

Engaging in Afterschool STEAM Policy

WHY STEAM IN AFTERSCHOOL, SUMMER, AND EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES?

A quality STEAM program engages participants in exploring, creating, and building skills and knowledge that are applicable in real-world situations and future careers, and that spark lifelong interest in STEAM activities.

Afterschool and summer programs activate learning and ignite interest by letting youth experiment with STEAM ideas in real-world situations. These programs teach children skills they will use their whole lives. STEAM subjects cultivate problem-solving habits like experimenting and checking assumptions against evidence. Afterschool and summer learning opportunities function as an important part of the STEAM learning ecosystem. Just as an ecosystem depends on all the plants and animals within it to play their unique role, STEAM education depends on a diversity of educational institutions including schools and non-school environments to support students.



✓ **AFTERSCHOOL STEAM OFFERS UNIQUE BENEFITS:**

- **Extra exposure:** Children spend less than 20 percent of their waking hours in school. Afterschool STEAM can almost double the amount of time some students have to question, tinker, learn, and explore STEAM topics.
- **Change of scene:** Afterschool STEAM engages students in hands-on, real-world projects. These programs offer innovative ways for students to practice STEAM skills in an informal space. This makes STEAM more accessible, more interesting, and helps to build fluency, much like immersing oneself in a new language.
- **A chance to follow their spark:** High-quality afterschool STEAM cultivates interest, builds real STEAM skills, and helps students connect STEAM to their lives and communities.

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- **Opportunity for all:** The wealthiest 20 percent of families spend almost seven times more on enrichment activities outside school for their children than do the poorest 20 percent. Afterschool STEAM helps to close this gap by offering engaging learning programs to a diverse range of students.
- **Prepare for the future:** Jobs requiring STEAM skills continue to grow, but too many students lack opportunities to learn and develop these skills. Afterschool STEAM programs provide opportunities that inspire long-term intellectual and emotional interest in STEAM, building science identity and career knowledge that can put students on the path toward majoring in STEAM fields and pursuing STEAM careers.

Learn more about [Afterschool and STEAM](#) and about [Leveraging Out-of-School STEAM Programming to Support Education Recovery](#).

SUPPORTING STEAM POLICY IN NEW YORK STATE



JOIN THE NETWORK IN EFFORTS TO:

- Promote the infusion of informal STEAM learning as a priority in existing local, state, and federal afterschool and summer funding streams.
- Support new funding sources for STEAM-focused afterschool and summer programs.
- Work with legislative partners to infuse informal STEAM learning as a complement to formal STEAM in relevant legislative efforts.
- Highlight and increase local media spotlights on informal STEAM learning in your community.
- Connect STEAM businesses with local regional afterschool networks, afterschool and summer programs, and STEAM hubs and/or ecosystems.
- Incorporate community-based organizations as critical partners in implementing Career and Technical Education programs.



GET INVOLVED

- Connect with the [New York State Network for Youth Success](#).
- Visit our [STEAM](#) page to check out STEAM resources and activities.
- Sign up for the [STEAM listserv](#) to receive updates.
- Get involved with the [NY STEAM Girls Collaborative](#).
- Sign up for our [Power of 3:00 Listserv](#) to receive policy and advocacy updates, action alerts, and networking opportunities.
- Gain skills to engage in STEAM advocacy as a [Power of 3:00 Ambassador](#).
- Check out the [Afterschool STEM Hub](#) - Includes communication tools related to making the case for STEM afterschool and equity and inclusion.
- Get involved with your regional [STEM Hub](#) or [STEM Ecosystem](#).