



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**December 5, 2018**

**NATIONAL EXPERTS: FORMING STEM ECOSYSTEMS IS TOP PRIORITY**  
**The New Jersey STEM Pathways Network is a strong example of the collaborative work of**  
**the national STEM Learning Ecosystem Community of Practice**

[Chatham, NJ] Acting on recommendations of top national education experts, the federal government Tuesday issued the “*Charting A Course for Success: America’s Strategy for STEM Education*,” listing participation of all Americans in STEM Ecosystems as a top priority.

The federal plan, announced Tuesday at the White House, says STEM Ecosystems are pathways for improving STEM literacy, ensuring a strong workforce and global competitiveness for all, and an important means to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in a thriving STEM workforce.

[The New Jersey STEM Pathways Network](#) (NJSPN) has already implemented the described ecosystem approach to improving STEM education and access for all, with great local success. STEM Ecosystems, including the NJSPN through its four Ecosystems, unite stakeholders from a variety of community-based organizations -- including formal and after-school education, higher education, business, government, philanthropy, and the non-profit sector -- to cultivate, innovate and work for common goals and actions surrounding world-class STEM opportunities for all learners.

Replicating the National STEM Learning Ecosystems model, the NJSPN has fostered the creation of four STEM Learning Ecosystems: the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, the Newark STEAM Coalition, the Liberty STEM Alliance, and the South Jersey STEM & Innovation Partnership. These Ecosystems were established to advance collaboration across educators, business, government and community-based organizations in order to form more integrated cradle-to-career pipelines. Representing six New Jersey counties, the Ecosystems are opportunities to address unique regional challenges, while also providing a space to pilot, scale and replicate work that expands a statewide vision of STEM.

The federal STEM five-year strategic [plan](#), under development for more than a year, is based on input from numerous stakeholders, including educators, business and community leaders, and representatives from all 50 states who attended a June federal STEM Summit hosted by Office of Science Technology and Policy (OSTP) at the White House.

The plan identifies three discrete goals: 1) Building strong foundations for STEM Literacy; 2) Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in STEM and 3) Preparing the STEM Workforce for the Future. The plan identifies methods for achieving the goals with the formation of STEM Ecosystems as the leading strategy.

“This pathway focuses on strengthening existing relationships and developing new connections between educational institutions, employers, and their communities. That means bringing together schools, colleges and universities, libraries, museums, and other community resources to build STEM Ecosystems that broaden and enrich each learner’s educational and career journey,” the report says.

These goals align closely with the work of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network through the foundation of the four regional STEM Learning Ecosystems: the Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance, the Newark STEAM Coalition, the Liberty STEM Alliance, and the South Jersey STEM & Innovation Partnership.

The Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance (Burlington County) is currently in the process of constructing an Innovation and Fabrication Laboratory in Delran High School, providing students, Kindergarten through High School, with hands-on learning tools to build the foundation for future careers in STEM. The ecosystem also hosted STEM and STEAM summer camps, offered to 150 students in grades 3 through 12, which covered key topics in STEM and the arts and aligned with school curriculum.

The Newark STEAM Coalition (Essex County) is supporting foundational summer STEM programming, including Rutgers University Newark’s four-week Geoscience Summer Scholars Institute, which allowed 63 Newark students to participate in hands-on STEM activities that teach them about environmental sustainability in their area.

The Liberty STEM Alliance (Hudson County) has most recently hosted “Hack Hudson,” a one-day mobile app creation competition which challenged 120 students from Jersey City Public Schools and Union City Public Schools to use coding and technology to identify and solve a current problem facing Hudson County, NJ.

The South Jersey STEM & Innovation Partnership (Camden, Cumberland & Salem Counties) has also hosted two mobile app creation competitions (Hack-a-thons) over the past year in Camden and Salem Counties, each challenging teams of high school students in underserved and underrepresented populations to develop technological innovative solutions to real-life challenges of their choosing.

“We are proud that the work of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network and our Ecosystems is receiving national attention as a force behind a prosperous American economy,” said Kim Case, Executive Director of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey and Manager of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network. “This underscores the fact that we’ve been on the right path as we have created successful STEM outcomes by developing, deepening and supporting cross-sector partnerships amongst schools, businesses, and community organizations here in New Jersey.”

Jan Morrison, founder and president of TIES - Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM, which designed and continues to lead the STEM Learning Ecosystems<sup>SM</sup> Community of Practice and who participated in the OSTP Summit, said, “We celebrate the fifty states’ vision and brilliance in focusing this report on the great value of bringing the work of STEM to all through STEM Learning Ecosystems.”

“The design of our communities as STEM Ecosystems ensures that STEM is central to children’s education both in- and out-of-school and that it is inextricably linked to workforce and a lifetime of solving our world’s grandest of challenges.”

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**About the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network**

A strategic public-private alliance, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network was established in 2014 to define and guide a STEM vision for cradle to career pathways in New Jersey. The NJSPN is chaired by Laura Overdeck, Chair of the Overdeck Family Foundation and Founder of Bedtime Math and is managed by the Research & Development Council of New Jersey. The NJSPN aims to attract, cultivate and retain a 21st century workforce in New Jersey, ensuring the state remains a top global competitor in STEM industry and continues its rich history of innovation. Learn more about NJSPN by visiting [www.njstempathways.org](http://www.njstempathways.org) or following us on Twitter [@NJSTEMPathways](https://twitter.com/NJSTEMPathways).

### **About STEM Learning Ecosystems**

STEM Learning Ecosystems build strong collaborations in schools and beyond the classroom—in afterschool and summer programs, at home, with local business and industry partners, and in science centers, libraries and other places both virtual and physical. Ecosystems strive to enable students to connect what they learn at home, in school and out-of-school with real-world opportunities. **Learn more about STEM Learning Ecosystems** national initiative at [stemecosystems.org](http://stemecosystems.org). Address specific questions to [info@stemecosystems.org](mailto:info@stemecosystems.org). Join online conversations on Twitter [@STEMecosystems](https://twitter.com/STEMecosystems) and [#STEMecosystems](https://twitter.com/STEMecosystems) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/STEMecosystems).

### **About TIES Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM**

TIES is dedicated to making STEM accessible to everyone, especially underserved and underrepresented learners. We do this by connecting stakeholders — educators, funders, community organizations, businesses and government agencies — who, through collaborative partnerships, create meaningful and gainful STEM learning experiences. Our team of consultants provides strategic planning support and guides design, training and implementation across all of our services. **Learn more about TIES - Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM's** work with STEM Design, Digital Fabrication and Innovation Labs, STEM Talent, and Philanthropy and Social Impact at [tiesteach.org](http://tiesteach.org). Join the online conversation on [Twitter @tiesteach](https://twitter.com/tiesteach) and [Facebook /tiesteach](https://www.facebook.com/tiesteach).

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