TOMORROW STEMS FROM IOWA | GOVERNOR'S STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL at the Iowa Department of Education

June 2026

Iowa STEM Youth Ambassador Group

A working group of the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, aka Iowa STEM

Charge

- The overarching goals of the Youth Ambassadors are:
  - to provide a youth perspective to Iowa STEM when asked.
  - to expand Iowa STEM's reach to Iowa youth.
- Youth Ambassadors will be valuable points of contact to connect Iowa STEM opportunities with schools and other external organizations. Involvement will expose Youth Ambassadors to different STEM organizations around their communities that support Iowa STEM's principles and mission to inspire and prepare the next generation of innovators for Iowa.
- Under Iowa STEM's guidance, Youth Ambassadors can help shift the discussion from teachers motivating students about STEM to students encouraging their peers to join STEM activities.

Composition

- The Youth Ambassador group consist of up to 27 Iowa youth, 21 of high school age (grades 9-12) and up to 6 collegiate mentors (enrolled as an undergraduate student at an Iowa college or university).
  - 21 members will be of high school age. This includes up to three Co-Chairs, chosen annually by the group.
    - Membership will be determined during an annual application period from a pool of applicants who fill out *the application* and best meet the criteria based upon *the application rubric*. Preference may be given to achieve balanced representation across Iowa communities and STEM regions.
    - Appointed Youth Ambassadors will serve July 1 through the June 30. Members who wish to serve another year will need to fill out a *recommitment application*. There is no limit on reapplication outside of age eligibility.
    - Co-chairs will collaborate with the Adult Advisory Team to convene and direct the group. This includes, but is not limited to, assisting with new member onboarding, drafting agendas ahead of regular meetings, sending out the agenda and meeting reminders at least 48 hours ahead of the meeting start, leading meetings, taking and publishing meeting notes, assisting committee leadership and presenting proposals on behalf of the Youth Ambassadors to Iowa STEM.
  - Up to 6 collegiate mentor roles are to be filled by young adults enrolled at an Iowa college.
    - Previous Youth Ambassadors must reapply for a collegiate mentor role upon high school graduation if they want to remain in the group. Preference will be given to geographical distribution of the six roles as needed.
    - Duties include, but are not limited to: helping co-chairs in leading meetings and committees, helping the Adult Advisory Team review and approve member applications, representing the Youth Ambassadors at designated regional or state meetings.
- The Youth Ambassadors are overseen by the Adult Advisory Team representing the Iowa STEM Central Operations Team, Iowa STEM Regional Managers and Regional STEM Advisory Boards.

About the Iowa STEM Youth Ambassadors Group

Goals and Actions

1. **Provide a Youth Perspective:** Investigate and report on youth perceptions, participate regarding STEM (surveys, interviews, etc.), and examine the current activities of Iowa STEM so as to advise on direction for impact.

2. **Community STEM Advocate:** Advocate for the existing Iowa STEM principles and mission to inspire and prepare the next generation of innovators for Iowa through support of local STEM initiatives to continue spreading the word about STEM. This can be done by engaging in regional STEM activities or other STEM activities that fit with Iowa STEM goals.

3. **Engage with Iowa STEM Events:** Aid in at least one of Iowa STEM's annual events **–** *STEM Day at the Capitol, Iowa STEM Summit, STEM Council meeting(s), Regional STEM Festival, Regional STEM Advisory Board meeting(s), other Regional STEM events/activities*. For example, creating a youth-led breakout session to be presented during the annual Summit, participating in working event registration tables or facilitating an exhibitor table representing Iowa STEM's Program library during a regional STEM festival.

Expected Member Commitment

1. Youth Ambassadors are expected to attend and be engaged in regular virtual meetings on a schedule determined by the group, generally ~1 hour/month.
    - This includes having cameras on and unmuting to participate in discussion or utilizing chat features when applicable.
    - Co-chairs will give advance notice of upcoming meetings by sending out an agenda at least 48 hours ahead of the meeting start. Youth Ambassadors who are unable to attend must give notice and good reason to a collegiate mentor and/or the Adult Advisory Team **at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting start** for an excused absence. **Three (3) unexcused absences may result in dismissal** from the group
2. Youth Ambassadors are expected to serve on and actively participate in at least one committee that will meet outside of regular full group meetings as determined by the committee.
    - A committee chair will work in conjunction with group co-chairs and collegiate mentors to conduct committee business, ensure tasks are complete on deadline and provide updates at full group meetings, or is responsible for delegating the responsibility.
3. Youth Ambassadors are expected to regularly check for communications from Co-Chairs and the Adult Advisory Team via email or other group-supported communications platforms.

4. Youth Ambassadors will be invited and encouraged to represent Iowa STEM in person at various events throughout the year in their respective STEM regions and at statewide events, typically in the Des Moines metro area.

5. Upon aging out of traditional membership status, Youth Ambassadors are encouraged to continue their STEM advocacy by applying to serve as a collegiate mentor of the group and/or serve on their respective regional advisory board.