



# **Strategic Plan**

**Fiscal Years 2026 – 2029**

**July 2025**

**Idaho STEM Action Center (STEM AC)**

**FY26 – FY29 Strategic Plan**

**Agency Overview, Core Functions, and Idaho Code**

During the 2015 Idaho legislative session, a group of legislators, education leaders, and industry leaders began a STEM Caucus that led to legislation creating the Idaho STEM Action Center (STEM AC) ([Idaho Code §67-823](#)). House Bill 302 became law on July 1, 2015. Guided by this legislation STEM AC coordinates science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education opportunities aligned to Idaho’s workforce needs from PreK to career.

The scope and benefits of STEM education are well framed in guidance from the national STEM strategic plan, which indicates “the best STEM education provides an interdisciplinary approach to learning, where rigorous academic concepts are coupled with real-world applications and students use STEM in contexts that make connections between school, community, work, and the wider world. Modern STEM education imparts not only skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, higher order thinking, design, and inference, but also behavioral competencies such as perseverance, adaptability, cooperation, organization, and responsibility.” Several agencies such as State Department of Education, State Board of Education, the Division of Career and Technical Education, Idaho Department of Labor, and Idaho Workforce Development Council as well as local school districts, community partners, and employers contribute to Idaho’s STEM activity and education efforts. STEM AC provides coordination efforts to ensure efficiency, eliminate duplication, and promote best practices within this complex system. This work is implemented by STEM AC’s Executive Director and seven professional staff. STEM AC’s decisions are also guided by a nine (9) member Advisory Board appointed by the Governor.

STEM AC’s overarching goal is to support Idaho’s efforts to produce a STEM-competitive workforce. Many of Idaho’s employers struggle with finding the skilled workforce they need to succeed. This need will only be compounded by future innovations and advancements in technology. Many educators also lack the experiences and connections outside the classroom which effectively align classroom instruction with present and future employer needs. STEM AC aims to bridge this divide through effective coordination of all relevant parties, fostering environments that make these connections intuitive, effective, and rewarding. With effective support in place, educators across the state can give their students the skills, competencies, and tools to prepare for the fastest-growing, highest-need, and most fulfilling careers in Idaho.

A key component of this work is a shared understanding of STEM education needs within Idaho’s communities built alongside the people who live and work there. This information is shared

widely for the benefit of all- identifying symbiotic connections, eliminating waste of time, energy, and money, and making recommendations for programming, investments, and partnerships best aligned to the unique features of local communities.

Opportunities identified for programmatic intervention receive support from STEM AC in one of several ways. STEM AC coordinates and provides high-quality STEM professional development for educators and work-based learning opportunities that benefit Idahoans no matter what stage of life they are in. To maximize the impact through direct-service programming, STEM AC also supports organizations best equipped to provide these programs.

**Mission Statement**

*We unite public education, employers, and community partners to ensure all Idaho youth are prepared to access STEM opportunities.*

**Vision Statement**

*We envision a robust STEM-powered workforce driving Idaho's economic future.*

**Goals**

GOAL #1: Increase awareness of the importance of STEM + CS education and employment pathways

Objective 1A: Increase understanding among students, educators, parents, and community members on the value of STEM + CS education and workforce development that leads to employment.

Objective 1B: Increase awareness of and interest in STEM + CS programs and pathways for students, educators, parents, and community members.

Performance Measures with Targets and Explanations			
Measure	FY 24 Baseline	FY25 Baseline	FY26 Targets
Value of earned media for STEM-related efforts in Idaho. <sup>1</sup>	\$432,382	N/A	N/A
Social Media Impressions <sup>2</sup>	109,425	70,846	75,000 <sup>3</sup>
Explanations: 1. The value of earned media measure was discontinued in FY25 due to a change in service. 2. Social media impressions include Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, LinkedIn, newsletters, and website traffic.			

3. FY26 targets for social media impressions are held close to 2025 target levels to plan for approach in proposed agency consolidation.

**GOAL #2: Increase pursuit of STEM pathways across Idaho**

Objective 2A: Coordinate and collaborate with state agencies, K-12, institutes of higher education, non-profits, employers, and other partners to enhance STEM + CS education and workforce development opportunities.

Objective 2B: Identify, pilot, and/or support high quality STEM + CS opportunities that fill gaps in current offerings, including professional development, grants, and programs.

Objective 2C: Improve institutional knowledge of barriers and solutions in broadening participation in STEM + CS education and workforce development.

Performance Measures with Targets and Explanations			
Measure	FY24 Baseline	FY 25 Baseline	FY26 Target
Number of STEM Designated Schools/programs <sup>1</sup>	11	12	12
Number of students participating in STEM career-connected learning platforms & resources <sup>2</sup>	10,070	22,490	28,000
Explanations: 1. Number of STEM Designated schools approved by the Idaho State Board of Education. 2. Number of students participating under the statewide contract for the Learning Blade Platform.			

**GOAL #3: Align STEM + CS education with workforce needs**

Objective 3A: Coordinate onramps for employer involvement in STEM + CS education and workforce development initiatives and programs.

Objective 3B: Identify and support employer-led STEM + CS education initiatives that focus on workforce development.

Objective 3C: Coordinate opportunities for students and educators to partner with employers.

Performance Measures with Targets and Explanations			
Measure	FY 24 Baseline	FY 25 Baseline	FY26 Targets
Number of educator externships run to connect educators and college and career counselors with employers. <sup>1</sup>	94	102 <sup>2</sup>	50
Explanations: 1. The number of educators who complete 200 hours at an employer partner. 2. Funding support from the Idaho Workforce Development Council and Micron Technology supported a large increase in the number of externships in FY24 & FY 25. The externship program will be supported by the Workforce Development Training Fund during FY26 and FY 27. Available funding will support up to 50 externs per year.			

## External Factors

### Proposed Agency Dissolution for FY27

In August 2024, the Governor directed the executive director of the Workforce Development Council (WDC) to assume leadership of the STEM Action Center, and an administrator was assigned as the agency head, beginning the process of preparing a recommendation for the future of the STEM AC. After a detailed analysis of all programs, impact, stakeholder feedback, and successful evolution of STEM education in Idaho it is recommended that STEM Action Center be consolidated within WDC.

This strategic consolidation builds on a decade of successfully embedding science, technology, engineering and math education throughout Idaho and creates a more streamlined approach to connecting educational pathways with workforce needs. The integration will maintain valued STEM programs while enhancing their connection to in-demand careers across Idaho's economy.

This integration directly supports the Governor's vision for streamlined, efficient government that maximizes impact. By combining complementary missions, STEM AC and WDC create a more cohesive approach to developing Idaho's talent pipeline. The technical education focus encompasses both traditional STEM fields and skilled trades that are essential to Idaho's economy.

This proposed consolidation will be further considered during the 2026 legislative session. If passed, we expect full implementation of this consolidation beginning in FY 2027.