

2026 MINNESOTA STEM CONVENING

Connecting Education. Industry. Community.

Welcome & Greetings

Woodlands C

Welcome, Emily Saed, Director, MN STEM Ecosystem

Greetings, Kari Denissen, Executive Director of Ignite Afterschool and CoChairperson, Minnesota Advisory Council for STEM Learning and Workforce Development

Networking

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Collaboration: Connecting Ideas. Creating Partnerships. Inspiring Action.

Breakout Session

Woodlands A & B

Lean Leader: Resource Rumble presented by Jason Bruns, Minnesota State Engineering and Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence

Building Career and Education Pathways in Semiconductors from K-Grey presented by Claire Dietz, Minnesota Nano Center, University of Minnesota

Breakout Session

Woodlands A & B

STEM in Motion: Creating a Regional Drone Program presented by Vic Dreier, Southeast Service Cooperative

Connecting STEM in Northeast Minnesota, presented by Paul Schonfeld, Northern Lights Collaborative, University of Minnesota and Anne Parish, Duluth Community Schools Collaborative

Main Session

Woodlands C

Welcome to the Future: An Introduction to the Aerospace Workforce Hub, presented by Shawn Haag, Minnesota State Transportation Center of Excellence

Legislative Update: Investing in STEM featuring Cap O'Rourke, O'Rourke Consulting

Closing & Reflection

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STEM Without Boundaries: Moving Forward Together.

RAFFLE: Gift Cards, STEM Swag and more!





Learning Sessions

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm

Room: Woodlands A

Lean Leader Lab: Resource Rumble presented by Jason Bruns, Minnesota State Engineering and Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence

Participants will experience an interactive, classroom-ready leadership activity based on LEAN manufacturing principles. The activity will challenge participants to apply teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and continuous-improvement skills that mirror competencies valued in today's engineering and manufacturing workplaces.

Room: Woodlands B

Building Career and Education Pathways in Semiconductors from K-Grey presented by Claire Dietz, Minnesota Nano Center, University of Minnesota

This session will explore how we can build meaningful career and education pathways in the semiconductor industry starting as early as elementary school. It will highlight strategies for connecting K–12 students to semiconductor careers through hands-on learning, industry partnerships, and intentional pathways that help students see themselves as the engineers and innovators of tomorrow.

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm

Room: Woodlands A

STEM in Motion: Creating a Regional Drone Program presented by Vic Dreier, Southeast Service Cooperative

Participants will learn firsthand how the Southeast Service Cooperative incorporated drones into their STEM lending library. Including developing the pilot program, providing professional development to educators that support real world applications and creating classroom experiences at both the middle school and high school levels!

Room: Woodlands B

Connecting STEM in Northeast Minnesota presented by Paul Schonfeld, Northern Lights Collaborative, University of Minnesota and Anne Parish, Duluth Community Schools Collaborative

Participants will learn strategies to develop regional STEM networks through the success of the Informal Computer Science Learning Network in Duluth. Their mission driven work includes facilitating community-building events and raising awareness about the diverse and creative ways computer science is used in art, industry, and informal learning.

3:00 pm – 3:50 pm

Room: Woodlands C

Our **main session** features an **Introduction to the Aerospace Workforce Hub**, presented by Shawn Haag, Minnesota State Transportation Center of Excellence. Shawn will introduce Minnesota's new statewide effort to connect high school education, colleges, employers, to the Minnesota Aerospace Skilled Technical Workforce State Hub, one of only seven in the nation, and NASA resources to build accessible pathways into aerospace careers.

AND the Legislative Update, with Cap O'Rourke, O'Rourke Consulting. Cap will provide an overview of what we can potentially expect in the upcoming session and help us understand how we can advocate for continued public investment in STEM Learning and Workforce Development.