Minnesota STEM Ecosystem: Quarterly Report Summary
October 2026

During the third quarter of 2026, the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem continued to strengthen its role as a statewide convener and coordinating network, connecting education, industry, workforce development, higher education, nonprofit organizations, and regional partners to expand STEM learning and workforce opportunities across Minnesota.

Significant progress was made in emerging technology education, including artificial intelligence, computer science, microelectronics, semiconductors, drones, and robotics. At the same time, programs connected students and educators with real-world industry experiences in manufacturing, agriculture, biomedical research, aviation, and other high-demand career fields.

Milestones & Highlights

Partnership Grant Oversight and Accountability. Continued implementation of the statewide Partnership Grant Program, strengthening financial stewardship, grant monitoring, and technical assistance. The Ecosystem initiated formal monitoring activities, provided grantees with monitoring guidance and documentation resources, and expanded public access to grant information, awards, reporting processes, and quarterly summaries through the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem website.

Community of Practice. Hosted the second statewide Partnership Grant Community of Practice on July 30, bringing together grantees and Regional STEM Coordinators for collaborative learning and resource sharing. Program spotlights focused on educator training and externships and the development of STEM Lending Libraries, highlighting opportunities to share successful models across regions.

Microelectronics and Semiconductor Education. Supported implementation of *Microelectronics in the Classroom*, a collaborative initiative with the Minnesota State Engineering and Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence and industry partners Seagate and Polar. Educators participated in intensive technical training during August, followed by industry micro-externship experiences. The initiative connected emerging technology instruction, workplace exposure, and classroom resources to help educators introduce students to semiconductor career pathways.

Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science. Expanded educator access to AI and computer science learning through statewide and regional partnerships. The August 3 MN+CS Conference, hosted by Raspberry Pi Foundation at Dunwoody College of Technology, featured 16 learning sessions across four tracks. Additional AI initiatives included the Science Museum of Minnesota's first AI Foundations for Educators series and continued development of a regional AI Literacy Framework in Southeast Minnesota.

Shared STEM Learning Infrastructure. Advanced the STEM Lending Library model through collaboration among Minnesota Service Cooperatives, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and Minnesota State Centers of Excellence. Regional partners continued developing and implementing strategies designed to make emerging technologies more accessible to schools and educators, particularly in Greater Minnesota.

Statewide Partnerships and Convening Preparation. Strengthened relationships supporting robotics and aerospace career pathways. Planning also advanced for the October Minnesota STEM Convening and the *Innovate with AI* community event in Northeast Minnesota. These events were scheduled for the following quarter.

Regional STEM Coordination

Regional STEM Coordinators continued connecting statewide initiatives with local educators, employers, and community partners. Based within Minnesota Service Cooperatives, this model supports place-based STEM programming that reflects regional workforce needs while reducing barriers to participation across Greater Minnesota.

Southern Minnesota. Expanded career-connected STEM learning through regional partnerships, educator engagement, and shared technology resources. The STEM in Motion drone lending initiative provided classroom access to equipment and curriculum, while STEM Forward continued connecting educators with industry and emerging technology opportunities. Regional activities included STEM Day at the Olmsted County Fair, Career Quest, and partnerships supporting educator learning and student career exploration.

West/Northwest Minnesota. Lakes Country Service Cooperative continued expanding hands-on STEM access through its Makerspace Lending Library and regional events. Highlights included STEM Day at the Otter Tail County Fair and the inaugural Science and Nature Conference in Fergus Falls, which provided hands-on learning experiences for 640 fourth- and fifth-grade students. Demand exceeded available capacity, with six additional schools placed on a waiting list.

Northeast Minnesota. Strengthened regional STEM and computer science networks through educator outreach, partnerships, and shared learning resources. Activities included development of energy-focused STEM lending resources, regional needs assessment, collaboration with Career and Technical Education partners, and preparation for emerging technology learning opportunities. These efforts continued building connections among schools, higher education, community organizations, and industry across northeastern Minnesota.

Q3 Partnership Grant Program Highlights
Strengthening Workforce Pathways & Advancing Minnesota's Innovation Economy

During the third quarter, Partnership Grant recipients advanced STEM learning and workforce development through a combination of direct student experiences, educator training, industry engagement, and development of resources for future implementation.

Programs served learners across multiple grade levels and educational settings, from elementary classrooms and afterschool programs to high school internships and educator-industry externships. Collectively, these activities strengthened the connections among STEM exploration, technical skill development, and Minnesota's workforce priorities.

Educator Professional Development

Southeast Service Cooperative. Advanced its regional AI Literacy Framework through a 15-member taskforce representing education, higher education, and industry. Monthly meetings explored district readiness, classroom applications, and workforce uses of AI, including direct engagement with Mayo Clinic professionals. The initiative is developing a flexible approach to AI literacy responsive to varying levels of readiness among school districts.

Science Museum of Minnesota. Launched its *AI Foundations for Educators* professional development series in August. The six-hour virtual training introduced foundational AI concepts, machine learning, generative AI, and elementary classroom applications. The Museum also completed instructional resources and facilitation materials to support future learning opportunities for classroom and out-of-school-time educators.

Raspberry Pi Foundation. Delivered the MN+CS Conference on August 3, providing professional development in computer science, artificial intelligence, semiconductor concepts, digital technologies, and classroom instruction. Partnership Grant support helped reduce financial barriers through educator stipends, while the conference strengthened connections among educators, higher education, and technology organizations.

SciMathMN. Advanced redevelopment of the statewide STEM Teacher Center through four educator listening sessions and 227 survey responses. Educator input informed initial priorities for standards-aligned resources, including mathematics data literacy and science content addressing the contributions of Minnesota Native American Tribes and engineering practices. Technical preparation also began for modernization of the online resource platform.

Ignite Afterschool. Refined its Career-Connected Learning Community of Practice using findings from an earlier pilot and recruited nine afterschool program sites for a new professional development cohort. The initiative emphasizes sustained learning and collaboration to strengthen how out-of-school-time educators introduce youth to STEM careers. The new cohort was scheduled to begin in October.

Hands-on STEM Learning & Career Exploration

Twin Cities PBS. Delivered 31 summer library STEM events, expanding family learning opportunities into communities in Wright, Sherburne, and Sibley counties. Developed hands-on STEM activities and educator resources for early elementary and afterschool settings, while providing professional development to classroom and afterschool educators. Twenty-five organizations enrolled for upcoming school-year programming.

STARBASE Duluth. Continued delivering inquiry-based STEM experiences for elementary students while expanding programming for middle school learners. A notable milestone was the introduction of STEM career pathways to 50 students in grades 6–8, extending the program's reach into a new age group.

Southeast Service Cooperative — STEM in Motion. Launched its drone lending library for the 2026–27 school year. Three educators used shared drone equipment and curriculum to engage 127 middle and high school students in technology, physics, and mathematics applications. A new partnership with Rochester Community and Technical College's Aviation Program also strengthened connections to postsecondary learning and aviation careers.

High Tech Kids. Advanced robotics education through the launch of the FIRST Tech Challenge season, team grant selection, coach support, and community outreach. FTC teams led robotics demonstrations at Minnesota State Fair STEM Day, introducing visitors to robotics while developing students' leadership and communication skills. High Tech Kids also began exploring a robotics mentor certification pilot with Metro State University.

The Works Museum. Advanced its STEM Career Connections initiative by confirming school partnerships, recruiting industry volunteers, and refining curriculum and educator resources. The developing model connects elementary students with local STEM professionals through engineering activities, family engagement, and career exploration. Initial school-based implementation was scheduled for the following quarter.

Work-based Learning & Workforce Engagement

Minnesota FFA. Connected 96 students from seven schools with agricultural technology and career pathways through AgriTech Field Days. Students explored precision agriculture, autonomous equipment, drones, and agricultural research. The organization also advanced its statewide drone education initiative, selecting 11 schools to receive classroom drone packages and providing educator training.

30,000 Feet. Provided technology-based career learning through coding, AI prompting, digital design, and content creation at its Saint Paul Arts and Tech Center. The program reported serving 90 students across its summer and alternative-school programming period, with 54 completing coding and AI projects. Through alternative education partnerships, 50 students earned academic credit, and six students were reported to have entered employment.

Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center. Completed six-week summer internships for 18 youth and young adults across three Science Museum of Minnesota departments. Interns gained workplace experience in exhibit fabrication, information technology, AI applications, data analytics, marketing, and communications. Projects combined technical learning, professional mentorship, and opportunities to present and apply workplace skills.

Southeast Service Cooperative — Micro-Internships. Connected nine high school students from five Southeast Minnesota school districts with project-based internships involving regional employers. Students gained exposure to biomedical research, agricultural science, healthcare technology, and communications. All nine completed program objectives, and eight reported increased interest in pursuing a STEM career.

Engineering and Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence. In cooperation with **ARC / Marvin Manufacturing, completed** the *Manufacturing Your Success* summer internship program in Warroad, combining paid manufacturing employment with technical instruction, professional mentorship, and career exploration. All 12 participating students remained through the program's conclusion, and eight earned the full Manufacturing Skill Standards Council Certified Production Technician credential. The program also supported students in exploring postsecondary education and continued employment opportunities.

Minnesota Diversified Industries. Continued development of its Unified Work initiative, building on immersive virtual reality career exploration experiences introduced earlier in the grant period. The program is designed to help youth with disabilities explore technical careers and workplace environments. *No new grant expenditures were invoiced during Q3.*

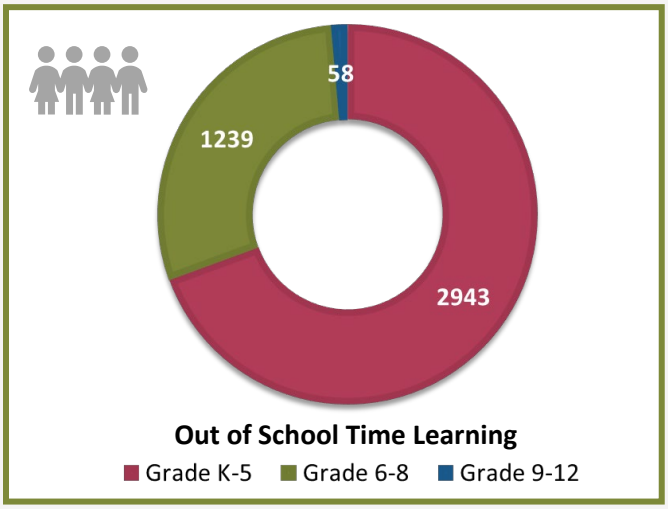
Looking Ahead

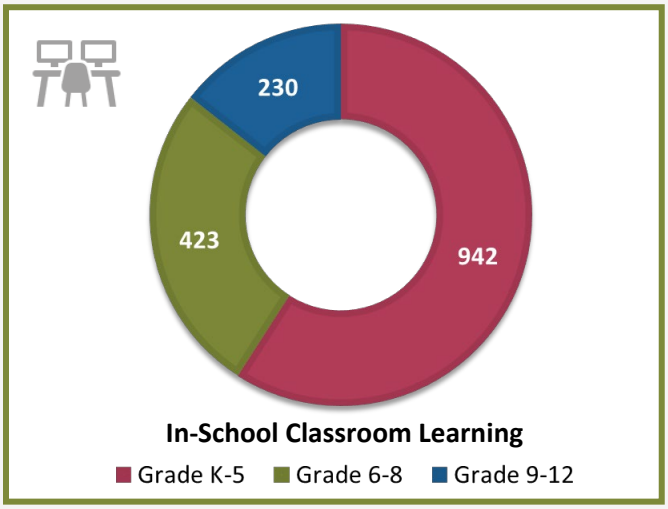
The third quarter demonstrated continued progress in translating statewide partnerships into regional and classroom-level opportunities. Programs increasingly combined technical learning with direct industry exposure, while shared equipment, educator resources, and regional networks helped reduce barriers to participation.

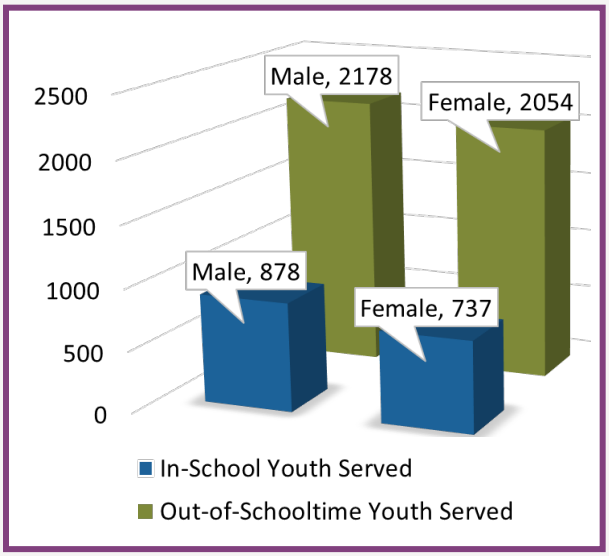
Several initiatives also established foundations for future expansion, including STEM Lending Libraries, educator externship models, AI literacy resources, robotics mentorship, and career-connected learning in afterschool settings.

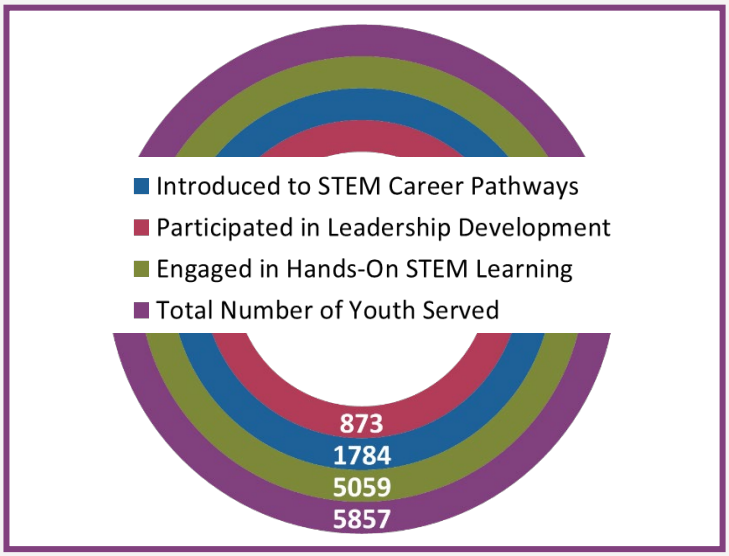
Q3 By the Numbers

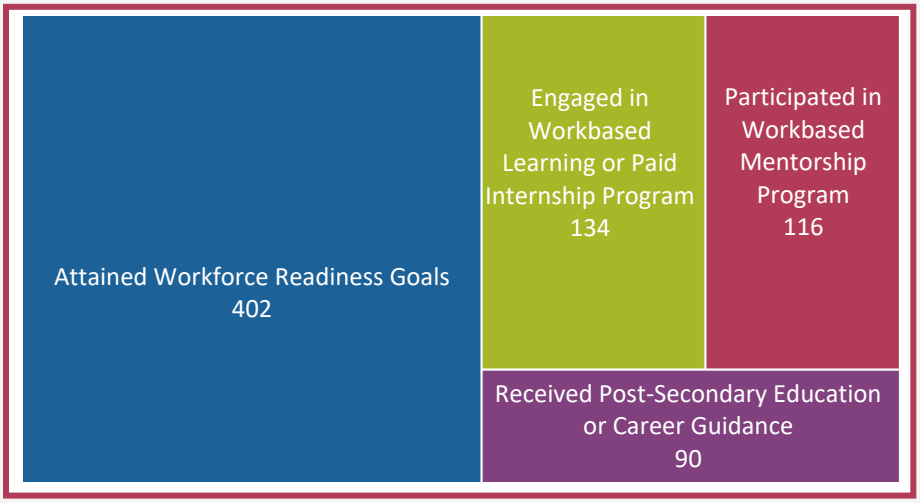
5,857 Youth Served, Statewide

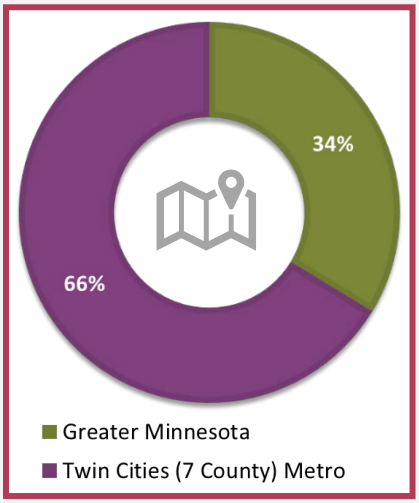






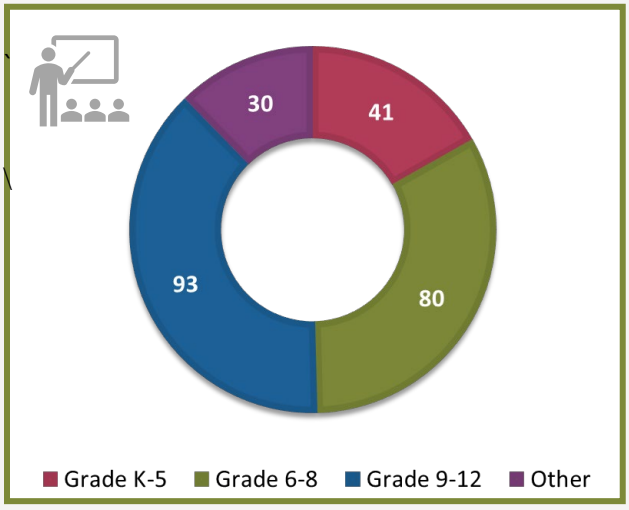


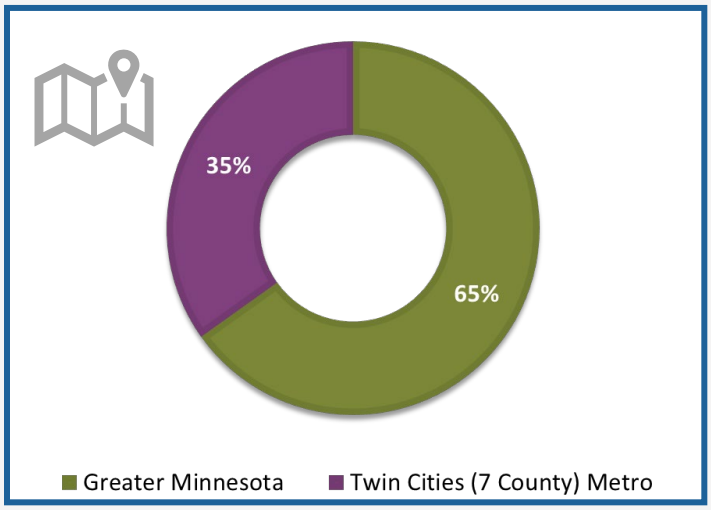


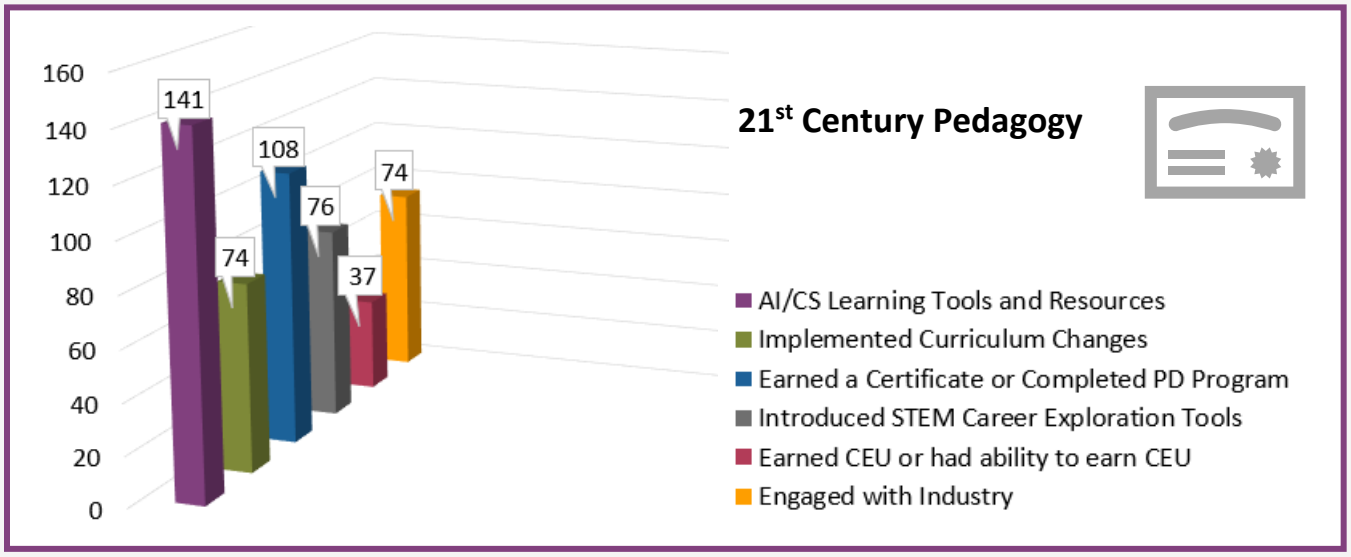


Q3 By the Numbers

244 Educators Served, Statewide







Minnesota Educators Bring Semiconductor and Microelectronics Learning into the Classroom



Organized by the Minnesota State Engineering & Applied Manufacturing Center of Excellence, with support from Seagate, Polar Semiconductor, and the Minnesota Nano Center, the Microelectronics Mini-Externship & Curriculum Training combined hands-on, industry-informed learning with direct exposure to Minnesota industries using semiconductor and microelectronics technologies. **Minnesota is one of only two states invited to participate in the pilot developing curriculum and the only state pairing the curriculum with educator industry externships.**