

Fact Sheet

AFTERSCHOOL: TIME TO LEARN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH

The interconnected subjects of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) give us the knowledge and tools for improving the systems that power our economy and advance our society. In fact, the primary driver of the future economy will be innovation, largely from advances in science and engineering. To maintain and expand our nation's shared prosperity, we need to expand learning in STEM.

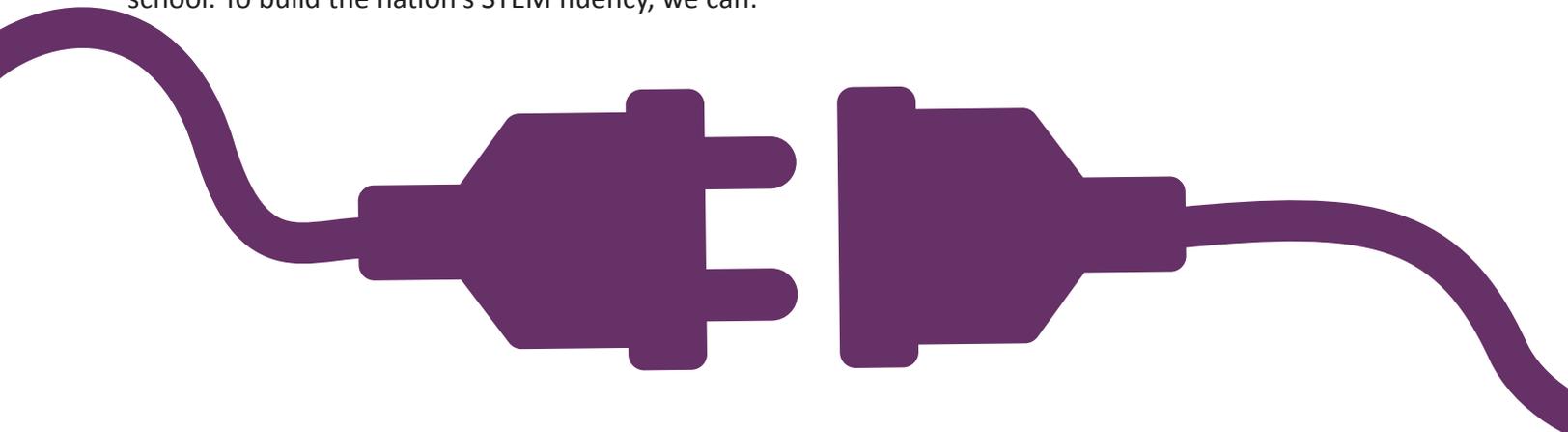
Afterschool time is a valuable resource in preparing the next generation for the jobs—and world—of tomorrow. Because afterschool and summer programs have great flexibility and can vary the modes of learning, they can help ignite students' curiosity and interest, especially for those who might not think of themselves as "math and science kids." By providing hands-on experiences and spaces where kids can get immersed in projects or experiments that match their interests, afterschool participation turns on interest in these important fields.

Afterschool makes a measurable difference. When children and youth have access to great STEM programming afterschool, we all benefit. Evidence shows:

- Afterschool STEM participation sparks interest, builds skills, and puts more students on the path toward majoring in a STEM discipline and pursuing a career in these much-needed fields.
- Afterschool STEM participation supports college and career readiness, boosting proficiency in math and science, and increasing the likelihood of graduation and post-secondary training.

MOVING FORWARD

Children spend only 20 percent of their waking hours in school. To make the most of the other 80 percent, we should use afterschool time to immerse students in STEM in ways that look and feel different from school. To build the nation's STEM fluency, we can:



- Increase funding for afterschool programs in science, technology, engineering and math. Building on the success of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, it makes sense to establish competitive grants for afterschool STEM programming.
- Embrace afterschool in educational planning and policies. For instance, state STEM learning committees should include representation from afterschool and other informal learning sites.
- Equip afterschool program leaders more effectively. For example, the training and resources that are available to classroom teachers should also be accessible to afterschool program providers.

Afterschool STEM programs turn kids on to these fields—putting us all on the path to a bright future.

The Need Is Growing.

Between 2008 and 2018, the nation's need for STEM professionals will grow by 17 percent—which is more than the projected growth for administrative work, sales, and transportation combined. *(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.)*

Growing STEM Grows Jobs.

By adding to the sectors that develop new products and services, we add to the pool of people creating jobs for our economy. One job in the high-tech sector leads to four new jobs in local goods and service industries. *(Source: Bay Area Council.)*

We need more engaging settings for students to immerse themselves in, especially in STEM. Nationwide, for every child in an afterschool program, there are two more waiting to get in. Learn more about proposals to strengthen the network of engaging afterschool STEM opportunities at afterschoolSTEMhub.org

