



# September 2023

## Monthly News



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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**October 13, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.**

North Central Regional STEM Advisory Board Meeting  
[More information](#)

**October 19, 2023 - 11:00 a.m.**

Southeast Regional STEM Advisory Board Meeting  
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**October 24, 2023 - 1:00 p.m.**

South Central Regional STEM Advisory Board Meeting  
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**October 26, 2023 - 1:00 p.m.**

Northwest Regional STEM Advisory Board Meeting  
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**October 31, 2023 - 12:00 p.m.**

Southwest Regional STEM Advisory Board Meeting  
[More information](#)

# School+Business Partnerships = Future-Focused Skills



*The STEM BEST Program at Prairie High School will engage students and local workplaces with technology advanced healthcare experiences using their new Anatomage Table.*

Prairie High School teachers added a new tool to their toolbox for the current academic year. Students are getting the opportunity to gain a deeper experience in healthcare through a new Anatomage Table. This technologically advanced 3D anatomy visualization and virtual dissection tool was added through the STEM BEST® (*Business Engaging Students and Teachers*) Program in 2023.

“As part of our College Community Ag and Medical Career Pathways, this table will provide our students with an authentic and sustainable real-world learning experience that is relevant to multiple career pathways offered through our District’s career readiness program, Prairie Ready,” said Amber Osterkamp, Prairie High School curriculum lead for science and specials.

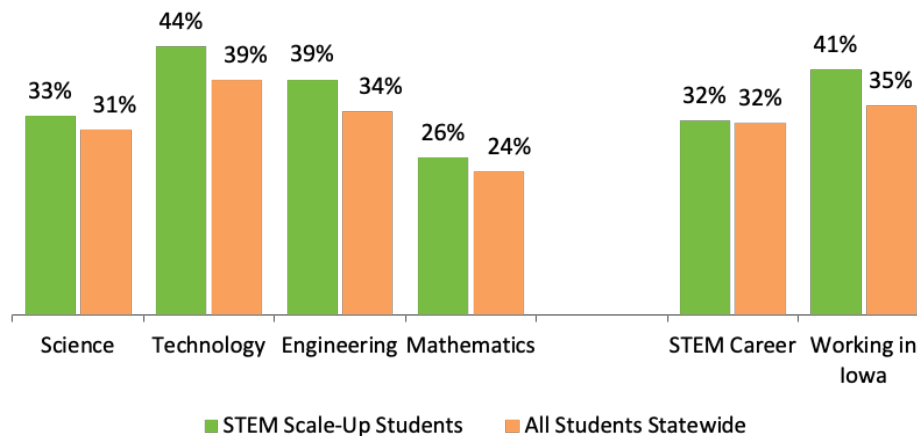
Prairie High School teachers and their students plan to engage community partners with use of the table to deepen the career connection, enhance the learning experience and strengthen relationships with steering committee members representing Kirkwood Community College, University of Iowa and Mount Mercy.

Communities seeking to grow collaboration between their schools and businesses will have the opportunity to get a jumpstart. The STEM BEST Program provides both expertise and funding to support the development of workplace-connected curriculum, the professional development of educators and employer partners to collaborate on lesson design and execution. Teachers and industry professionals are encouraged to design a work-based learning model that combines STEM subjects with hands-on learning experiences that highlight the essential skills needed in the workplace.

The STEM BEST Program application period will be open Oct. 2 - Dec. 13, 2023. Iowa public and non-public school districts and buildings serving students in grades K-12 are eligible to apply. For more information on the STEM BEST Program, please visit <https://iowastem.org/STEMBEST>.

## Latest STEM Report Indicates

# Progress, Impact on PreK-12 Students and Educators



*According to the annual STEM evaluation report, a higher proportion of students who participated in a STEM Scale-Up Program said they were “very interested” in all STEM subjects and in pursuing a STEM career compared to all students statewide.*

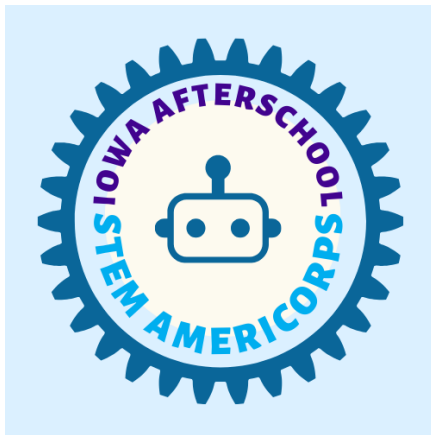
A new report released by the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council at the Iowa Department of Education highlights the statewide impact of STEM Council’s programs on PK-12 students and educators across the state. The independent assessment examines 18 indicators ranging from student interest in STEM, public support of STEM and postsecondary majors and career trends in STEM.

Highlights of the report include:

- In 2021-22, 89% of Iowans said STEM education should be a priority in their local school district.
- STEM Scale-Up participants who graduated high school between 2017-2021 chose STEM majors at a 47.7% rate, compared to non-participants at a 37.6% rate.
- The number of minority students enrolled in STEM coursework has increased by +10.7% in science, +8% in technology and +11.9% in mathematics in the last nine years.
- Among educators taking part in the STEM Scale-Up Program, 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they now have more confidence to teach STEM topics, and 96% have increased their STEM knowledge.
- STEM jobs pay an average of \$49,660 higher per year at \$95,420 compared to \$45,760 for all other jobs.
- Young Iowans in STEM are 7% more interested in living and working in Iowa than their peers.
- There are STEM BEST® Program awarded schools in 67% of Iowa counties with 770 unique community partners working with STEM BEST Program models between 2014 and 2022.

The Iowa STEM Evaluation Report is produced by a collaboration of partners from Iowa’s three Regent universities: the University of Northern Iowa’s Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR), the Iowa State University Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) and Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa.

# Two Programs Receive STEM Seal of Approval Designation



*Apple Learning Coach and Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) STEM AmeriCorps recently earned the STEM Council's Seal of Approval for their contributions to advance STEM education in Iowa.*

STEM education is a vital economic development advantage for quality job growth and opportunity in Iowa. The STEM Council's Seal of Approval recognizes programs or events that are advancing STEM principles in Iowa communities and cultivating the next generation of innovators. Two programs, Apple Learning Coach and Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) STEM AmeriCorps, recently received this designation.

## **Apple Learning Coach**

Apple Learning Coach offers free professional training and resources to help educators develop their skills and expertise in integrating technology into the classroom. As Apple Learning Coaches, Iowa educators are equipped to enhance their teaching methods and engage students in innovative ways. The program fosters innovation, collaboration and effective integration of technology, while engaging students in meaningful and interactive learning experiences.

## **IAA STEM AmeriCorps**

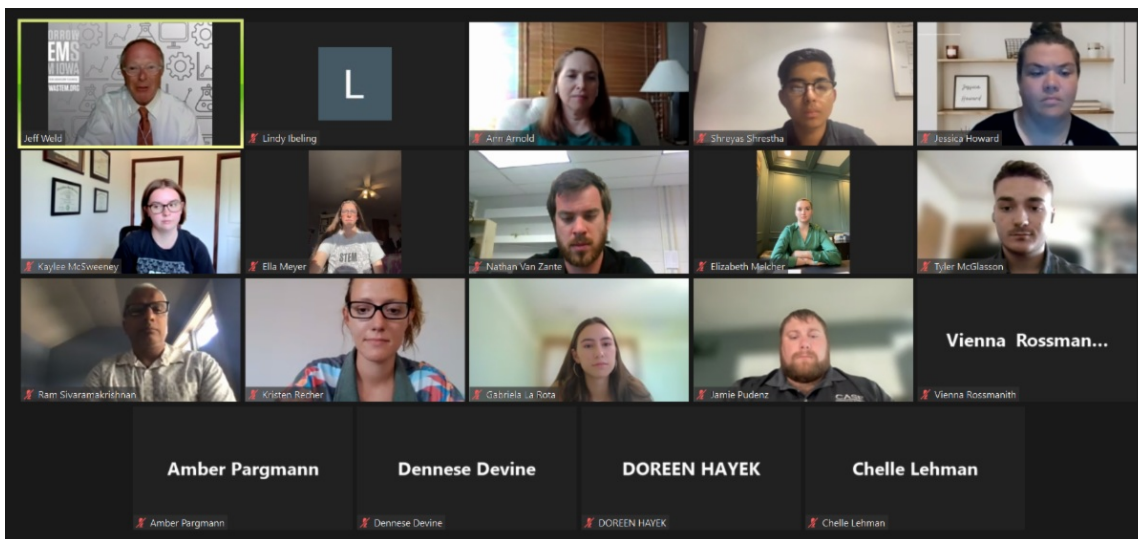
IAA STEM AmeriCorps Program facilitates STEM activities and lessons for students to apply their STEM learning outside the school day and in real-world situations. IAA STEM AmeriCorps Program addresses the needs in socially vulnerable populations in Iowa and equips youth with the access, support and application needed to thrive and make the connection to possible futures in STEM.

A total of 36 programs have received the STEM Council's Seal of Approval since 2015. Recipients can leverage the official designation for endorsement and promotion of their program.

"We believe the Seal of Approval will offer additional opportunities to showcase our programs as a legitimate and excellent offering to new network host locations who may not be offering high-quality STEM programs currently," said Elva Griffin,

To apply or learn more about the STEM Seal of Approval, visit [lowastem.org/seal](http://lowastem.org/seal).

## STEM Council's Youth Advisory Board Conducts Conference



*The STEM Council Youth Advisory Board hosted a virtual conference in early September to grow student engagement and awareness in STEM subjects.*

With a mission of informing the STEM Council's direction and expanding reach to Iowa youth, the STEM Youth Advisory Board is up to the task. Members of the Youth Advisory Board are highly engaged in their schools and communities and can boost statewide engagement in STEM opportunities. In addition to involvement in activities within their own school districts, the Youth Advisory Board recently brainstormed ways to expand knowledge of STEM in the classroom and increase community engagement with Iowa youth. The result: a statewide virtual youth conference.

The student-led virtual conference was held in early September and empowered members of the Youth Advisory Board to apply 21st Century Skills through planning, communication, promotion and execution of the conference, while serving a broader mission of reaching students across the state.

To open the virtual conference, STEM Council Executive Director Jeff Weld provided remarks highlighting the critical role and contribution today's youth will have on the future of our communities.

Breakout sessions featured educators and subject-matter experts on topics including computer science and artificial intelligence, STEM extracurriculars and increasing accessibility to STEM in the classroom.

"The virtual STEM conference was small in numbers, but it made a huge impact," said Ella Meyer, STEM Youth Advisory Board member. "The audience members selected two sessions they would like to attend. During these sessions they got to

have one-on-one conversations and group discussions with the speaker and the other audience members about the topic at hand. The ability to have these small discussions allowed them to be more in-depth and create a longer lasting impact for the students and educators in Iowa.”

The Council owes a nod of gratitude to two John Deere executives, Amber Pargmann and Allison Plunkett, for donating their time to mentoring the group. For information on the Youth Advisory Board, for example their upcoming agenda and how to join, contact [info@lowaSTEM.org](mailto:info@lowaSTEM.org).



THANK YOU

for your investment this month in helping Iowa STEM get closer to meeting statewide demand.



GOVERNOR'S STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL

dedicated to building a strong STEM education foundation for all Iowans

Contact the Iowa STEM Operations Center by phone at (515) 335-1531 or by email at [info@lowaSTEM.org](mailto:info@lowaSTEM.org).

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