



NEBRASKA

Community Learning Center Network

January 2009

Growing successful students, engaged families, stronger communities

People Matter:

A highly trained staff makes all the difference

Our last e-blast we provided information on how engaging families helps build stronger, more effective afterschool programs. This month we would like to focus on the other side of quality afterschool programs: ensuring staff are highly qualified and have opportunities to receive necessary training.

We'd like to hear from YOU . . .

If you haven't already done so, please visit our website and take a couple of moments to fill out a **Partner Form** at:

www.NebraskaCLCNetwork.org

This is our way of getting to know you and your interests so that we can serve you better.

As always, feel free to contact us with your questions, comments or other feedback. Direct your emails to Jeff Cole at:

jcole@nebraskachildren.org.

A Look ahead...

Core Competencies for Afterschool Professionals

What characteristics should we look for when staffing afterschool programs? What skills should people considering a career in afterschool programming acquire? How can professional development opportunities help build more high quality programs? These are some of the questions driving a new project the Nebraska Community Learning Center Network will launch early this year.

The Nebraska Department of Education's Early Childhood Training Center, which played the lead role in coordinating Nebraska's core competencies for Early Childhood Professionals, will be working closely with the Network and other afterschool program advocates to develop a multifaceted outreach, writing and review process that identify qualities that make for high quality afterschool professionals here in Nebraska. This project is designed to expand on the tremendous progress our state's early childhood advocates made in publishing the working document *Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals* (March 2008) as well as other states' experiences designing their own core competencies.

In addition to building on the current early childhood foundation, this project will also benefit from the guidance of national experts involved in a project supported by the C. S. Mott Foundation, a major supporter of the Network's activities. As part of this effort, teams in Kansas, Wyoming, Massachusetts and New York will engage in projects to strengthen their statewide systems-building efforts linking early care and education and afterschool program advocates.

In order for this process to be successful, we will need to engage the voices of diverse afterschool stakeholders from across Nebraska. While we understand the challenges of engaging people across our state in this work, we will utilize focused working groups, email, conference calls and other communication tools to ensure that a range of voices are included in this important process. We will start work on this project early this year and hope to have teams of writers and reviewers in place to begin drafting parts of these voluntary competencies during the summer months. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jeff Cole, at jcole@nebraskachildren.org or (402) 477-6422.

Sustainability Planning Training

During 2009 and into 2010 the Network will field test an innovative training process with communities interested in developing sustainable school-based or school-linked afterschool programs. Building on a proven process created by the national organization The Finance Project, our approach will require the commitment of school-community planning teams to undergo an intensive training program that will extend over 3 – 4 months and will culminate in the development of a formal sustainability plan that programs can use to generate support for their initiatives.

CLC Awareness Week

During the week of January 19 – 23rd, the Network will be presenting materials about afterschool programs as part of CLC Awareness week activities at the State Capitol. This is our opportunity to share information about the importance of out of school time programs at the national, state and local levels with state level officials and elected representatives.

To learn more about these opportunities, contact Jeff Cole:
jcole@nebraskachildren.org
(402) 477-6422

C. S. Mott Foundation's Statewide Afterschool Network Conference

This month, a team from Nebraska will be attending the Mott Foundation's annual Statewide Afterschool Network conference. This year's conference will highlight opportunities for collaboration between afterschool and workforce / career development programs.

Nebraska's team will meet with 37 other statewide networks as well as other national advocates supporting afterschool programs and hear about new opportunities at the national level.

We anticipate returning from this meeting with new ideas about how we can help build stronger coalitions supporting afterschool programs that meet the needs of older youth.

New Secretary of U.S. Department of Education Nominee

President-elect Obama recently announced the CEO of Chicago's Public Schools, Arnie Duncan, as his nominee to be the nation's new Secretary of Education. What you may not have heard in these announcements was that Chicago is the site of one of the nation's largest community schools programs, an initiative which has grown during Mr. Duncan's tenure. We are hopeful that if confirmed, Secretary Duncan will bring new support for Community Learning Centers to this important position. We'll keep you posted as things develop at the national level.