

2016 Municipal Summits on Afterschool/Expanded Learning Opportunities Final Report

Overview of Outcomes

As part of the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families initiative to support afterschool and summer learning, OregonASK was awarded a small grant to work on informing and engaging more municipal leaders in the issues surrounding afterschool. Thanks to this grant, OregonASK worked with regional STEM Hubs and partners to host discussions about the importance and impact of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) on our communities. Our overarching messaging for the events was around how Afterschool & Summer Programs Support STEM by providing increased Access, STEM Fluency, and Equitable Opportunity.

We worked to increase awareness and share resources to help these communities find strategies for building a mutually beneficial system to support local economic vitality and informal STEM learning. We also highlighted our state's STEM Strategic Plan and how the vision of STEM going forward should be a community collaboration.

From August through October, we toured the state, hosting regional convenings in seven different communities. Overall, 32 elected officials attended, including members of the US Congress and the State Legislature, as well as Mayors, City Council members and County Commissioners. At least 35 communities were represented, and dozens more served by regional representatives in attendance. In collaboration with our Chief Education Office, the STEM Policy Director attended six of the events to co-present and hear from each of the communities. Besides local leaders from each community, several State Representatives, Senators, and leaders in the world of STEM participated in the various events.

Each community brought together a diverse group of community leaders and STEM partners to contribute to conversation, share questions, and identify strategies for building an aligned system of support that would engage all stakeholders in supporting STEM learning. We heard from US Congresspeople, State Senators & Representatives, Mayors, City Council, County Commissioners, STEM Hub representatives, Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Boards, Industry Partners, Higher Education, K-12 Administrators, Formal & Informal Educators, Community Based STEM Programs, Libraries, Education & Community Foundations, and Students.

Regional Success - 7 summits

Our first event gathered over 50 community partners, including mayors from four Washington County cities and US Congresswomen Suzanne Bonamici. The mayor of Hillsboro shared about a current partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and school district to provide annual opportunities to explore STEM careers within City Departments and with regional businesses. Representatives from Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce, Business Education Compact (BEC), Impact NW, and Hillsboro School District shared about current partnerships they have to provide more informal STEM learning opportunities for youth in Washington County. We also had the pleasure of hearing from several students who have taken advantage of opportunities through local non-profits.

The second event brought school administrators from the far corners of Douglas county, as well as mayors, informal STEM partners and local foundation representatives who were able to hear more about local industry needs and current opportunities. Participants reported increased partnerships, particularly being able to connect with government and industry partners within the region. The third event in Southern Oregon focused on the connectivity of regional efforts in supporting youth in the area, with in-depth discussion around how existing partners might be able to expand hands-on experiences to include more youth. Student panelists added a personal perspective about local programs offered and potential opportunities to expand their reach.

Our convening in Central Oregon drew a high concentration of informal partners, as well as several key elected officials. State Representative Whisnant posed a question about the role of community partners in implementation of the STEM Strategic Plan, creating a great opportunity to highlight much of the work happening in pockets around the region and state, as well as showcasing the importance of providing informal STEM as a comprehensive system of support for youth. This region also did a great job including a wide-breadth of stakeholders, from industry to K-12 to workforce to community partners.

The event held in Salem showcased local partnerships, particularly the industry, district and city collaborative approach to building a state of the art Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC). The million dollar facility is currently utilized primarily by Salem-Keizer School District and is looking forward to expanding its reach while also promoting development of similar buildings/partnerships in other areas of the state. Participants were also excited to hear about the STEM Strategic Plan and how implementation would become part of the work they are already engaged in.

Our Eastern Oregon convening brought together over 45 regional representatives from 5 different counties, talking about how local efforts can be supported and spread through the work of the STEM Hub. Participants were given time to discuss at tables, reflecting on their own needs and roles in further implementation of regional STEM efforts to support community wide engagement. The final event back in Southern Oregon included 70 regional STEM & CTE partners, local elected officials and industry representatives. Attendees were given a breadth of information about region-wide efforts and local highlights of programs. Most participants showed up with some knowledge of the work happening locally, but all left with the specific ask of being more engaged in supporting these coordinated efforts.

We are looking forward to continuing our partnerships with the regional STEM Hubs, new and existing champions, and the dozens of STEM providers we were able to engage in the systems building conversation. Although we did face challenges reaching new local municipal leaders who were not already engaged or interested, we were able to increase awareness around the work of the network and the state's efforts going forward. We will be sharing this report and a summary of feedback with all of those who attended, as well as local municipal leaders who were unable to attend in person. Additionally, we will follow up by bringing training opportunities out to the more remote areas of the state, in response to the needs expressed of those we engaged in this series.