

Minnesota STEM Ecosystem: Quarterly Report Summary March 2026

The first quarter of 2026 marked a major transition for the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem—from planning and infrastructure development into full statewide implementation of the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem Partnership Grant Program. During this period, the Ecosystem successfully launched funded programs, activated regional STEM coordinators, strengthened public-private partnerships, and supported high-quality STEM learning opportunities for youth and educators across Minnesota.

Milestones & Highlights

Advisory Council. Convened the quarterly Advisory Council meeting where members adopted statewide performance indicators and welcomed new representation from Ramsey County, strengthening statewide leadership and accountability.

Partnership Grantee Onboarding. Hosted the first statewide onboarding meeting for all Partnership Grantees and Regional STEM Coordinators as an introduction one another and the best practices used throughout the Partnership Grant program focused on strengthening collaboration, and continuous improvement across funded projects.

Program Administration. The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem finalized contracts with all Partnership Grant recipients and regional partners, launched reporting and accountability systems, and held onboarding sessions to prepare grantees for implementation. **Key systems developed included:**

- Standardized monthly invoicing templates
 - Quarterly reporting tools aligned with DEED requirements
 - Communications and branding resources for all grantees
 - Ongoing technical assistance and compliance support
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Regional STEM Coordination Model Activated

A cornerstone of the Ecosystem's statewide strategy is the Regional STEM Coordinator model, including Coordinators based in Southern Minnesota, West/Northwest Minnesota, and Northeast Minnesota began active implementation. Highlights Included:

Southern Minnesota. Hosted educator convenings and STEM Forward events; launched STEM Lending Library platform; participated in Aviation Career Day serving 147 students at Rochester International Airport and expanded partnerships with Xcel Energy, MnDOT Aviation, and Winona State University.

West/Northwest Minnesota. Expanded Makerspace and Lending Library access; planned Young Writers & STEM Conference and led educator professional development focused on AI integration and emerging technologies.

Northeast Minnesota. Launched NESC STEM Connect webpage and outreach systems; developed district STEM needs assessments and strengthened alignment among STEM, CTE, and Computer Science partners.

This regional model ensures that STEM programming reflects local workforce needs while expanding access in Greater Minnesota.



Q1 Partnership Grant Program Highlights

Strengthening Workforce Pathways & Advancing Minnesota's Innovation Economy

During the first quarter, **six Partnership Grant projects were actively delivering innovative STEM learning and workforce development opportunities across Minnesota.** Programs engaged youth, educators, employers, higher education institutions, and community partners through hands-on STEM experiences, career exploration, educator professional development, and authentic work-based learning aligned with Minnesota's workforce priorities.

Minnesota FFA – Technology Empowered Careers Conference

- Students from across Minnesota (24 high school chapters) gathered for the TEC conference to engage with more than 50 industry professionals, learning about career pathways in agri-science.
- Students also participated in hands-on learning with tours of Toro and Zeigler CAT facilities.

30,000 Feet

- Young people participated in hands-on learning through career visits to Dunwoody College and HealthPartners.
- Saint Paul youth also engaged in VR, coding, and technical workforce training, some receiving certifications.

Minnesota HOSA- FHP (Future Health Professionals)

- More than 1000 students gathered for the State Leadership and Technical Skill conference.
- The “mini-grant” supported approximately 600 medical certifications earned by the students in fields like Phlebotomy, Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and Nursing Assisting through competitive events.
- Students also engaged with 40 career-resource exhibitors and 90+ industry volunteers.

Twin Cities PBS

- TPT led two training sessions for metro-based afterschool educators; along with an additional session for Dakota County librarians specializing in youth programming.
- In preparation for the afterschool Learn Academies program, 2 new learning modules were created for educators with STEM themes. In addition, 1800 learning kits were prepared including all physical materials needed for educators to employ the activities with youth.
- TPT currently has 34 library family STEM events scheduled for the summer.

Southeast Service Cooperative

- Drone pilots launched in schools; physics students were introduced to using sensors and data collection through drone use activities.
- AI/Computer Science taskforce recruitment initiated. Targeted outreach was conducted across the region to raise awareness and encourage broad participation.

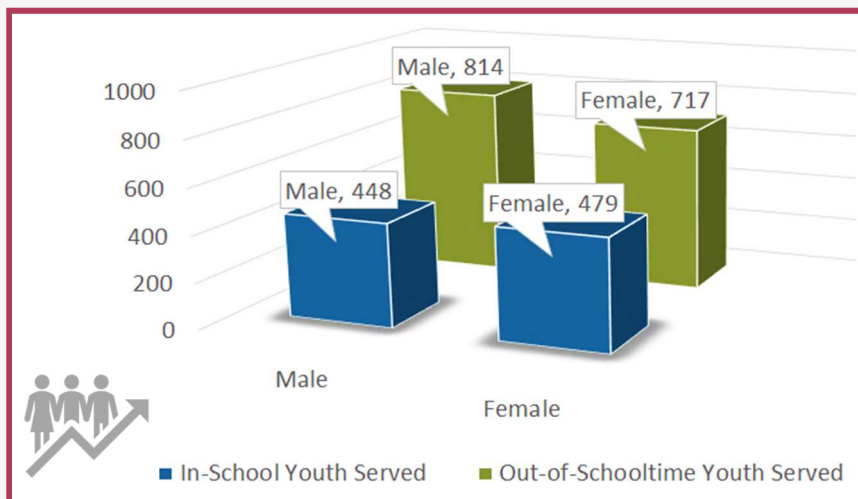
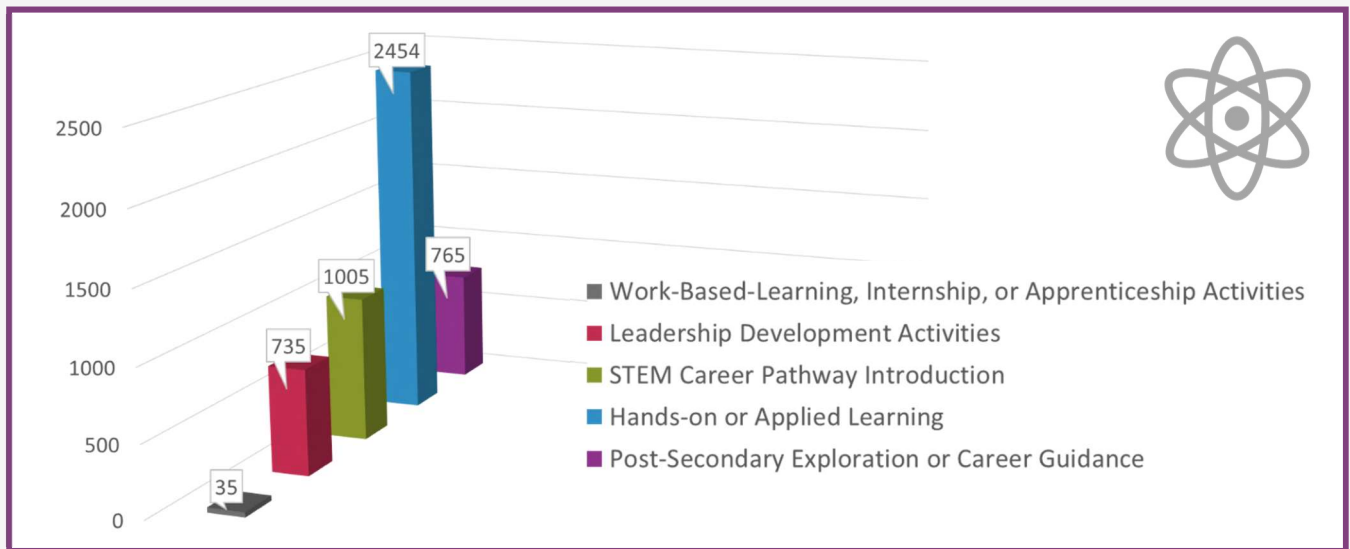
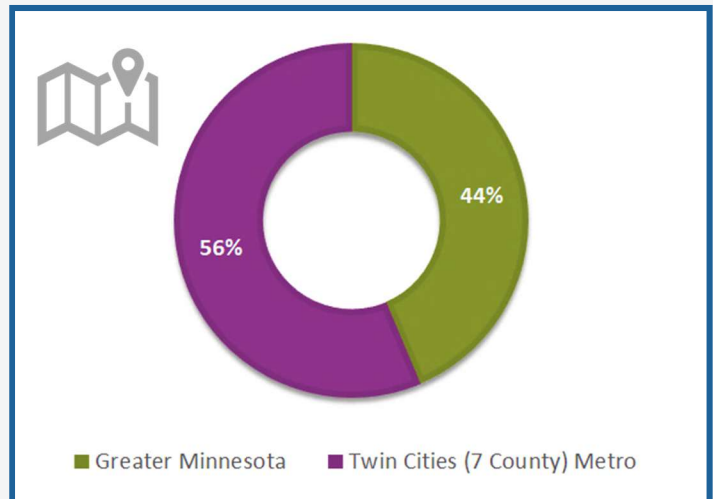
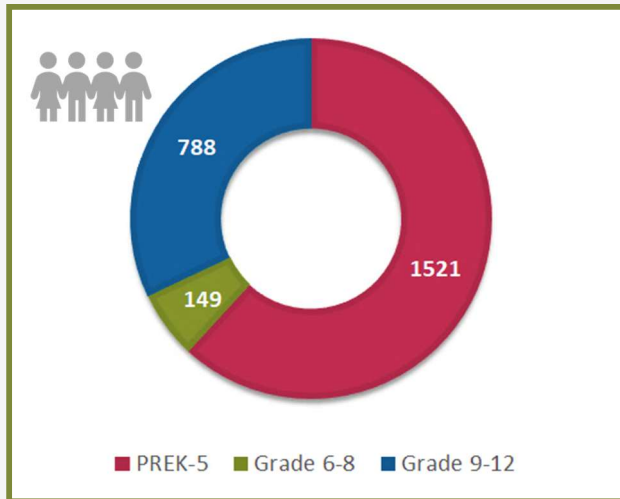
The Works Museum

- Strengthen partnerships with the University of Minnesota Nano Center, Center for Sustainable Polymers and International Institute for Biosensing.
- Initiated planning of hands-on Nano Center STEM workshop for Blooming Prairie STEM Day.



Q1 By the Numbers

2,458 Youth Served, Statewide

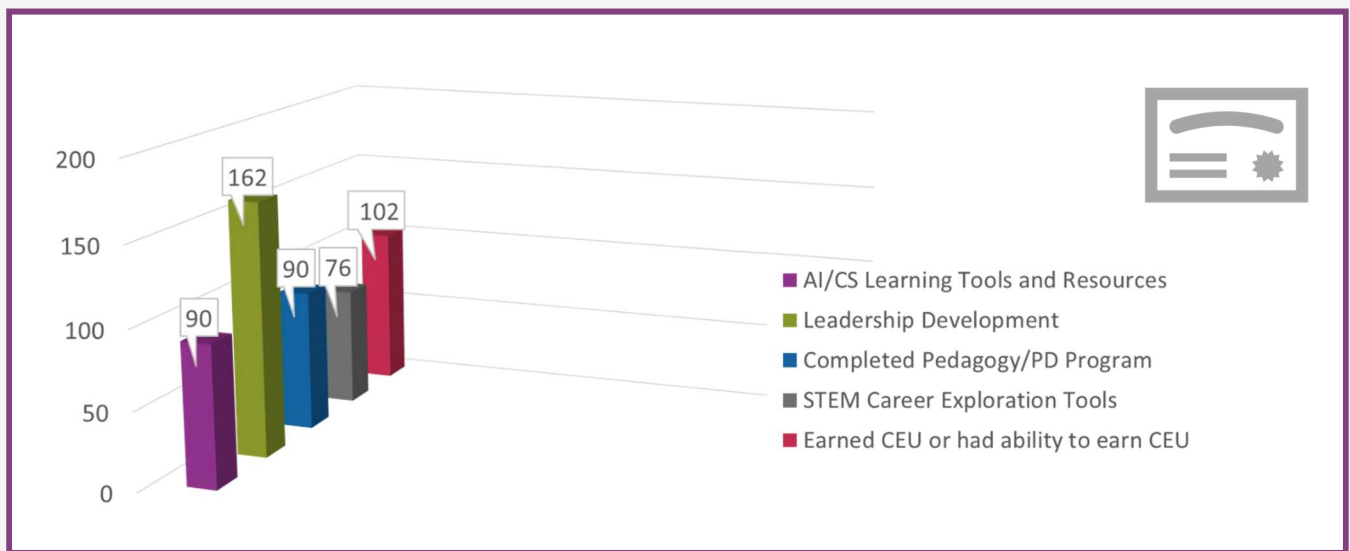
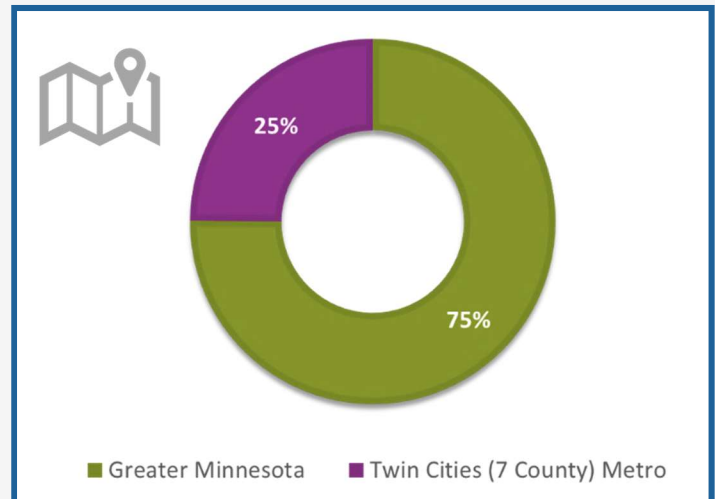
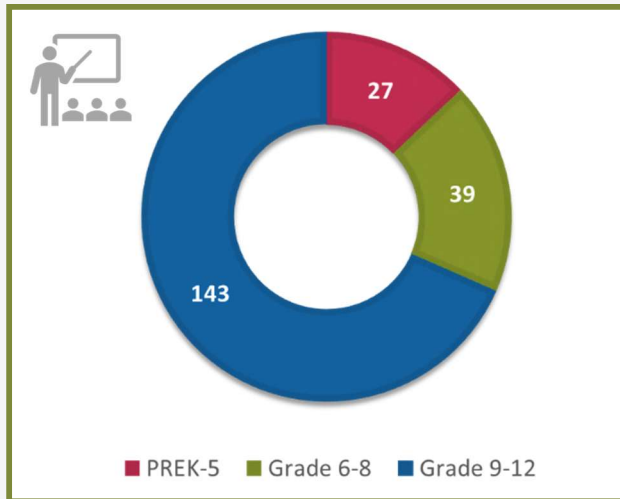


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Q1 By the Numbers

209 Educators Served, Statewide



“Any time we can bring real world examples into the classroom is a win for me. The Drone Project has taken my students to another level of learning. Students were able to see a lot of great current world examples of how drones are beginning to be used for so many different things. Having students get a taste of being a drone pilot is such a neat experience and I was so glad we could provide them such a great experience.”

-Stewartville Middle School Teacher



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