

Engaging Families

The path to confidence in STEM learning starts with stoking a sense of curiosity and a willingness to try new things.

To encourage families to explore hands-on learning together, in 2021 Kansas City participated for the first time in Remake Learning Days Across America, the nation's largest festival of innovative learning. From May 1-10, nearly 70 organizations offered 100+ learning events and activities to the KC community, engaging caregivers, parents and kids. Kansas City was one of 17 regions participating in the national campaign, which generated more than 1,000 learning experiences for families around the country.

Spearheaded locally by the KC STEM Alliance with support from The DeBruce Foundation, the activities spanned six learning themes.



By the Numbers

- 60 local organizations offered 100+ activities.
- 25 organizations received mini grants to host 28 events serving 1,500+.
- 8 teams entered Teen Design Challenge, with 3 earning internships to help bring event ideas to life. This yielded 4 well-attended events.
- 5 "try this at home" activities aired on KSHB.

[WATCH the recap video >](#)

[SIGN UP to help plan #RemakeDaysKC 2022 >](#)

Aligning with Regional Education/Workforce Initiatives

Regional partners are working together to help young people gain valuable work skills and prepare for future work and learning.

Real World Learning



Real World Learning is a Kansas City community initiative with the goal of ensuring every student is prepared for future learning and work—graduating with a diploma *plus* one or more experiences valued by employers and higher education.

With support from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 30+ school districts are working on transforming the high school experience with built-in internships, engaging experiences, expanded access to college credit courses and entrepreneurial experiences. Through immersive experiences, real-world projects and internships across a multitude of interests, learners gain skills to navigate what comes next—and employers help share and prepare today's students to become the talent of tomorrow.

[DOWNLOAD a one-page overview >](#)

[ACCESS all RWL resources >](#)

Agilities & Essential Skills

Students can use The DeBruce Foundation's Agile Work Profiler and Career Explorer Tools to explore occupations and expand career pathways. Now, new research sponsored by the foundation offers additional guidance for helping students develop the essential skills needed for success across all jobs.

Essential Skills Report

The Young Professionals Study, led by a coalition of education and industry partners, builds on work from KC Rising around Common Sector Competencies—the 24 professional skills found in all work activities. The study asked young professionals to identify the six most important skills, specified as **Essential Skills**, and evaluated their perception of:

- The importance of each Essential Skill when first starting a career,
- How prepared they were in each skill, and the related gaps in that preparation; as well as
- The most influential high school and college experiences that form these skills.

A key finding: **extracurricular activities** were cited as the most influential experience for building **Essential Skills**, especially **Communication, Collaboration and Executive Function**. Out-of-school STEM partners can play a significant role in helping students gain these Essential Skills.

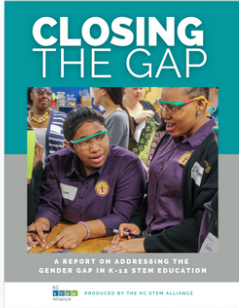
[DOWNLOAD the full Essential Skills report >](#)

[REGISTER for free workshops to learn how to leverage the Agilities and Essential Skills in your programming >](#)

Broadening Participation in STEM

Building a diverse and innovative STEM workforce starts with ensuring all students have access to quality STEM experiences.

Closing the Gender Gap



In early 2021, the KC STEM Alliance released a report on the K-12 STEM education gender gap based on a series of focus group conversations with 25 girls and women.

Although work to reach girls with STEM opportunities is progressing, the report noted that significant socio-economic, racial and environmental barriers remain, and that to make meaningful progress will require a community-based approach.

Since then, a number of partners passionate about this work have begun meeting monthly in a work group led by KC STEM Alliance Program Consultant Marian McClellan. They are sharing best practices, raising awareness and leveraging respective networks to reach more girls with quality STEM experiences and mentors.

[WATCH the webinar series >](#)

[READ the report >](#)

[SIGN UP for work group information >](#)

Closing the Racial Gap

All students deserve high quality, equitable and inclusive STEM learning experiences, both in and out of school. However, a significant racial gap exists both in STEM professions and in learning spaces.

Closing that gap requires strategic and intentional change at all levels. In 2021, that included:

- Work to diversify the STEM Connect-KC leadership team;
- The KC STEM Alliance's hiring of Christina Chandler as a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Specialist.
- A five-part webinar series moderated by the Kansas City Public Library's Andrea Ellis. The series included 20 STEM professionals, educators and students, whose shared experiences will help inform a report and action plan for the community.

[WATCH the webinar series >](#)

[SIGN UP for work group information >](#)

Measuring Impact: Regional Data

Every learning opportunity a student experiences has data attached. Linking that data can tell the stories of program effectiveness and student achievement in the classroom and beyond.

Student success in school, and ultimately in the workforce, relies on learning key skills and knowledge both in school and out of school. However, capturing the myriad pathways of student experiences from education to the workplace is extremely challenging. It requires intentional strategies to capture, share, link and evaluate key data points.

Partners in the region are looking at ways to put systems and partnerships in place to create a robust STEM data dashboard that can tell the story of STEM education in Kansas City.

Like other communities, our goal is to use this data to assess student achievement and persistence; identify gaps; and look for policies and strategies that work, especially for under-represented students of color.

Building on work started by a STEM Connect-KC work group, a broader professional learning community kicks off Sept. 15 with a panel discussion featuring regional leaders in this work. Join this Zoom session to dive into why and how the data we capture can be put to work in powerful ways that improve individual programs, empower students and families, and deepen our understanding of overall ecosystem effectiveness. To be successful in telling the full story of student achievement requires broad engagement of organizations of *all* sizes and missions.

[REGISTER for the panel discussion >](#)

[SIGN UP for work group information >](#)

www.kcstem.info/connect

#STEMinKC