



NEWS RELEASE
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CONTACT: [Gretchen Wright](#)
202/371-1999

Senator Kolowski Honored as an Afterschool Champion at Special Event in Nation's Capital

*At National Event, Educators, Parents, Afterschool Leaders Honor Champions,
Press for Increased Funding for Afterschool Programs*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Afterschool Alliance today recognized State Senator Rick Kolowski for his exemplary support for afterschool programs and the youth who participate in them. Sen. Kolowski was named a State Afterschool Champion at the “Breakfast of Champions,” a gala event in Washington, D.C. featuring Members of Congress and national afterschool champions. In the Nebraska State Senate, Sen. Kolowski has drafted and supported legislation to ensure children have extended learning opportunities. He was one of 11 state champions honored at the Breakfast for helping to support and expand innovative approaches to expanding learning that close opportunity gaps, build student skills and create pathways for lifelong learning. Beyond School Bells nominated him for the honor.

Before being elected to the Senate, Kolowski was the founding principal of Millard West High School, which had one of the state’s highest rates of student participation in extracurricular activities. After retiring, Sen. Kolowski was elected to and named chair of the Learning Community of Douglas and Sarpy Counties. One of the group’s first activities was to fund an expansion of high quality afterschool and summer programs. Since his election in 2012, Sen. Kolowski has authored legislation resulting in two separate Education Committee hearings on extended learning opportunities.

“From his time as an educator placing a strong value on connecting youth with extracurricular activities to his time in the State Senate advocating for more funding for extended learning opportunities, Sen. Kolowski has made improving access to enriching out-of-school-time learning experiences a priority,” said Jeff Cole Beyond School Bells lead. “He is currently leading an effort to conduct a study on extended learning opportunities that will shape future legislation. His efforts will create new and engaging learning opportunities for children and youth throughout Nebraska.”

The “Breakfast of Champions” is part of the 13th annual *Afterschool for All Challenge*, sponsored by the Afterschool Alliance. The event brings together hundreds of educators, parents, afterschool leaders and advocates from around the country for a series of events and meetings with Members of Congress. Following the Breakfast, participants met with their senators and representatives on Capitol Hill to talk to about how important afterschool programs are to

children, families and communities. This year, the Alliance is also encouraging advocates for afterschool to participate in the *Challenge* at home by calling Congressional district offices to urge their representatives in Congress to co-sponsor the Afterschool for America's Children Act.

“Quality afterschool programs give our children and youth a chance to engage in hands-on, experimental learning in a safe and structured environment after the school day ends,” said Afterschool Alliance Executive Director Jodi Grant. “But they also do much more. Not only are they a lifeline for working parents, afterschool programs expose students to possible careers in the sciences or other fields, teach them the value of community service, and provide them with mentors, meals, physical activity and more. The champions we honor today not only support these programs, but the kids, parents and communities that benefit from them.”

The State Champions being honored at the *Afterschool for All Challenge* are:

- **Florida:** Michael Lannon, Retired Superintendent, St. Lucie County Schools;
- **Kansas:** Joyce Glasscock, Director, Government Relations, Boys & Girls Clubs of America;
- **Massachusetts:** Jennifer Benson, Representative, Massachusetts State Legislature;
- **Michigan:** Peter MacGregor, Representative, Michigan State Legislature;
- **Michigan:** Rashida Tlaib, Representative, Michigan State Legislature;
- **Nebraska:** Rick Kolowski, State Senator, Nebraska State Legislature;
- **New Mexico:** Christine Trujillo, State Representative, New Mexico State Legislature;
- **Ohio:** Gayle Manning, State Senator, Ohio State Legislature;
- **Pennsylvania:** Nancy Peter, Founder and Director, Out-of-School Time Resource Center at the University of Pennsylvania;
- **Tennessee:** Karl Dean, Mayor of Nashville; and
- **Wyoming:** Karen Bierhaus, 21st CCLC State Consultant, Wyoming Department of Education.

The 2014 *Afterschool for All Challenge* is generously sponsored by: The NAMM Foundation, National Afterschool Association and National Geographic Channel.

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The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs. More information is available at www.afterschoolalliance.org.