

**Subject:** Beyond School Bells Newsletter-March 2023

**Date:** Friday, March 17, 2023 at 7:55:09 AM Central Daylight Time

**From:** Beyond School Bells



March 2023

## News & Policy

### Our First Nebraska ELO Innovation Invitational in the Books!



From March 7 – 9th Beyond School Bells, in partnership with the NE Department of

Education and NE Extension, hosted a dynamic gathering of approximately 260 afterschool educators and advocates from across Nebraska and multiple other states at UNL's Innovation Campus.

The *Nebraska ELO Innovation Invitational* combined a mix of short keynotes followed by topic specific deep dives and workshop on important topics related to high quality, cost efficient and locally sustainable afterschool and summer programs. The BSB team also facilitated play-based activities throughout the conference as well field learning experiences at the State Capitol and the Bay / Bay High.

A key highlight of the gathering was a conference kick-off evening presentation, facilitated by college students, sharing insights gained from a youth brainstorming process asking 150+ Nebraska youth in four urban and rural communities to identify components they would like to see more of in their community's afterschool and summer programs. BSB is partnering with the NE Department of Education to provide school-based afterschool programs participating in the ESSER III grant program with \$1 million in additional federal and private funds to make these youth ideas a reality this summer in school-age programs across the state.

BSB is planning on keeping these important conversations going. Over the months ahead we will be revisiting some of the conference's key themes, such as Innovation, Purpose and Equity, during monthly webinars. We will use this newsletter alongside other outreach efforts to let you know about upcoming events.

Missed a session? You can find presenter slides and contact information at the link below!

[See Resources](#)

## Resources & Funding Opportunities

### Summer of Youth Grant Application Open!

Applications due March 31

As suggested above, Beyond School Bells is proud to be partnering with the Nebraska Department of Education to combine public and private resources to support school-based and community powered summer learning experiences that reflect youth interests in summer programs across the state. This \$1 million fund, that combines Federal ESSER III funding for targeted Nebraska school districts with private funds from Nebraska's generous philanthropic sector, will provide additional support new and existing ELO programs in targeted ESSER III communities, select 21st CCLC sites and other school-based programs that use youth insight to structure exciting, engaging and inspiring summer learning experiences.

Please visit the BSB website for an overview of this exciting opportunity and the easy to fill out application form.



Apply Today

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## BSB Conservation Experiences Afterschool... and During the Summer!



Have you noticed the little sprouts of green starting to poke out of the ground yet? You'll have to look closely, but they're on the way and spring is around the corner! Starting this April, BSB will focus on getting youth outdoors in partnership with conservation organizations across the state to enjoy Nebraska's natural spaces and learn about career opportunities that protect our natural resources. This will range from BioBlitz events for younger students, field experiences for upper elementary and middle school students, and day and weekend trips for high school youth. We have many opportunities lined up, but we need more! Let us know if you'd like to participate and if there are conservation opportunities (prairies, parks, professionals, and so on) near you that you'd like to connect with, we'd love to facilitate those partnerships! Email Dakota Staggs, [dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org](mailto:dstaggs@nebraskachildren.org), to find out more.

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## Beyond School Bells' College and Career Readiness Toolkit is Live!



Afterschool and summer programs provide vast and meaningful opportunities for students to explore their interests, strengths and skills that can create a pathway towards a career. Beyond School Bells recently launched a College and Career Readiness toolkit—specifically designed for out of school time programs. This toolkit provides practical resources, information, and activities for out-of-school time programs to move through this continuum, starting with foundational skills, career and college readiness culture building, and awareness.

- Units 1-6 are specifically designed for middle and high school programs to provide skill-building, information and awareness specific to their post-high school graduation opportunities for trades, apprenticeships, and post-secondary education.
- Unit 7 is specific to Nebraska and is intended for programs serving all ages of students (K-12) to explore skills, interests and career and education opportunities in Nebraska.

Stay tuned for an upcoming spring webinar that will walk through this toolkit and the many ways to utilize it in your programs.

[Explore the Toolkit](#)

## TMC Highlights

**This Month is TMC Challenge Month!**



Science, technology, engineering, math, oh my! STEM is a fundamental part of our Think, Make, Create Labs. As we have seen tremendous growth over the last several years we want to bring a sense of community to our fleet. New for March 2023, we are introducing TMC Challenge Month. This year we are going to focus on the E in STEM, engineering. Our challenge this year we will be using the 2040 CityBuild program from Beyond School Bells. CityBuild is a hands-on, minds-on experience for k-8 youth to use recycled and TMC Lab materials to build a representation of their town as they envision it will look in 2040, a time when they may be the next generation of community leaders. In the 2040 City Build, students will work with peers, city and business leaders, and event facilitators to design a city with a focus on housing, businesses, parks and recreation, transportation, water management systems, and renewable energy. There are three different options this year – 2 day build, 4 hour build, and 2 hour build. To learn more and check out each option visit our TMC Lab Community website below.

[Learn More](#)



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