



NEWS RELEASE

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Contacts:

[Lisa Lederer](#), Afterschool Alliance

[Brenda Weyers](#), Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

[Kelly Jefferson Minty](#), Collective for Youth

New Study: Parents Report Vast Majority of Afterschool Students In Both Omaha and Greater Nebraska Are Engaging in STEM Learning in Their Afterschool Programs, But Tens of Thousands of the State's Children Shut Out

OMAHA, NE — Afterschool programs are leading the way in educating the next generation in the STEM subjects the jobs of the future will require. Ninety-six percent of parents of Greater Nebraska afterschool students, and 87% of parents of Omaha afterschool students, now say their child's afterschool program offers STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning. Forty-five percent of the parents in both communities whose child's program offers STEM report their child engages in STEM learning after school at least twice per week. But 50,098 Greater Nebraska children and 38,409 Omaha children whose parents want afterschool programs for them are not enrolled.

Those are among the findings in [Afterschool STEM Takes Off In Greater Nebraska](#) and [Afterschool STEM Takes Off in Omaha](#), released today by [Collective for Youth](#) and [Beyond School Bells](#). Both are based on a household survey commissioned by the [Afterschool Alliance](#). Conducted by Edge Research, the survey included 30,515 U.S. households, with 428 Greater Nebraska households with 560 children – plus 444 Omaha households with 670 children – screened. Greater Nebraska is defined in the study as statewide, excluding the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas.

Afterschool programs in both Greater Nebraska and Omaha are educating students on a range of STEM topics, according to parents. In Greater Nebraska, 92% of parents say their child's afterschool program offers engagement in math, 84% engineering, 82% science, 80% technology, and 76% computer science. In Omaha, 75% of parents say their child's afterschool program offers science, 72% math, 67% engineering, 66% technology, and 60% computer science. Four in five Omaha parents, and three in four Greater Nebraska parents, say afterschool programs help children gain skills and interest in STEM.

"In Nebraska and across the country, parents value and prioritize STEM learning in afterschool, and afterschool programs have stepped up to provide it," said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. "Afterschool is an ideal place for STEM education. It offers students the chance to explore their interests, engage with peers in hands-on, team-based learning, and see up close how STEM can help solve problems facing our communities and our country. We're thrilled with the near-universal afterschool STEM learning in Greater Nebraska, Omaha, and nationwide. We need to continue the

trajectory and, most of all, make afterschool programs available to many more students. As long as millions of children whose parents want afterschool programs for them are missing out, we have more work to do.”

“This study has good news for Omaha and also for Greater Nebraska,” said Collective for Youth Executive Director Megan Addison. “Our afterschool programs are doing vitally important work to educate the next generation about STEM and helping students apply what they learn in real-life settings. That, in turn, can help them imagine themselves in STEM-related careers. But every child deserves an afterschool program that provides STEM. We need to continue increasing support until we have enough programs to ensure that no child is missing out.”

“Afterschool programs across our state have made an impressive commitment to STEM learning in afterschool,” said Alison O’Toole, Vice President and Network lead, Beyond School Bells, Nebraska’s statewide afterschool network. “But we have more work to do to make afterschool programs and the STEM learning opportunities they provide available to all children and youth in the state. We are calling on lawmakers, philanthropy, and local partners to do more to ensure that all of our state’s young people can access the afterschool programs that will prepare them for college and careers.”

Nationally, the Afterschool Alliance study found that 92% of parents of afterschool students now say their child’s program offers STEM learning – up from 69% in 2014. But there are disparities in afterschool access to STEM, with low-income families lagging behind.

In most respects, the Omaha and Greater Nebraska findings mirror the national survey findings, which also include:

- **Increases in STEM in afterschool from 2014 to 2025 were seen in every state.** The biggest increases were in Arizona, Hawaii, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Washington State, Wisconsin and Wyoming.
- **Children in families with low incomes are less likely to have multiple exposures to STEM in afterschool each week than those whose families have higher incomes.** Less than half of parents with low incomes (48%) say their child engages in STEM in afterschool multiple times per week, compared to 56% of parents with middle incomes and 60% of parents with high incomes.
- **Rural parents report fewer computer science and technology opportunities in afterschool.** Just 70% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers computer science, compared to 88% of urban parents. Similarly, just 66% of rural parents with a child in an afterschool program report that the program offers technology education, compared to 86% of urban parents.
- **Two in three parents with children in afterschool programs (65%) value STEM extremely or somewhat when selecting a program – but there are differences by race.** Native American parents (73%), Black and Hispanic parents (70%), and Asian American parents (68%) place greater importance on STEM in afterschool than White families (62%).
- **Parents of boys and girls report similar levels of access to STEM in their child’s afterschool program, but parents of girls prioritize computer science, technology, and engineering less than parents of boys.** Parents today report that 93% of male children and 91% of females have

STEM opportunities in afterschool. But there are differences in how much parents of boys and girls prioritize different STEM subjects, with 63% of boy parents placing greater importance on computer science, technology, and engineering, compared to just 53%, 56%, and 58% respectively, of girl parents.

- **Parents prioritize STEM, and specifically computer science, more as their children age.** Just over half of parents of elementary schoolers (53%) say computer science offerings are important when they choose an afterschool program for their child, compared to 68% of parents of high schoolers.

Findings from Omaha are [here](#) and from Greater Nebraska [here](#). Nebraska statewide findings [are here](#). The data for both were collected between January 31 and June 18, 2025.

The *America After 3PM 2025* study is based on a survey of 30,515 U.S. parents or guardians with a school-aged child living in their household. It was conducted in English and Spanish using a mixed-mode methodology to reach as many households as possible. The margin of error for the national study is +/- <1%. Previous *America After 3PM* surveys were conducted in 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2020. It is based on research funded by Overdeck Family Foundation.

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*The **Afterschool Alliance** is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.*

***Beyond School Bells (BSB)**, an initiative of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF), is Nebraska's statewide afterschool network. BSB strengthens and expands high-quality afterschool and summer programs, what we call Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs), that serve K–12 youth. Through partnerships, capacity building, and innovative programming, BSB helps ensure that all Nebraska youth have access to safe, engaging, hands-on learning opportunities beyond the school day.*

***Collective for Youth**, an Omaha-area nonprofit, brings together funders, schools, and community partners to ensure children have access to safe, high-quality afterschool experiences when it matters most. Serving a network of 41 programs across the Omaha metro, Collective for Youth manages shared resources, uses robust data to drive continuous improvement, and advocates for a strong afterschool ecosystem that supports youth development and keeps families in the workforce. CollectiveforYouth.org*