

April - June 2022



Spotlight on the Standards

Alabama Afterschool Quality Standards

"Bringing the Community Into the Classroom"
by Emelina Minero

Work with community learning partners to make student learning relevant, engaging, and applicable to the real world.

- Utilize learning partners to fit your needs.
 - Increase content knowledge for teachers and students
 - Give student work an authentic audience
- Know what you want in a learning partner.
 - Someone who can connect with your students in a way that you cannot
 - Someone who reflects your students' image

[Read the full article](#)

Social Emotional Learning



Nurtured by Nature
by Kirsten Weir

Psychological research is advancing our understanding of how time in nature can improve our mental health and sharpen our cognition.

From a stroll through a city park to a day spent hiking in the wilderness, exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders and even upticks in empathy and cooperation.

[Read the full article](#)

5 Easy Ways to Bring Your Students Outside

3 Ideas for Taking SEL Outdoors



Health and Wellness



CATCH

Healthy Smiles, a new K-2 oral health program, is now available at no cost to U.S. schools! As part of this engaging program, children will meet Swish, Pearl, and Weaver who will teach them about oral health and cheer them on as they develop healthy habits. Free resources include teacher training, curriculum materials, parent materials, home activity ideas, videos, and a school-wide engagement toolkit. Sign up is quick and easy, so get started today and help your students maintain their healthy smiles!

[Get started here!](#)

STEM Activities

It is the time of year when children and teachers alike are catching Spring Fever! Head outside and engage kids in STEM learning with these outdoor STEM challenge ideas!

STEM Outdoor Challenge Cards

Giant Marble Run

Solar Oven Engineering Design Challenge



Staff Support

Teachers need support now more than ever! Why not start a Self-Care Club to help teachers focus on their well-being, develop coping skills, and offer support to one another? Be sure to keep each session relevant to the needs of your members. Topic ideas can come from teacher surveys and feedback and can include activities such as book studies, group nature walks and fitness sessions, and opportunities for creative expression.



Need an idea to get started? Gather together to create Personal Vision Boards! As you work, reflect on and share the reasons you became teachers, what you love most about teaching, and your goals for the future. Go old school and cut pictures out of magazines or get digital and use an online graphic design platform such as Canva or Design Wizard. Check out the links below for more information about vision boards.

[What is a Vision Board and Why Make One?](#)

[How a Vision Board Can Help Guide You Through Teaching's Ups and Downs](#)



[Learn more](#)

Youth Service America (YSA) is a leading global nonprofit that activates young people, ages 5-25, to find their voice, take action, and acquire powerful civic and 21st Century skills as they solve problems facing their communities.



Afterschool Grants - Application opens April 1, 2022 - Supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation - Up to \$500 each - Youth-led service or service-learning opportunities

Youth Service Zone Grants - Application opens April 1, 2022 - Supported by AmeriCorps - \$15,000 grants for collaboratives of 3+ organizations to build partnerships and capacity to increase youth service rates

Everyday Young Hero Awards - Applications always accepted! - Supported by Hershey - Nominate young people who are improving their communities through service to others.

[Find out more about YSA!](#)

Free Professional Development Offerings

We would love to see you at one of our face-to-face or virtual training sessions!

Click the link below to access our calendar of scheduled professional development sessions and to register for the ones that interest you.

[Online PD Calendar](#)

[Full List of PD Sessions by Standard](#)

Looking for a professional development topic that is not on our list?

Contact us to request a specific training session or date or to discuss new topic ideas. We want to meet your needs!

