



TO: Roger Breed, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Mary Ann Losh, Administrator, Equity & Instructional Strategies  
Kim Larson, Coordinator of Professional Development, 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

SUBJECT: STEM Education in 21st Century Community Learning Center Afterschool Programs

**Proposed Board Action:**

This presentation will provide information about the Nebraska BLAST! program. This program supports STEM implementation in 21st Century Community Learning Centers across Nebraska. Two partners, Dr. Bradley Barker, UNL Extension, and Michael Sibbersen, Science and Technology Coordinator at the Strategic Air and Space Museum, will join Kim Larson to provide information about their growing partnerships with 21st CCLC programs across the state in the area of STEM education. Joining also from Chadron Public Schools via technology will be Lorna Eliason, 21st CCLC Project Director, and a classroom teacher who is implementing the Nebraska BLAST! content in the Chadron afterschool program.

**Background Information:**

The 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) program at the Nebraska Department of Education received funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to implement a \$750,000 Summer of Innovation Cooperative Agreement named Nebraska BLAST! BLAST is an acronym which stands for Building Lasting Afterschool STEM Teams--a major goal of the program. Through Nebraska BLAST! we are building partnerships among afterschool staff and school day teachers, and among 21st CCLC programs and community partners interested in providing STEM opportunities to students. Our goal is to build a statewide network of STEM providers for 21st CCLC afterschool programs.

This four-year project began in the summer of 2011 and provides NASA science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) content to underserved and underrepresented students in grades four through eight who participate in 21st CCLC programs during the summer and school year. Over the four year period, professional development workshops are offered across the state focused on selected NASA content including robotics, earth and space science, aviation and aeronautics, and rocketry, and the alignment of this content to local curriculum. The project utilizes NASA experts and partners from the University of Nebraska system and the Strategic Air and Space Museum to provide ongoing professional development opportunities to teams of certified teachers and afterschool staff each summer and during the school year.

**Estimated Cost:**

The funding source is a Summer of Innovation Cooperative Agreement awarded to the Nebraska Department of Education in 2011 by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, an independent Federal Agency of the United States created by the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958. NDE was awarded \$750,000 over a four year period.

**Supporting Documentation Included:**

None

**For Additional Information on this item:**

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