February, 2021
North Central STEM Region
Monthly News

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Congratulations to the 2021 Iowa STEM Teacher Award
Recipient - Devan Walker

The Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council and Kemin Industries have announced the recipients of the 2021 Iowa STEM Teacher Award, sponsored by Kemin Industries.

The North Central STEM region's honoree is Devan Walker, science teacher at Southeast Valley High School in Gowrie, Iowa. She was selected for her efforts to create accessible and engaging content for students—in any subject she teaches.

At Southeast Valley High School, Walker covers a variety of classes, including chemistry, environmental science, biotechnology, anatomy and physiology, food science and physics. She strives to incorporate hands-on activities that demonstrate the principles of each topic. Some of her hands-on projects have been inspired by professional development workshops, which Walker regularly attends to learn from and collaborate with other educators. In 2017, she was one of 18 teachers selected to attend the Iowa Space Grant Consortium—resulting in an interactive physics experiment brought back to her classroom. After attending biotechnology programs, Walker has been able to lead students through labs to learn more about DNA.

Walker works hard to make sure students understand how STEM concepts will serve them in life. In food science, learners see fractions, conversions and even chemistry come to life in the kitchen. She also helps students explore STEM topics, allowing learners to understand scientific data and work on critical thinking.
This award recognizes and celebrates one teacher from each of the six STEM regions who goes above and beyond to increase their students' interest in STEM. Each recipient was selected by a panel of judges after being nominated for the award by a colleague, school administrator, parent, student or community member and completing an application showcasing their contributions to STEM education. Each recipient will receive $1,500 for their classrooms—as well as another $1,500 for personal use.

Walker and the other five recipients will also be recognized together at STEM Day at the Fair, held August 22, 2021. Usually held during STEM Day at the Capitol in February, the change was made with the health of teachers, their students and families in mind. For more information about the award and all current and previous recipients, please visit https://iowastem.org/teacheraward.

STEM Scale-Up Program Application Closes March 5

The STEM Scale-Up Program invites educators to provide hands-on STEM units covering topics such as robotics, physical computing, digital math, engineering design, biotechnology, career exploration and more. Students who participate in the STEM Scale-Up Program perform better on the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress compared to students who did not receive STEM Scale-Up programming. They also have a more positive attitude about STEM studies and careers, compared to students who did not participate.

The programs are FREE and provide curriculum, materials, and professional development.

The 2021-22 Scale-Up Program menu has been released and educators can APPLY now thru March 5, 2021.

STEM Essential Podcast: Vaccination, by STEM

During the month of February, the STEM Essential Podcast Series focuses on exploring the people and the tools behind developing, distributing and administering the COVID-19 vaccine. Listen to these life-saving stories:

Dr. Nafissa Cisse Egbuyone
Director, Black Hawk County Public Health

Dr. Patricia Winokur, MD
Executive Dean, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine

Dr. Balaji Narasimhan
Director, Nanovaccine Institute at Iowa State University

Ken Sharp
Division Director, Iowa Department of Public Health

Are you interested in being an advocate for STEM and providing STEM opportunities to Iowa’s young people?

Consider applying for a position on the North Central STEM Region Advisory Board. Explore openings at the State of Iowa Talent Bank.
While the summer of 2020 brought challenges to educators and businesses across the state, the Iowa STEM Teacher Externship Program was able to place over 50 teachers at business hosts. These Externships involved a combination of in-person and virtual experiences. Teacher Externships provide educators with the exposure to answer questions about real-world application, prepare students for careers they may have in the future, and improve educational experiences. During the summer, educators work side-by-side with knowledgeable and skilled industry employees who help bring the classroom curriculum to life.

Teacher Externships are full-time, six-week temporary summer positions in local businesses and agencies for secondary teachers of mathematics, science and/or technology. Teachers earn a stipend of up to $4,800 (including two days of professional development), as well as one graduate credit through the University of Northern Iowa’s Continuing Education program.

The STEM Council is accepting applications from educators and interest forms from workplace hosts for summer 2021. More information can be found here: https://iowastem.org/externships.

The STEM Council has teamed up with the Authentic Learning Network to offer an online self-paced course called the “Authentic Learning Bootcamp.” This course provides educators an opportunity to explore implementation strategies of work-based learning within their classroom. Iowa Area Education Agency (AEA) instructors Laura Williams, Stephanie Lane, and Brea Baxter will collaborate to offer regional and statewide online course options through local AEAs and AEA Learning Online. Iowa STEM program manager for STEM BEST, Tanya Hunt, is consulting on the course design.

- Explore Iowa’s Clearinghouse for Work-based Learning.
- Create future-ready, authentic learning opportunities that align with PK-12 curricular goals/standards to help students develop professional and 21st Century skills.
Engage with implementation strategies & resources to support students in authentic learning opportunities.
Prepare for planning a STEM BEST® model offered through Iowa's STEM Council.
Expand your own personal and professional network!

To sign up for Authentic Learning Bootcamp, visit: http://bit.do/AuthenticLearningBootcamp or contact Tanya Hunt, hunt@iowastem.org.

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**Calendar of Events**

**March 5**
STEM Scale-Up Application Closes

**March 8**
STEM BEST Application Opens

**March 26**
NC STEM Region Advisory Board Meeting 12-2 PM

**Contact Us**
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**2020-2021 NC STEM Advisory Board**

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