AFTER words

The *learning* that begins after the bell

PRODUCT *highlight*

AFTERSCHOOL TRAINING TOOLKIT FOR TECHNOLOGY

www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/technology/

This free online staff development resource includes video clips, resources, and lesson plans on promising practices in technology.

AFTERSCHOOL *news*

Using Technology to Advance Your Afterschool Program

Here's something you already know: most kids love to use computers. If you are fortunate enough to have access to computers and other technology in your afterschool program, how can you ensure that you are making the most of your resources?

"Although it might be tempting to let them blow off steam by playing computer games, students will benefit more from your technology program if you and your staff are intentional and know what you want them to learn," says Marilyn Heath, a program associate at the National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning at SEDL. Heath oversaw the production of the technology portion of the National Partnership's Afterschool Training Toolkit (see the product highlight above), a staff development resource organized around six promising practices in afterschool that have been shown to improve student performance in school. Heath points to "gathering and sharing information," one of the toolkit's six practices, as a way to engage students in interesting activities while teaching them critical-thinking skills. With this practice, students use technology to record information about the world around them, analyze it, and share their findings with others.

In "The Monarch Butterfly Watch," for example, students participate in an international migration research project where they record changes in daylight and temperature, and any observations of monarch butterflies in their various stages of growth. They submit their information to an online project called the Journey North, which receives data from participants in Mexico, the United States, and Canada and generates maps that track the butterflies' migration north every spring. "Instead of reading about monarch butterflies in a book, students are studying them in their community and using the Internet to contribute to scientific research and connect with other schools to learn how butterflies behave in other parts of the country," Heath says. The Journey North also tracks migration patterns of other animals and collects data on when various plants bloom across the country.

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> **MARILYN HEATH**
> *program associate*

The **National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning** helps state education agencies and local practitioners develop high-quality programs for academic enrichment as well as youth development activities.

www.sedl.org/afterschool/

Newsletter available online at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/

Reno Valley Middle School "Learning Academy"
HUTCHINSON, KS

The Learning Academy afterschool program at Reno Valley Middle School began with a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. Two and a half years after the initial grant ended, the program is self-sustaining, has high attendance rates, and has received local and national recognition for its achievements.

Staff have learned to capitalize on the community's strengths as well as their own. They have built partnerships with community organizations both for financial support and to offer more diverse activities. To promote technology, program leaders worked with the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center. Students have visited the center for enrichment activities, and staff from the center have visited the Learning Academy to offer technology instruction. The center also supports the afterschool technology program by offering space technology, rocket design, and robotics classes.

"We have actively reached out to the community to support our program," says Steve Lehman, program director. "We also change our afterschool curriculum every year, depending on teachers' expertise and interests. This allows more variety for students and makes it more enjoyable for staff."

> *"Computers . . . greatly enhance the ability of our students to prepare for the world they will be working in."*
>
> STEVE LEHMANN

IN YOUR *words*

What types of technology do you use in your afterschool program? (Select all that apply.)

- ❑ computers
- ❑ word processing and presentation software
- ❑ Internet
- ❑ digital cameras/video recorders
- ❑ handheld GPS (global positioning systems)
- ❑ robotics
- ❑ digital music recording and editing

To participate in this survey and view results, submit your vote at www.sedl.org/afterschool/afterwords/survey200706.html

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NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR QUALITY AFTERSCHOOL LEARNING

at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

SEDL

TECHNOLOGY *tip*

Involving Family

Technology is a great way to involve family and community in your afterschool program. Many afterschool professionals have found it beneficial to make sure parents and students have a signed copy of the school's "acceptable usage policy" for the Internet, a document outlining what are appropriate Web sites for a school setting and what students need to do to protect their privacy and safety.

If few of your students' parents have computers or Internet access at home, free computer classes will bring them to your program. Students will also enjoy the opportunity to show their parents what they have learned and created with technology.

For more information planning and managing technology in afterschool, see www.sedl.org/afterschool/toolkits/technology/pdf/ ast_tech_planmanagetech.pdf To learn more about acceptable Internet usage for children, visit www.ala.org/ala/oif/foryoungpeople/ youngpeopleparents/especiallyyoungpeople.htm.

EVENTS *calendar*

July 17–19   The 2007 21st CCLC Summer Institute
            MIAMI, FL

Oct. 22–23   The Bridge from School to Afterschool and Back: Northwest Regional Training Event
            VANCOUVER, WA

For more events, visit our calendar at www.sedl.org/afterschool/training/calendar.html.