



Idaho STEM Ecosystem Mid-Year Report

July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

Executive Summary

Overview

The Idaho STEM Ecosystem (EcosySTEM) continues to advance STEM education, workforce development, and industry engagement across Idaho. Through strategic partnerships, expanded programming, and targeted outreach, the EcosySTEM fosters opportunities for students, educators, and communities. This report outlines key activities, progress, and impact from the first half of FY2025.

Key Accomplishments

Expanding Awareness and Access

- **Statewide Engagement:** The EcosySTEM actively participated in over 60 partner organizations and 86 individuals through Idaho Business for Education (IBE) events and board meetings.
- **Community Engagement:** Attended and led key regional and national STEM events, including STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice Annual Convening and LEAD STEM meetings, Idaho Out of School Network and Think-Make-Create Lab trainings, and national STEMx meetings.
- **Conferences & Presentations:** Hosted, attended, and exhibited at over 15 conferences, including the Full STEAM Ahead, Idaho Association of School Administrators, National 4H, and Idaho School Board Association.
- **Community Platform Growth:** The online Community Platform reached 1,014 users, with 812 activated members with significant increase in engagement since the launch of the platform.

Aligning STEM Education with Workforce Needs

- **Industry and Workforce Partnerships:** Dedicated 220+ hours to meetings with industry, education, and community partners to identify workforce gaps and align education with job market needs.
- **Professional Development:** Launched new AI Lesson Planning Platform Workshops partnering with a Boise-based company, with 90 registrations and 30 active participants. Collaboration with the University of Idaho Continuing Adult Professional Development to offer professional development credit for AI workshops.

Programmatic Updates

- **EcosySTEM Hubs:** Regional hubs continued expanding engagement and supporting educators and industry partners.
- **Idaho Exhibition of Ideas (IDX):** Preparing for the 2025 showcases with four regional competitions focused on Agricultural Sciences.

- Idaho Science and Engineering Fair (IDSEF): Increased outreach to re-engage educators, introduced \$500 teacher stipends (matched by INL in Eastern Idaho), and expanded student support resources.
- Idaho EcosySTEM Student Ambassador Program (IESA). Programmatic features include:
 - STEM Projects that positively impact their classroom, school, or community.
 - Leadership Interviews with local industry professionals.
 - Industry Tours to expand their understanding of STEM career opportunities in their community and beyond.

Grants and Funding Impact

- Grant Support & Awards: The EcosySTEM awarded \$141,213.22 in FY25, supporting 59 projects out of 78 applications.
- Increased Accessibility & Impact:
 - Final reports from two rounds of grants supplied in 2023 demonstrated the following impact:
 - Directly impacted 11,452 students, 487 educators, and 2,786 community members.
 - Indirectly impacted an additional 20,527 students, 496 educators, and 10,485 community members.
- Sponsorship & Funding Initiatives:
 - \$100,017 in WDC Industry Sector Grant reimbursements for outreach, programming, and rural regional grants.
 - Secured a \$5,000 Bews Foundation grant for IDSEF.
 - Pending application for a \$150,000 Digital Access Grant and \$15,000 to support the Community Platform from INL.

Sustainability and Future Goals

- Strategic Planning and Oversight: Strengthened statewide and regional advisory committees, ensuring local voices shape the EcosySTEM's direction while prioritizing sustainability and community engagement.
- Best Practices & National Collaborations:
 - Active participation in STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice (SLECoP), Beyond 100K, and the STEM Opportunity Alliance.
- Data-Driven Decision Making: Partnership with independent contractor to conduct a statewide two-year program evaluation, including surveys and focus groups.

Conclusion

The Idaho STEM Ecosystem continues to expand its impact, strengthen partnerships, and enhance STEM education alignment with workforce needs. The mid-year results reflect a highly engaged network, strategic growth, and measurable outcomes in student and educator engagement. With a strong commitment to expanding partnerships and supporting Idaho communities, the EcosySTEM is on track to exceed expectations for the remainder of FY2025.