



STEM LEARNING ECOSYSTEMS: EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

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SUMMARY

This is a report on findings from a survey of STEM Learning Ecosystems' thoughts about collaboration on evaluation and assessment. The survey had an impressive response rate of 100%, with very detailed comments, demonstrating the high level of importance placed on this topic by community leaders. Results revealed that half of the ecosystems are using at least one data collection tool to evaluate STEM learning, and the level of evaluation progress can be stratified as three groups: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Leaders identified six goals for evaluation and assessment, including: to demonstrate value of programming to stakeholders; to use data to guide the process of implementing system- and program-level changes, to assess program impact on student outcomes; to ensure quality of student learning experiences; to use data to improve teaching effectiveness; and to increase STEM learning opportunities. However, ecosystem leaders felt that attainment of these goals would be less challenging with a common set of tools and strategy, a centralized data management/reporting system, more funding, less stringent data sharing/privacy policies in schools, and more cohesion among partners. Nevertheless, leaders remain positive and motivated to work toward strengthening partnerships, creating a common language for evaluation and assessment, and leveraging resources and support to strengthen the ecosystems as a whole. This report concludes with recommendations for advancing this high-priority issue.