The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College and the National Writing Project (NWP), with generous funding support from the Robert Bowne Foundation, launched the National Afterschool Matters Initiative Practitioner Fellowship in September 2008. The first two participating cities were Philadelphia through the Philadelphia Writing Project, and the San Francisco Bay area through the Bay Area Writing Project. We have also have or had Fellowships in Minneapolis, Seattle, Pittsburgh, and New York City.

NIOST and NJSACC are excited to bring this opportunity to out-of-school-time (OST) practitioners and classroom teachers in New Jersey. The fellowship is grounded in the inquiry-based, writing, and professional development approaches of the National Writing Project (NWP) and NIOST. This effective professional development model provides frequent and ongoing opportunities for educators in and out of school to write and to examine theory and practice together systematically. Educators who are well informed and effective in their practice can be successful teachers of other practitioners as well as partners in development and implementation of effective and quality practice. Research findings by the fellows will be presented at a research roundtable in the Fall of 2015, and fellows will be encouraged to submit papers for publication.

Participants in the Practitioner Fellowship are selected by application. Through the year-long course the Fellows will explore some of the issues emerging from recent studies that challenge the dichotomy of learning experiences as well as traditional structures of learning. Researchers and policy makers have increasingly questioned the split between in-school and out-of-school programs, calling for new policy and innovative thinking to bridge these divides. Those selected for the New Jersey STEM Practitioner Fellowship will:

- **Become part of a community of practitioners.** Fellows work collaboratively to study effective practices and investigate the structures in which effective practice happens – at the program/classroom, activity, curriculum, and individual levels using their own Science, Technology, Engineering and/or Mathematics curricula as the objects of study.
- **Learn strategies to engage in program reflection and inquiry.** Fellows learn approaches and strategies that will help them become better at program/classroom observation and analysis.

“This fellowship was one of the most transformative professional development opportunities that I have participated in. It has had a huge impact on how I approach my work, engage the youth that I work with, and I am a more effective educator because of it”.
- Past participant in the Philadelphia Fellowship

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• **Improve programs and practice.** Fellows identify and investigate effective instructional strategies and bring these strategies back to their classrooms and/or OST programs.

• **Collaborate to identify** ways that schools and OST programs can better work together to support youth in STEM learning and engagement.

• **Engage in leadership activities to disseminate program/classroom improvement strategies.** Fellows present their work to peers, administrators, parents and community members. They are encouraged to design and deliver workshops based on their work to share new expertise with others in the field.

• **Write a STEM-focused inquiry paper** that intentionally brings the worlds of OST and the school classroom together as part of an article for professional journals.

**Responsibilities of Fellows:**
September 2014 to November 2014: *twice monthly Saturday meetings at the NJSACC office in Westfield, NJ*

December 2014 to May 2015: *monthly meetings, one Saturday per month in Westfield, NJ*

April or May 2015: *a spring writing retreat, where rough drafts of STEM research articles will be completed. Location TBD.*

October 2015: *a formal Round Table Presentation of research to the broader community*

**Application Process:**
Employer approval must be obtained (see Memorandum of Understanding). Please complete the Practitioner Fellowship application and return, along with the MOU, **no later June 27**th **2014 by e-mail, fax, or mail to:**

National Institute on Out-of-School Time, National Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowship
Wellesley College, Waban House
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
niest@wellesley.edu
fax: 781-283-3657

For more general information contact: Elizabeth Meister, (781) 283-2607 or emeister@wellesley.edu

If you have specific questions in regards to the New Jersey Fellowship please contact Mike MacEwan, Director of STEM Initiatives for NJSACC at mmacewan@njsacc.org

To **apply** request the National Afterschool Matters Practitioner Fellowship application and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from mmacewan@njsacc.org, the NJSACC website, www.NJSACC.org or the NIOST website, http://www.niost.org/Practitioner-Fellowship/practitioner-fellowship-overview.

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