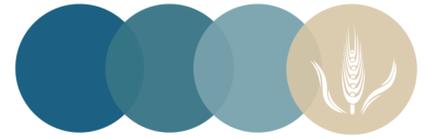


2026 SESSIONS

THURSDAY, FEB. 19



Afterschool Leadership Conference

Leaders Make the Weather presented by Marissa Badgley

Every team has a “climate,” and whether it’s sunny and steady or cloudy and chaotic depends largely on the person or people in charge. Leaders make the weather. Their emotional states, attitudes, decisions, and behaviors set the tone for their team’s culture, influencing morale, motivation, trust, and performance more than any policy or program ever could.

In this interactive and practical General session, we will explore the art and science of how leaders create (and change) their team’s weather. Grounded in organizational psychology, trauma-informed leadership, and real-world experience in the afterschool field, this session will help Program Directors understand how their presence shapes psychological safety, ownership, and resilience within their team, and how to build healthy conditions that allow people and programs to thrive.

In the second half of our time, participants will engage in a facilitated process to identify the conditions they want to cultivate and design tangible strategies for building the team climate they and their staff need to thrive. They’ll walk away with a visual blueprint and action plan for how they want their team to feel and what daily actions, systems, and habits will reinforce it.

Beyond Program Walls: Building Strong Community Connections presented by Brandis Stockman

Afterschool programs are strongest when they are connected to the communities around them. From local businesses and workforce partners to cities and chambers of commerce, these relationships can strengthen programs in ways that go far beyond funding. In this interactive session, participants will explore practical ways to connect their programs with local people, organizations, and resources to build stronger, more sustainable, and more meaningful experiences for youth. This session provides real-world examples, tangible strategies, and clear next steps for building impactful partnerships.

Collaborating and Connecting

Mott Million Dollar Challenge Information

The Mott Million Dollar Challenge is the ultimate national stage for kids and teens with game-changing ideas. This presentation will deliver information on how the students at your program can get involved in the Challenge. Time will be given for participants to collaborate with others and practice creating and recording their own entrepreneurial pitch!

Activities to Connect

This interactive presentation will feature activities that could be used to help staff connect to one another or could be used with students to create connections within a group. We will practice these activities and create some connections of our own! The activities range from very low risk (no talking) to highly connected (working together). This plenary will be a fun session full of movement, laughter, and learning!

Afterschool Program Site Visits (Option 1)

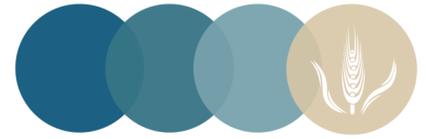
Sign up to visit a local afterschool program. Check out their space, meet program staff, and be a fly on the wall observing youth activities. These unstructured visits will provide you an opportunity to see another site in action. Space is limited, sign up for a specific site at check-in on Thursday morning, transportation provided. Shuttles will leave the conference center at 4:00 and will depart the afterschool site at 4:45. You will have approximately 30 minutes at the site.

Topical Discussion Tables (Option 2)

Join fellow afterschool administrators, along with MASN and KEN staff, at table top discussions on a variety of topics. Space at each table is limited, sign up for a specific topic, or propose a new one, at check-in on Thursday morning.

2026 SESSIONS

FRIDAY, FEB. 20



Afterschool Leadership Conference

Daybreak with DESE and MASN (Option 1)

Enjoy your breakfast while hearing DESE grantee updates and results from the 2024-25 statewide evaluation.

Kickstart with KSDE and KEN (Option 2)

Bring your breakfast or pop in to learn more about afterschool in Kansas.

Network with Neighbors (Option 3)

Wanting to connect with someone from yesterday? Make plans to meet for breakfast!

Advocating for Afterschool and Summer Programs presented by Erik Peterson

Nearly 30 million students want to participate in afterschool programs, but currently more than 3 in 4 are missing out. Hear the latest data from the America After 3PM report about demand for afterschool programs and what parents want: and how to use that and other data to make the case at all levels for investments in afterschool and summer programs. We will dive into the need for advocacy, what effective advocacy looks like, and strategies to raise your voice in support of afterschool and summer programs.

Afterschool Leadership Conference Reflection Session presented by Marissa Badgley

There is often a disconnect between the ideas and knowledge we gather at a conference and the implementation of that learning when we return to our daily work. In this final plenary session, we will reflect on the conference plenary sessions, and look ahead to the breakout sessions, so we can plan how we will put our new knowledge into practice with the staff and students in our programs. Participants will leave this session with a clear idea of what they have learned and how they will use that information in the days ahead.

The Power of Safe Spaces: From Values to Program-Wide Practice presented by Brandis Stockman

Safe spaces are built through consistent, program-wide practices, not just one great staff member or leader. In this session, program directors will explore how to turn safe-space values into everyday operations through shared systems, routines, and expectations. Participants will learn what makes a space feel safe from a youth's perspective, how to build staff buy-in, and how to align training and practices so safety, belonging, and trust are sustained across the entire program.

Bridging Generational Differences: Managing Across Ages, Eras & Expectations presented by Marissa Badgley

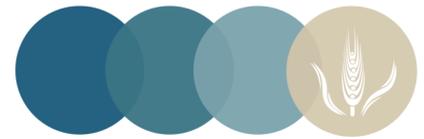
The youth development sector is more multi-generational than ever. This session unpacks the communication styles, values, and motivators that often differ across generations and provides tools to bridge those divides with empathy and clarity. Leaders will gain strategies to transform generational friction into fuel for collaboration, innovation, and mutual respect.

Messaging for Afterschool and Summer presented by Erik Peterson Natalie Hampton, and Emma James Claire

This interactive workshop will talk through messages that might work in your community and with state and federal policymakers and funders to make the case for afterschool and summer programs support. Practical strategies will be practiced like creating and delivering an effective elevator pitch.

2026 SESSIONS

FRIDAY, FEB. 20 (cont.)



Afterschool Leadership Conference

OST Training That Sticks presented by Brandis Stockman

Are you a supervisor who struggles to train staff in the complicated area of behavior management strategies? The Training That "Sticks" model aims to provide an approach to behavior management training that promotes ongoing staff growth and development. This evidence-informed model was designed specifically for supervisors who face the unique challenges of the afterschool workforce: limited time for training, a high number of part-time staff, and significant levels of staff turnover. Join this workshop to learn how to incorporate specific behavior management strategies into your programs and walk away with a training structure and curriculum to implement with your staff team.

From Day One to Done Well: Designing an Effective Afterschool Staff Onboarding Experience presented by Ashlee Liska, Cassie Hackett, Jamie Keiter, Erica Schadegg

A strong onboarding experience can make the difference between staff who merely show up and staff who truly shine. In this session, participants will explore how intentional onboarding sets the foundation for high-quality programming, stronger team culture, and increased staff retention. We'll walk through practical strategies for welcoming new hires, building role clarity, and introducing organizational values in a way that feels engaging—not overwhelming.

Destination Summer Learning: Designing High-Quality Programs That Center Youth, Belonging, and Impact presented by Brodrick Clarke

This interactive workshop introduces participants to the Destination Summer Learning Guide, a comprehensive roadmap for designing, strengthening, and sustaining high-quality summer learning programs. Grounded in decades of research and practice from the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) and Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR), the session positions summer learning as a critical strategy for academic recovery, social-emotional development, and youth well-being.

EXCLUSIVELY FOR
LEADERS
OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

What is the Afterschool Leadership Conference?

The Afterschool Leadership Conference (ALC) is designed exclusively for those in afterschool program administrator roles. While we acknowledge that afterschool programs often have multiple levels of leadership, registration and attendance at the ALC is reserved specifically for program directors and administrators. The event is being offered through the collaboration of the Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN) and the Missouri AfterSchool Network (MASN).