

Advocate for STEM Programming in Your School District

California's school finance system, known as Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), gives school districts flexibility—and an unprecedented opportunity—to enhance STEM learning opportunities for students

Seven of the ten fastest growing occupations are in STEM fields, making STEM education a key part of career-readiness. And hands-on science and engineering learning is relevant and engaging to every kid, no matter what field they pursue: it promotes their critical thinking and leads to deeper understanding and improved outcomes across their studies. Despite the obvious importance of STEM, many schools in California don't currently offer courses critical to STEM education and, ultimately, STEM careers.

Part of the limited STEM education in California is a holdover from old policies, such as No Child Left Behind, which forced schools to drop science and technology classes and limit other investments in these fields in order to meet math and language arts requirements. Now, the California Next Generation Science Standards (CA-NGSS) offer great promise to improve learning for our students and secure a better future for them and our state's economy. But districts need to integrate CA-NGSS into their planning, budgeting, and program delivery.

You can help to make that happen.

School district leaders must provide schools with the guidance, support and resources they need to make the transition to the new science standards a success. LCFF requires schools to bring parents into the planning and budgeting process, which gives parents and community members the opportunity to tell district board members and superintendents about the importance of STEM education and the opportunity LCFF offers for them to invest in NGSS-based teaching and learning.

To advocate for STEM education in your areas, follow these two easy steps:

- 1 STEP ONE: Set up a meeting with a board member of your local school district.**
- 2 STEP TWO: Prepare talking points for your meeting.**

Set Up a Meeting:

- Visit your school district's website.
- Find the Board of Education page.
- Choose a member of the board with whom to meet.
- Call or email to make an appointment.

Prepare Talking Points for Your Meeting: STEM education is essential for all students.

High-quality NGSS-based learning can:

- Equip all students with a deep understanding of core scientific ideas and concepts, as well as the critical skills and competencies—problem solving, communication, collaboration, investigation—that reinforce learning in other core subjects and are essential to success.
- Foster students' innate curiosity, encouraging them to ask lots of questions and emphasizing hands-on investigation and discovery.
- Remove barriers to learning for kids in underserved communities, by encouraging their innate curiosity and making education more relevant to their lives.
- Reduce the opportunity gap for girls and Latino, African American, and low-income students.

STEM education is good for the economy.

Investing in NGSS-based STEM programming leads to:

- Graduates with higher earning potential.
- Students who are innovators and leaders who will create a prosperous and sustainable future for California's innovation economy.
- Graduates who are prepared to take advantage of California's STEM jobs, which now comprise more than a quarter of all new job openings, including many of the highest paid occupations.
- Graduates who are more equipped to understand and solve many of the biggest issues and problems we face today and in the future—in health, energy, security, environmental sustainability.

Visit your school district leaders today and...

Implore them to build out a comprehensive, multi-year plan to implement NGSS in every school in your district.

The plan should include the following:

- Hiring and training strategies to build every teacher's capacity to deliver and every principal's ability to lead science and engineering instruction,
- Appropriate laboratory equipment and instructional materials,
- Sufficient budget dollars to carry out the plan.