

Connecting in STEM

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2024 Issue

From STEM Action Center

Idaho Science and Engineering Fairs (IDSEF)

After taking a year to reorient the International Science and Engineering Fairs through Society for Science, Idaho STEM Action Center has entered into a contract with the Idaho STEM Ecosystem (EcosySTEM) to bring IDSEF back in the coming year!

Through funds provided by the STEM Action Center, the EcosySTEM will plan, implement, and run the regional fairs this year, as well as providing boots-on-the-ground support for educators with competing students. When the top finalists from each regional fair are selected, Idaho STEM Action Center will organize an all-expense paid trip for those students and their chaperones to compete at the prestigious International Science & Engineering Fair in Columbus, OH.

For information on the implementation of the fair closest to you or support with your students' proposals, please [contact Trisha Mick](#) with the EcosySTEM. If you are an educator interested in learning more about Idaho's affiliation with the International Science & Engineering Fair or receiving professional development related to student research and science fairs, please [contact Nate Dean](#) with Idaho STEM Action Center.



Sawtooth STEM Educator Award

We received more nominations this year than ever before for the Sawtooth STEM Educator Award, formerly known as INDEEDS! Individuals across the state of Idaho nominated the STEM educators who'd made a difference in their lives, schools, and communities. Two recipients, one elementary educator and one secondary educator, will be selected by the industry supporters of the award. Each recipient's school will receive \$2,000 for STEM programming, and each recipient will receive a \$2,000 cash prize supported by industry partners and up to \$3,000 from Idaho STEM Action Center to attend a national conference related to STEM. The recipients of the Sawtooth STEM Educator Award will be announced at the Idaho Technology Council Hall of Fame Gala on October 11th.

Computer Science Education Week

Computer Science Education Week will take place December 9-15th, 2024. Idaho STEM Action Center invites schools to complete an Hour of Code. Hour of Code is a global movement introducing students worldwide to computer science, inspiring kids to learn more, breaking stereotypes, and leaving them feeling empowered. These easily scaled events introduce and celebrate computer science any time of the year, but with most events taking place during #CSEdWeek. Classrooms in schools all over Idaho participate in CS Week and Hour of Code. For questions about how you can get involved with computer science in Idaho, [contact Katie Bösch-Wilson](#), STEM Education Coordination Officer.

To sign up to volunteer or partner in your classroom, please [visit the CS Ed Week page](#).

i-STEM

This summer, over 400 educators gathered at colleges across the state to learn and grow together. Educators investigated and learned more about computational thinking, the intersection of math and art, the principles of drone photography, coding, and many more cross-disciplinary STEM topics. In addition to professional development, each educator received a kit of instructional materials unique to the strand they participated in, allowing them to implement what they learned into their own classrooms. All Idaho educators are encouraged to utilize the i-STEM Resource Libraries, a collection of STEM tools, kits, equipment, and resources that are available to be checked out and utilized in learning spaces and educational programs free of charge. To explore the strands that educators participated in this year and access the i-STEM Resource Libraries, please [visit the i-STEM webpage](#).

Externships

Thanks to a generous grant through Micron and the Workforce Development Council, the Externship program had a booming year with 97 educators completing summer externships across Idaho. These educators were matched with industry partners and non-profit organizations to strengthen the connection between their schools and communities. Each extern received a \$5,000 stipend and completed a 200-hour work-based learning experience with their matched organization. The projects completed this year varied from the summer camp to the construction site to the laboratory, and many places in between. To read the experiences of this year's externs and the externs of years past, please [visit the Extern Archive](#).

The Externship program will be back next year! Applications will open in early January, 2025. For more information on participation in the Externship Program—either as an educator or as an industry host—please [contact Halle Fultz](#).



From Our Partners

ISAS (Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars)

The Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars (ISAS) program is a unique and competitive opportunity for high school juniors in Idaho. It offers an online, NASA-developed course focused on space exploration, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and their connection to Idaho's academic standards. The program is designed to be both challenging and rewarding, aiming to build students' knowledge and interest in STEM fields.

Additionally, students can earn high school science credit or dual credit through Boise State University. Students who excel in the course may be invited to participate in a week-long Summer Academy at Boise State University and a trip to a NASA affiliated facility, where they can engage in firsthand activities and a simulated mission to Mars. Applications for the 2025 season opened on the 21st of August, 2024. Applications close in Mid-October, the course runs January through May, and the summer events and academies take place in July.

Learning Blade

Learning Blade is happy to announce its 3 year contract renewal in Idaho provided by the Idaho STEM Action Center.

Learning Blade offers a contextualized learning experience that brings STEM subjects to life and meets career exploration and computer science requirements in Idaho. This resource is a system of interactive online lessons, teacher lesson plans, and printable at-home activities for 5th to 9th graders, where students learn about high-demand STEM, CTE and Computer Science careers while reviewing academics. Students can use 400+ online lessons in human-centered "Missions" or stories to explore exciting careers aligned to state standards. Teachers also have access to the dozens of lesson plans that support innovative project-based learning and classroom activities using common materials.

Learning Blade also includes a 20-hour "Intro to Coding" course and a brand new "Intro to AI" module.

Supported through Idaho STEM Action Center funding, Learning Blade is FREE to all Idaho educators!

[Sign Up for Your Fully Funded Account!](#)

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