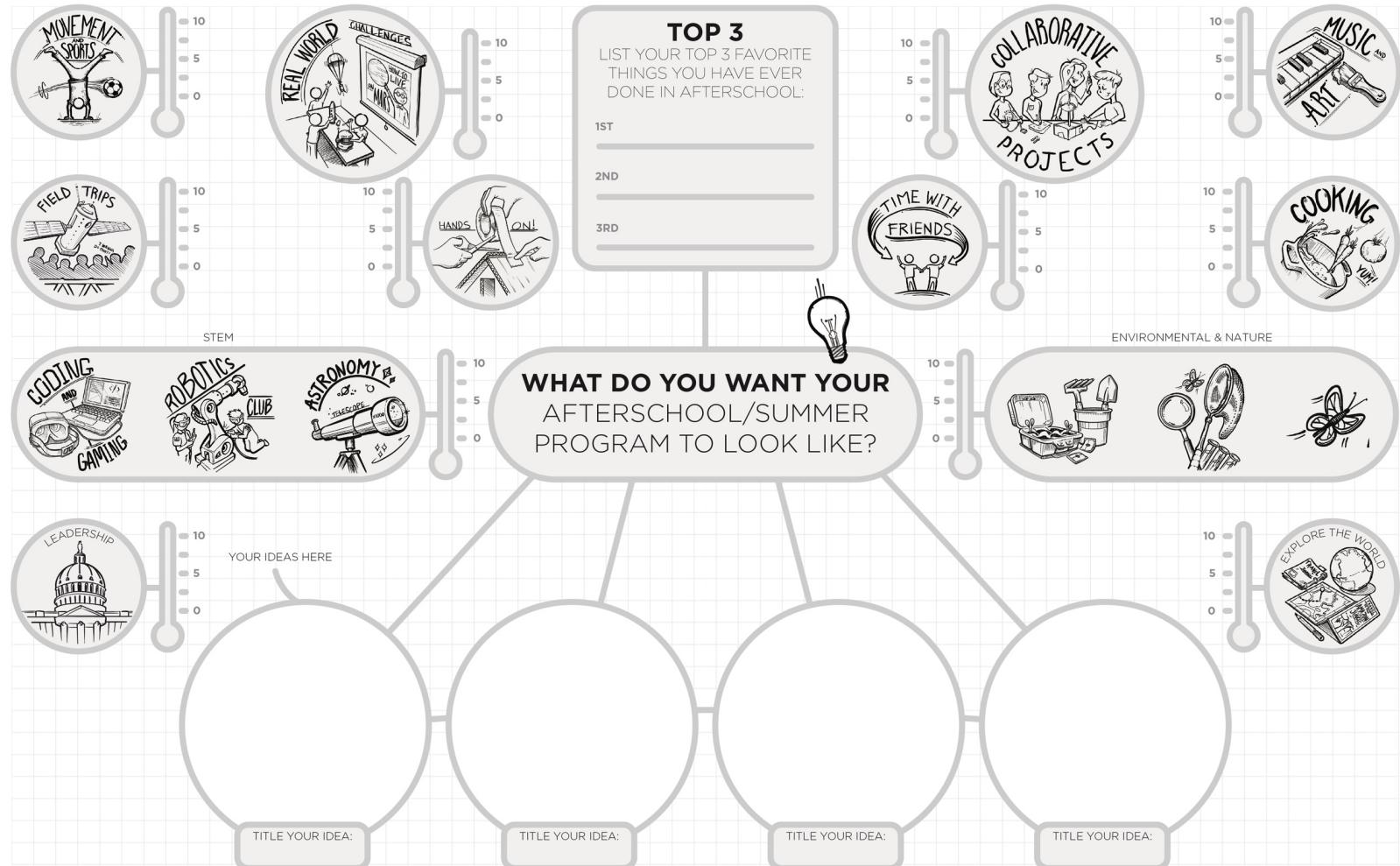
Evaluator Comments

Several suggestions are offered by the evaluator (Dr. Teresa Wanser-Ernst, EquiMeasure Consulting LLC) moving forward.

- As Table 1 displays, the data in this report are somewhat representative of the students in Nebraska. However, students in schools from larger districts were not included in this administration. Therefore, the data should be interpreted with that caveat.
- In subsequent administrations, the facilitators should separate and label the brainstorming sheets for elementary students and middle level students so that the data can be disaggregated by grade level bands. The needs and interests of students change over time as has been noted in this and previous administrations.
- The process for the Youth Brainstorming Activity was well-developed and replicable with minimal training.
- It is encouraged that this process be repeated when large or small-scale programming changes are being considered. Student voice is critical to the effectiveness of ELO programming and this activity is well-suited to that purpose.
- Implementation of the Youth Brainstorming Activity can occur in a statewide, district-wide, or site-based data collection event.
- Representation of all students is also a critical component to collecting student suggestions. It is important to ensure all demographic groups within the school, district, or state are represented in the student suggestions collected through this activity.

- The facilitator was encouraged to read the prompts on the brainstorming sheets to students or record students' dictated responses, which minimized the impact for students who were not strong readers or writers and hopefully included wider participation.
- Efforts to share this activity, both the administration of and data from, to other people and organization that offer ELO programs should be encouraged and supported.
- I commend BSB for engaging the services of a program evaluator to assist in the development and facilitation of this process, which increased the validity of the data collected.

Appendix A - Youth Brainstorming Sheet



Appendix B - Administration Guide and Information Form

2025 Youth Voice Brainstorming Sessions Facilitator Administration Instructions

Dear Facilitator,

Thank you for your assistance in collecting youth voices about programming ideas for afterschool experiences. Not only will this activity give you an opportunity to hear from youth in a meaningful way, but the data collected during this process will also shape Expanded Learning Opportunities across Nebraska.

As the facilitator of this process, your assistance in collecting this data is essential. You are administering this process on behalf of Beyond School Bells and we appreciate your willingness! To help us ensure data is collected in a consistent manner across the state, we ask that you **please carefully read and follow the instructions as outlined below.**

PLANNING YOUR BRAINSTORMING SESSION

- A. Please read all directions carefully before conducting your session.
- B. Please review the Brainstorming sheet before conducting your session.
- C. Please convene a group of **no less than six students and no more than ten students.** Students to invite should be
 - a. students who are eager and productive participants.
 - b. students who can draw, write, or dictate their ideas to an adult.
 - c. representative of the demographics of their community (gender, ethnicity, ableness, etc.)
- D. If you are scheduling two brainstorming groups, consider grouping students by gender (a girl's group and a boy's group), English language learners, or grade level such as grades 4 & 5 and grades 2 & 3.
- E. Schedule your session during the month of March. The session will take approximately 45-60 minutes.
- F. Schedule a place to hold the session such as a classroom with chairs and tables for students to place their brainstorming sheets and write.
- G. Be sure to have pencils or colored pencils available.
- H. Complete the Information Form on page 5 and return with the completed Brainstorming sheets. The student demographic information should be found on your enrollment forms or collected from the school's student information system.

CONDUCTING THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION

To ensure consistency, please follow the script below as closely as possible.

Say:

Thank you all for being here today. You have been invited to participate in sharing your ideas about things you have done in afterschool programs and things you would be interested in doing during afterschool or summertime in the future. Students across the state of Nebraska are sharing their ideas. Your ideas will be combined and shared with adults who organize programs for youth like you. None of your names will be shared with anyone outside of this room but your ideas will be shared with lots of interested adults.

Ask:

Does anyone have any questions?

Answer any questions about the process.

Pass out the Brainstorming sheets.

Say:

Do not put your name on these sheets.

Let's take a couple of minutes and look at the drawings on your brainstorming sheet. These drawings are there to help you remember activities you have participated in in the past or to think about activities you might like to participate in during summer or afterschool time in the future. (Note: It is OK to read anything on the sheet for students who might struggle with some of the words or to help them understand what the images are.)

To start, think about some of the best times you've had during summer or afterschool programs in the past. If you can think of your favorite one, two, or three clubs, activities, or programs that you have really liked in the past, write those in the box at the top of the sheet, where it says, "Top 3". Write one idea on each line.

Take a few minutes to help students think of past experiences. Pause while the students write. It is OK for you to write answers for them if they ask you to or are struggling to write.

Say:

Now, we would like you to share your favorite clubs or activities with the person sitting next to you. Each of you should take turns sharing what you wrote down. We will take about five minutes to share. (Note: Students should share with the person next to them, rather than move around the room. This part shouldn't take too long.)

Say:

Now we're going to take a closer look at the drawings on the sheet. We are going to do this step on our own, not with a partner.

Each bubble with a drawing in it is a theme for clubs or activities. Next to each bubble is a thermometer with the numbers zero, five, and ten. We would like you to fill in the thermometer up to the number that shows how interested you are in participating in a club with that theme. Zero means you are not at all interested and wouldn't sign up for a club with that theme. A five means you're kind of interested. A ten means you really want to explore that theme and would definitely sign up for a club with that theme. Please go ahead and fill in each thermometer based on your interests. Are there any questions? (Note: Students may need to have additional explanation on what to do if they are confused. Students should do this step independently, not with a partner. We want to know what each student thinks.)

Give students several minutes to complete this step. Answer any questions students might have about the drawings, the words attached to the drawings, or what they are supposed to do. Once students have filled in all the thermometers, you can move them to the last step.

Say:

Now, you are going to fill in the empty bubbles at the bottom of the sheet. In the four empty bubbles, we want you to draw or write in themes we haven't thought of. What are YOU interested in? Is there anything you would like to learn more about? Are there any issues or needs you have? Is there something you want to explore but you can't on your own? Use this as an opportunity to let adults know what you want to do during your afterschool or summertime.

Maybe there's a theme that's similar to one that is already on the sheet but your idea is more specific. For example, theater could be in the music & art theme, but it is more specific. In the smaller bubble attached to the bigger bubble, write or draw in a club that fits that theme. With our theater theme example, a club could be writing plays. (Note: you may need to pause here and check for understanding or ask if there are questions)

Draw or write one idea per bubble. If you have more ideas and need more bubbles, you can use the white space on the sheet to make more bubbles.

Be sure to give each bubble a title.

Give students plenty of time for this step. They may need assistance with brainstorming. It's OK if they brainstorm with their peers but we want to encourage them to write down their own ideas. We encourage students to think outside the box!

Whatever students write on the sheets, we will respect and keep in confidence. The contents of their sheet will be combined with all the other sheets we collect. Results will not be reported by student, school, or district but as a statewide data collection effort.

AFTER THE SESSION HAS ENDED

Please complete the information form. This data is important for us to describe the group of students across the state who participated in this data collection. Return the completed form with the Brainstorming sheets. Please collect all of the Brainstorming sheets, even if they are blank, and mail them back to Beyond School Bells in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 31st. Thank you for assisting us with this data collection! We look forward to learning what the students are excited about.

INFORMATION FORM

Facilitator: Please complete and return with the Brainstorming sheets

Your name (if we have follow-up questions): _____

Your email address: _____

Your program site name: _____

How many sessions did you conduct? _____

Date(s) of the session(s)? _____

Where did you hold the session(s)? _____

Are the participants part of an existing club? If yes, what is the name of the club?

If more than one session was conducted, please complete the table below for each session.

Demographics	Session 1	Session 2
How many students participated in total?		
What grade levels were the students (please list)?		
How many girls participated?		
How many boys participated?		
How many students are English language learners?		
How many students in each ethnic/race category participated? (Please use data from your enrollment forms or the school office.)		
American Indian or Alaskan Native		
Black or African American		
Hispanic/Latino		
Asian		
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		
White		
Two or More		
Unsure		

Appendix C – Sample Parent Information Letter

**Youth Voice
Brainstorming Sessions**

Information for Families

Join Beyond School Bells, Nebraska's Statewide Afterschool Network, in elevating youth voice across the state!

Your child is invited to participate in a facilitated brainstorming session to share about the activities they currently enjoy afterschool and the creative ideas they have for new activities, clubs, and programs that they would like to participate in.

The fun interactive process will be facilitated by a staff member of your child's afterschool program and will take place during their afterschool time.

The session will take approximately 45-60 minutes, during the week of October 23 (or soon after).

There will be a total of 6-10 youth in each brainstorming session.

Facilitators will gather general demographic data about the group (from program registration forms) but no identifying information will be collected about your student. Youth will not put names on their brainstorming sheets and sheets will be destroyed by Beyond School Bells after data is collected.

Youth from all across Nebraska will participate. Beyond School Bells will use the information from students to hear creative ideas and find themes that represent what students today are interested in. This information will guide afterschool programs across the state for years to come.

There are no requirements to participate. If you or your child choose not to participate, please let afterschool staff know!

Each student will fill out one brainstorming sheet (see back).

Questions? Follow the QR code to find out more about the process or contact:
Stephanie Vadnais
svadnais@nebraskachidren.org
Alison O'Toole
aotoole@nebraskachidren.org


Beyond School Bells
[nebraskachidren](http://nebraskachidren.org)



Appendix D - Themes for Coding Student Responses

Youth Brainstorming Activity Themes for Top Three and Ideas

Sports

- Organized
- Individual/Team
- Outdoor/Indoor

STEM

- Structured/self-directed
- STEM-related trips
- Coding, design
- Construction, building
- Math club
- Creating hair products

Arts

- Structured learning using art media or learning about art, music, theater
- Trips to learn about something in the Arts
 - o Theater, Concert
 - o Art museum

Crafts

- Structured/self-directed, for the sake of making something "crafty"

Culture

- Learning about a culture or others
- History, trips to museums
- Learning a new language
- Sign language

Mindfulness

- Awareness of feelings
- Take care of self/self-care
- Relaxation

Literacy

- Reading
- English language learning
- Trips to the library

eSports

- Online and offline
- Gaming system (computer)

Board Games

- Tabletop, not electronic
- Teams/individual

Life Skills

- Learning "how to" do something that leads to self-help or self-care
 - o Swim lessons at the Y
 - o Cooking, making food
 - o Hair, nail care
 - o Talk about jobs
 - o Scouts
 - o Civic & community engagement

Experiential

- Enjoying an experience for the sake of the experience, opportunities to do unique things (field trips to an experience vs learning in place)
 - o Going to a movie
 - o Going to a beach
 - o Going to McDonalds
 - o Social time with friends

Gender Specific

- Boys/girls on the run
- Men's fashion