

NATIONAL REPORT TOOLKIT

Resources and Tools to Leverage *Restoring America's Position As A World Leader by Reinvesting in STEM*



Communications for the Report

Through a series of Town Halls, the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice developed five major recommendations for how the Biden-Harris administration, as well as individual states, can improve STEM learning for all.

This toolkit is intended to support Ecosystem leaders with local communications around the SLECoP National Report, *Restoring America's Position As A World Leader by Reinvesting in STEM*.

WHAT'S IN HERE

- Customizable Press Release for your local community
- Sample Tweets for Social Media
- Suggestions for Organizing Local Meetings
- Sample Letters to Reach Out to Legislators, District Officials and State Leaders



PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Use this
template to
release a
custom press
release for you
Ecosystem.

For Immediate Release



Feb. 8, 2020

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YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME Offers Recommendations for the Biden-Harris Administration on Education and Career Pathways **CITY WHERE YOU ARE LOCATED** - Fostering collaboration is the top recommendation offered by **YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME AND LINK TO WEBSITE** and other members of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice for how the Biden-Harris administration can improve STEM learning and connections to careers in communities across the country.

YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME and the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice developed five major recommendations for how the Biden-Harris administration, as well as individual states and local communities, can improve STEM learning for all.

The recommendations, contained in a recently released report, “*Restoring America’s Position As A World Leader By Reinvesting in STEM*,” are based on a series of Town Hall sessions, surveys and focused interviews with STEM leaders from nearly every state in the country. The ideas of more than 1,000 STEM leaders, families, teachers, after-school educators as well as those from non-profits and philanthropy contributed thoughts.

In addition to fostering collaboration to engage, leverage and link all relevant community resources, the contributors to the report urge the Biden-Harris administration to support steps to improve and diversify the STEM teaching pipeline and revamp evaluation systems to allow for performance-based measures with alignment to STEM postsecondary and career options.

The report also recommends creating an early learning system for STEM and encouraging student participation in STEM by increasing the visibility, relevance and connections to real-world and community challenges.

“We were pleased to participate in this report and have great hope for positively shaping the future of STEM in **YOUR REGION’S NAME** which will have benefits for all of us, including our key industries,” said **NAME OF ECOSYSTEM LEADER, TITLE OF ECOSYSTEM LEADER**.

In addition to the recommendations, the report also includes examples of how **YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME** and other STEM Learning Ecosystems are implementing the recommendations in their daily work within their regions. This offers practical, real examples of how the Biden-Harris Administration might support scaling the work.

“The members of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice have great hope for the Biden-Harris administration and how it will elevate STEM to improve individuals’ lives and communities by improving workforce trajectories,” said Jan Morrison, president and founder of TIES which operates the STEM Learning Ecosystems.

As the lessons from the COVID pandemic and all of 2020 continue to be inventoried and analyzed, at least one is clear: Communities that are faring the best and recovering the fastest are those with deep cross-sector partnerships and systems in place to mobilize learning and share and maximize resources. STEM Learning Ecosystems have the established structures and partnerships that enabled immediate collaboration to serve community needs, including manufacturing personal protective equipment, pairing students with business owners to improve their online presence and securing and distributing computers and devices for getting online. Ecosystems also assisted with countless remote learning opportunities for students, including those without internet access.

The SLECoP stands as a singular, stellar example of how to form these partnerships and systems; and its leaders are eager to share their success as a model for leveraging STEM to strengthen our economy and ensure upward mobility for all.

BOILERPLATE LANGUAGE ABOUT YOUR ECOSYSTEM.

SAMPLE TWEETS

Customize
sample tweets to
spread the word
about your
Ecosystem's
involvement in
the recent
report.

“Foster collaboration is top recommendation for Biden-Harris administration for improving STEM Learning.”

LINK TO REPORT

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

“**YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME** has helped develop recommendations for Biden-Harris administration for improving STEM in YOUR REGION NAME and across the country.”

LINK TO REPORT

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

“**YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME** has helped develop recommendations for Biden-Harris administration for improving STEM in YOUR REGION NAME and across the country.”

LINK TO REPORT

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

"Students of color achieve more when they have at least 1 teacher of the same race. Develop stronger teacher recruitment & retention strategies - a recommendation from

LINK TO REPORT"

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

"Increase the visibility, relevance and real-world connections of STEM to encourage long-term student participation - a recommendation from

LINK TO REPORT"

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

"Community partners must play an active role in preparing the next generation - a recommendation from

LINK TO REPORT"

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

"Experiential learning is critical for
success in STEM - a
recommendation from

LINK TO REPORT"

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

"STEM learning needs to start as
early as preschool - a
recommendation from **LINK TO
REPORT"**

#STEMEcosystems

#YOUR ECOSYSTEM'S NAME

#STEMCareers

#STEMEducation

ORGANIZING MEETINGS

Calling a meeting to discuss and review “Restoring American’s Position As A World Leader by Reinvesting in STEM.” may be a good idea for your ecosystem for catalyzing your work, ensuring alignment and identifying areas where you may want to re-focus.

Here are some suggestions.

Share the draft report with those being invited.

Sample Invitation Language:

Dear **XXX**,

We are thrilled to share the report, “Restoring America’s Position As A World Leader by Reinvesting in STEM” that was created by **YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME AND LINK TO WEBSITE** and other members of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice.

The report was created to offer guidance for how the Biden-Harris administration can improve STEM learning and connections to careers in **NAME OF YOUR REGION** and other communities across the country.

We will be holding a meeting to discuss the report and consider its implications for the work of **YOUR ECOSYSTEM**.

Specifically, we will be going through each of the five recommendations from the report and discussing how **YOUR ECOSYSTEM** is addressing each of the issues. This discussion may then lead to further conversation about the work of **YOUR ECOSYSTEM**.

Develop an agenda for the meeting.

Sample agenda:

YOUR LOGO

Meeting date, time and platform link.

Meeting Objectives:

Review and discuss “*Restoring American’s Position As A World Leader by Reinvesting in STEM.*”

Inventory the work of **YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME** that aligns with the five priorities identified in the report:

- Foster collaboration to engage, leverage and link all relevant community resources - adoption of the STEM learning ecosystems model;
- Introduce a performance-based system, collaboratively designed system to ensure quality and alignment to strong postsecondary and/or STEM careers;
- Ensure a diverse, well-prepared, supported and high-quality teaching workforce, including involvement and leadership with students, administrators and higher education faculty;
- Encourage long-term student participation in STEM by increasing visibility, relevance, connections to the real-world and community and global challenges;
- Build a strong early learning system.

Discuss any possible changes to the work of **YOUR ECOSYSTEM NAME**

SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATOR

Here are some
suggestions
for reaching
out to
members of
Congress.

Sample Letter

YOUR LOGO

(Month) (Day) (Year)

The Honorable (First name) (Last name)

(Room Number), State Capitol

(City), (State), (Zip Code)

RE: (state the topic or include the bill number, author and subject if you are writing to support or oppose a particular legislative bill)

Dear (Assembly Member/Senator) (Last name):

My name is (your first and last name) and I am a regional center consumer (family member /service provider/advocate/community member) who resides in your district.

(Explain why you support or oppose the bill or other issue here. Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly.)

(Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your family member and your community.)

(Tell your representative how you want her or him to vote on this issue and ask for a response. Be sure to include your name and address on both your letter and envelope.)

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

(Print your name)

Street address

City, State, Zip code

MORE TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH A LEGISLATOR

Tips and tricks
for emails and
phone calls

Writing a Letter to a Legislator

Use the proper salutation. For example:

The Honorable (First name) (Last name)

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Assembly Member/Senator) (Last name):

State the purpose of the letter in the opening sentence and if you are referring to a bill, include the bill number, author and topic. If you live in the elected official's district be sure to say this in the opening paragraph as well.

Focus on the message and key points. Personalize the letter by including examples of how the legislation might impact you and your family. Keep the letter brief – not more than one page.

Restate your request at the end of the letter, for example urging them to support or oppose the bill. Thank the legislator for his or her support and offer to address any questions that he or she might have. Be sure to include your contact information, and sign the letter.

Sending Email Communication to a Legislator

The same guidelines apply to email as to written letters.

Before sending an email, you might want to call the legislator's office and ask if a letter sent by email is effective.

If you do send an email, send it to the representative. Do not copy other representatives or send a mass email. Make it a brief message with no special layouts or graphics. Do not include attachments. Include your full name and address so it is clear that you are a constituent, and ask for a response.

Sending a hard copy of your email to the legislator never hurts either!

Phone Calls to a Legislator

State your name and address and identify yourself as the legislator's constituent. You will often be speaking with a secretary or aide.

Briefly make known your position as they keep track of the issues that people call about to report to the legislator. Have your thoughts organized in advance, which will help you to keep the call brief and to the point. It is also very helpful to share how the issue affects you personally.

Thank them for their support.

SAMPLE LETTER TO A DISTRICT LEADER

Reminder that
the sections in
bold, red describe
how you can
customize the
following letter
dependent on
your needs

Dear (District Leader):

[Introduction]

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted last year by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress, puts an array of key education decisions and flexible funding streams in your hands. In particular, state and local policymakers now have the ability to leverage the enormous potential of informal, out of school, and summer education programs to contribute to our state's STEM education initiatives.

The steps you take now to prepare our children in STEM will have an enormous impact on our state's economy, America's national security, and this country's continued leadership in science and technology. I encourage you to utilize the new state and district-level decision-making powers granted under ESSA to take action to include afterschool, informal, and summer learning programs as an integral part of efforts to improve STEM education for all students.

Afterschool and summer learning programs around the nation have enthusiastically embraced STEM programming and are engaging children and youth in STEM learning—including those who may not otherwise be selected to, or choose to, participate in STEM programs. Research has demonstrated that high-quality out-of-school STEM learning programs are strong contributors to improving student engagement and learning in STEM fields.

[Here is the “ask” section. You can use one or both of these sections depending on your needs and preference.] [Title IV, Part Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants program]

We request that the district apply for federal funding through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Title IV-A). Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner to improving the well-rounded education of all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize new funding provided under the Title IV-A program to support collaborations among school, afterschool program, and informal program personnel to improve the integration of programming and instruction in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to support hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. Research has demonstrated the importance of STEM learning in these settings to build STEM fluency and persistence in STEM fields. We urge the district to use these new federal funds to support learning opportunities that bring together both classroom-based approaches and informal learning to improve student success.

[Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instruction state grants program]

We request that the district utilize federal funding provided through the through the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (SEIS, Title II-A) to support integration of afterschool and informal learning pathways into STEM teacher professional development programs.

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize funding provided under the Title II-A program to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. We urge the district to use these flexible federal funds to support innovative professional development for educators that increase collaboration between classroom teachers and afterschool educators.

Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include...

[You will want to add some specific suggestions about programmatic activities to support afterschool and informal STEM learning based on your local and state needs and areas of expertise. The accompanying guidance document has several examples and references for additional information]

[Conclusion]

Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the district application and serve as a partner in improving teaching and learning for our critical STEM educators and all of our students.

Under ESSA, districts can now utilize funding provided under the Title II-A program to support the use of best practices to improve teacher quality and professional development program, especially as they relate to learning in the STEM subjects. These funds can also be used to expand the use of hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. We urge the district to use these flexible federal funds to support innovative professional development for educators that increase collaboration between classroom teachers and afterschool educators.

Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include... **[Add any guidance documents for suggestions and sources of additional information on specific programs and activities to propose]**

Spending time in programs outside of school that focus on STEM subjects gives all students the opportunity to experiment with STEM ideas in real-world situations. Such opportunities help spark curiosity, especially for those who might not think of themselves as "math and science kids. The success of our youth in today's ever-changing and high-tech society stands to be greatly improved by taking advantage of the complementary nature of formal and informal learning opportunities, which includes after-school and summer programs.

We all benefit when more of our children have a fair and equal chance to live up to their potential and contribute to our society.

Respectfully,

EXAMPLE LETTER TO A STATE LEADER

Reminder that
the sections in
bold, red describe
how you can
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[Introduction]

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The steps you take now to prepare our children in STEM will have an enormous impact on our state's economy, America's national security, and this country's continued leadership in science and technology. I encourage you to utilize the new state and district-level decision-making powers granted under ESSA to take action to include afterschool, informal, and summer learning programs as an integral part of efforts to improve STEM education for all students.

Afterschool and summer learning programs around the nation have enthusiastically embraced STEM programming and are engaging children and youth in STEM learning—including those who may not otherwise be selected to, or choose to, participate in STEM programs. Research has demonstrated that high-quality out-of-school STEM learning programs are strong contributors to improving student engagement and learning in STEM fields.

[Here is the “ask” section. You can use one or both of these sections depending on your needs and preference.] [Title IV, Part Student Support and Academic Enrichment grants program]

We request that the state apply for federal funding through the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program established by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, Title IV, Part A). Our organization would like to work with you to help develop the state application and plan for administering these new funds and serve as a partner to improving the well-rounded education of all of our students.

These funds can also be used to support hands-on STEM learning, which can take place in a wide variety of afterschool and informal settings. Research has demonstrated the importance of STEM learning in these settings to build STEM fluency and persistence in STEM fields. We urge the state to use these new federal funds to support learning opportunities that bring together both classroom-based approaches and informal learning to improve student success.

Under ESSA, districts will now be applying to the state for an allocation of formula funds under Title IV-A program that can be used to support collaborations among school, afterschool program, and informal program personnel to improve the integration of programming and instruction in the STEM subjects. These applications will be required to demonstrate how proposed activities are aligned with community and workforce needs. Considering this and the strong connections between excellence in the STEM fields and our ability to compete local, state-wide, and nationally in the global economy, we encourage you to prioritize STEM education activities within this program. For example, the state can propose matching district funds with state funds for certain types of activities like STEM programming.

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Specific projects and activities that could be supported with these funds could include...

[You will want to add some specific suggestions about programmatic activities to support afterschool and informal STEM learning based on your local and state needs and areas of expertise. The accompanying guidance document has several examples and references for additional information]

[Conclusion]

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Respectfully,



KEEP US UPDATED

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Ecosystem's progress by emailing
info@stemecosystems.org