

## Communities of Practice

During 2008, CSAS is documenting the key projects, resources and people working to incorporate STEM learning opportunities as part of after-school programs. Three communities have been formed based on the [CSAS Action Areas](#):

Staff Capacity and Professional Development  
Development of STEM Learning Activities

- **Programs and Program Improvement** This series of activities is designed to strengthen the intellectual foundation of after-school STEM education. CSAS will provide the professionals who serve the after-school field with common concepts, models and vocabulary that will form the basis for a *community of practice*. The resulting tools, as well as an ongoing system for exchange of ideas and dissemination of successful approaches, will inform existing and future projects and ensure the active engagement of key stakeholders who are committed to high quality after-school experiences in STEM.

Each community will result in:

**A review of the field**, consisting of a collection of project summaries and a research brief. This review will serve as a snapshot of the current field – who is doing what and based on what understandings.

**A community of leaders:** Based on the Community of Practice model of information management (especially based on the work of Etienne Wenger), CSAS invites those who are leading the practice to help define the field as well.

**A report on the state of the field:** CSAS will work with Community of Practice members to author a report connecting the knowledge from existing projects with the relevant understandings from research and evaluation reports. The report will identify gaps among resources and knowledge necessary for the field to continue innovating.

CSAS expects that this report and the Communities of Practice will serve as a springboard for future collaborative projects that help improve staff development for after-school STEM.

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