

Minnesota STEM Convening Brings Education and Community Partners Together to Strengthen STEM Learning and Workforce Pathways

WOODBURY, Minn. — October 27, 2026 — The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem brought together educators, nonprofit leaders, higher education representatives, and regional Service Cooperative partners on October 26 for the 2026 Minnesota STEM Convening, a statewide gathering focused on expanding STEM learning opportunities and strengthening connections between education, industry, and communities.

Held in Woodbury under the theme **“Connecting Education. Industry. Community.”**, the convening provided opportunities for professional learning, networking, and collaboration around innovative STEM education practices and emerging workforce needs. The event reflected the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem's commitment to building a more connected and accessible STEM learning landscape through cross-sector partnerships and regional collaboration.

“Meaningful STEM learning happens when educators, industry partners, and community organizations work together,” said Emily Saed, Director of the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem. “This convening created space for people to share what's working, learn from one another, and build relationships that can lead to new opportunities for students and educators across Minnesota.”

Exploring Innovation and Emerging Workforce Pathways. Attendees participated in interactive breakout sessions highlighting practical strategies for connecting STEM education with real-world applications and future careers.

- **Lean Leader Lab: Resource Rumble**, presented by the Minnesota State Engineering and Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence, introduced a hands-on activity demonstrating teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and continuous improvement—skills valued across manufacturing and engineering workplaces.
- **Building Career and Education Pathways in Semiconductors from K-Grey**, presented by the University of Minnesota's Minnesota Nano Center, explored how early STEM experiences, educational partnerships, and career-connected learning can help students discover opportunities in the growing semiconductor industry.
- **STEM in Motion: Creating a Regional Drone Program**, presented by Southeast Service Cooperative, highlighted the development of a regional drone lending library and strategies for helping educators bring drone technology and real-world applications into middle and high school classrooms.
- **Connecting STEM in Northeast Minnesota**, presented by Northern Lights Collaborative at the University of Minnesota and the Duluth Community Schools Collaborative, shared lessons from the Informal Computer Science Learning Network in Duluth. Their work demonstrates how regional partnerships can connect computer science with art, industry, and informal learning opportunities.

The afternoon's main session introduced **Minnesota's Aerospace Skilled Technical Workforce State Hub**, a statewide effort to connect high schools, colleges, employers, and NASA resources to expand access to aerospace education and career pathways. The Minnesota State Transportation Center of Excellence discussed the initiative and its potential to strengthen Minnesota's aerospace workforce pipeline. The convening also featured a legislative update from O'Rourke Consulting, highlighting **the importance of continued public investment in STEM learning and workforce development**.

Throughout the event, participants connected with colleagues from across Minnesota, shared promising practices, and explored opportunities to collaborate across organizations and regions. The gathering concluded with a reflection on **“STEM Without Boundaries: Moving Forward Together,”** reinforcing a shared commitment to collaboration and continued progress.