



**3<sup>rd</sup>-Quarter LASTEM Advisory Council Meeting**  
**University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Student Union**  
**August 27, 2025**

# Welcome



**Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed**  
**Louisiana Board of Regents**  
**Chair, LASTEM Advisory Council**

# Agenda Items

- **New Member Introductions & Roll Call**
  - **Kassie Cusachs**, High School Principal of Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy and Founding Faculty of Discovery Schools
  - **Jolen Stein**, Senior Director of the Peoples Services Team at BASF Corporation

# Agenda Items

- **Approval of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Quarter Meeting Minutes**



# Region 7 STEM Center Application

- Sci-Port decided not to continue as host of the Region 7 STEM Center in FY 2025-26, the final year of the three-year designation
- BPCC submitted a full application in accordance with the 2023 RFA, including a plan to retain Dr. Heather Kleiner as the Center Director
- An external evaluator, using the scoring rubric in the RFA, assessed BPCC's plans for the Center and enthusiastically recommended the Advisory Council approve BPCC as the new host
- If approved, BPCC is positioned to begin work immediately

# Staff Recommendation

LASTEM staff recommend approval of Bossier Parish Community College as the host entity of the Region 7 STEM Center for FY 2025-26.



# 1A ConnectEd Updates

**LASTEM Advisory Council**

August 27, 2025

**Maggi Bienvenu, Ed.D.**  
Director, Business & Education Connections

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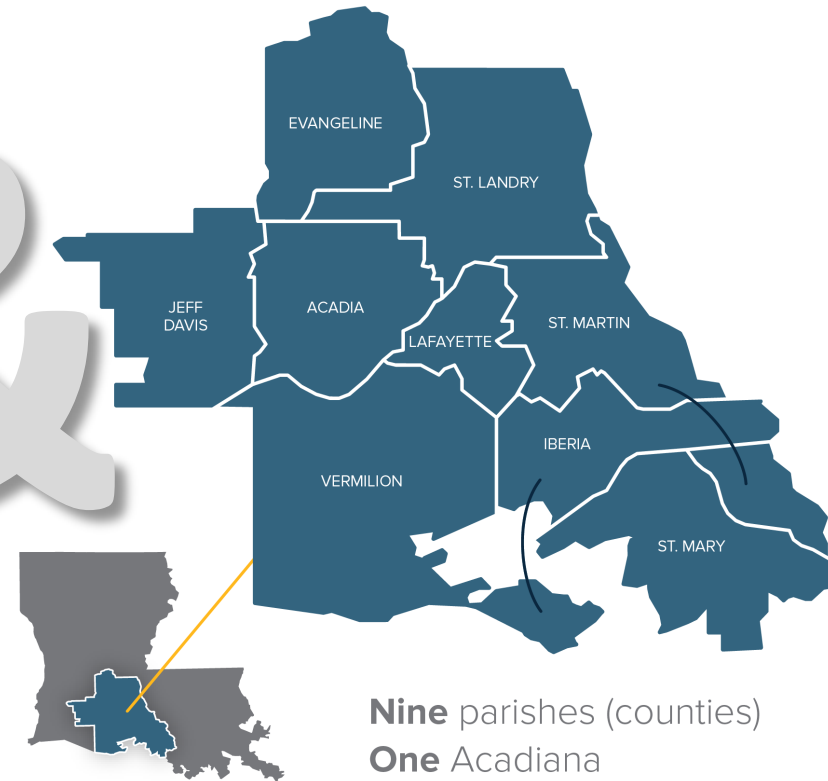
## About One Acadiana



Greater Lafayette  
Chamber of Commerce



## Regional Economic Development Organization



Nine parishes (counties)  
One Acadiana



## 1A Business & Education Connections



Looking beyond 2025, as an outgrowth of the 55 by 25 initiative, 1A is proud to announce a new suite of activities we are calling One Acadiana ConnectEd, which leverage 1A's unique role in the workforce ecosystem as a connector of business and education.

One Acadiana ConnectEd includes three main pillars:

**1A's Industry  
Roundtable Series**

**Educator  
Professional  
Development**

**Promoting  
Career-Connected  
Learning**



## 1A ConnectEd Pillar #1 – 1A's Industry Roundtable Series

- Convened as part of 1A's Workforce & Education Committee
- Brings together employers who require similar skill sets in their workforces to discuss their shared needs with education and training providers
- Discuss workforce challenges and best practices, including recruiting, hiring, training, retaining talent, and more

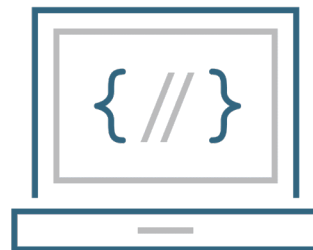


**Q1** | January 31



Healthcare

**Q2** | April 11



Information Technology

**Q3** | July 25



Manufacturing

**Q1** | October 31



Skilled Trades





## 1A ConnectEd Pillar #2 – Educator Professional Development

- **Launched Regional Fellowship (June 2024):**  
20 CTE teachers trained in Healthcare & Manufacturing, with industry tours
- **Piloted a Local PD (Jan 2025):**  
15 counselors/administrators in St. Landry & Evangeline connected to local career resources.
- **2025 Summer Educator Workshop (July 2025):**  
Trained 20 educators over three days on career-connected learning strategies.
- **Future...**





## 1A ConnectEd Pillar #3 – Promoting Career-Connected Learning

- 1A recognizes Louisiana's increased emphasis on work-based learning in the new K–12 accountability formula, including incentives for apprenticeships and internships.
- We see the value of WBL in building job skills, career clarity, and real-world experience.
- **Our role:**
  - Use industry roundtable insights to shape internships/apprenticeships that align with workforce demand.
  - Facilitate employer/educator relationships to create WBL opportunities at every level.
  - Collaborate with partners like LEDA, Acadiana Workforce Solutions, and regional EDOs on career fairs, industry tours, and events like Manufacturing Week.
  - Be a resource for understanding WBL implementation strategies, incentives, and untapped talent sources.
  - Celebrate success stories.







## A Recent Win!

### Intro to Construction for Re-Entry Candidates

- Last month, 1A partnered with the **Master's Guild of Acadiana** and the **Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office** to offer the Guild's **Intro to Construction Class** to 15 re-entry candidates.
- This pilot program was funded by a \$5,000 grant through the **ACCE Foundation Economic Mobility for Rural Workers** cohort.
- LPSO's facility hosts training for 16 parishes, including those in the Acadiana region.



### NEXT STEPS

- **UL Lafayette** has begun to offer additional certifications at the facility through a **Department of Labor** grant:
  - Residential Construction
  - Advanced Manufacturing
  - Solar Panel Installation



## Bright Future: FUEL Scale Grant



1A is receiving funding from **Future Use of Energy Louisiana (FUEL)** to pilot innovative **Energy & STEM** initiatives across Acadiana.

- Each district receives \$350,000 (total \$3,500,000) from the NSF grant.

ool / \$350 High School)

### 1A School Districts

Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Jeff. Davis, Lafayette, St. Landry,  
St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion, Charter Schools, USA



## Updates

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# R4SNC Goals



## Provide Access

R4SNC is focused on providing STEM access across our region through groundbreaking initiatives involving high quality teaching and learning, free of charge to student participants.



## Remove Barriers

We provide widespread enrichment in STEM activities across our region so that all constituents can realize that this sector is accessible to them.



## Build Networks

We collaborate with students, teachers, industry partners, and STEM stakeholders to create network-building think-tanks focused on further developing a thriving STEM culture across sectors housed in Region IV and beyond.



# STEM Extravaganza



550 Students/5 School Districts



10% increase



46 Stations



53% increase



15 Community Partners



114% increase

# STEMulating Summer 5.0

**STEM  
Olympics**

**Career  
Exploration**

**Environmenta  
I Deep Dive  
4.0**

**Adventures In  
STEM**

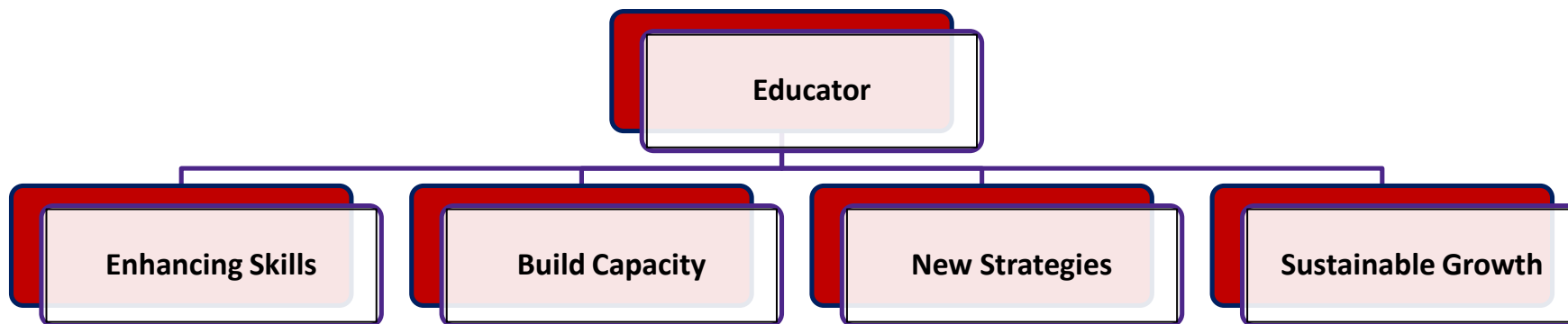
**NASA**

**Jump Start w/  
Abbeville High**





# Professional Development

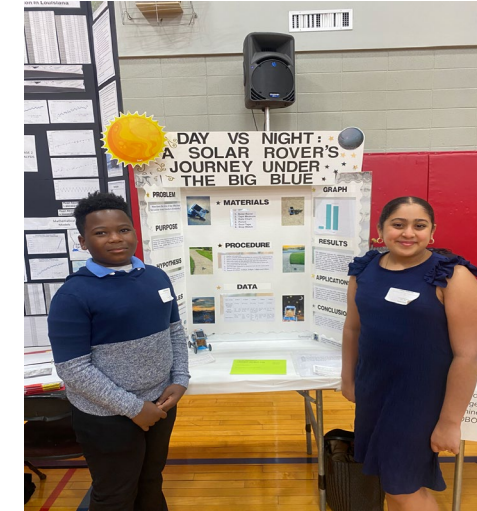
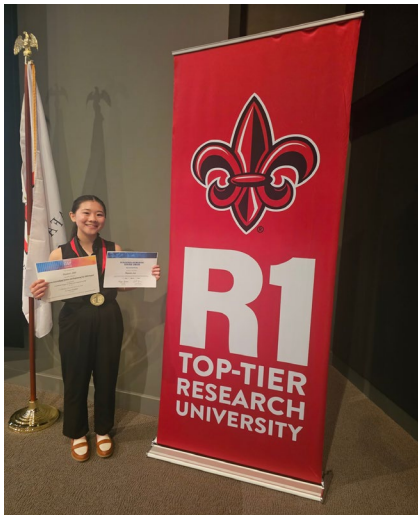




# Regional Science Fair

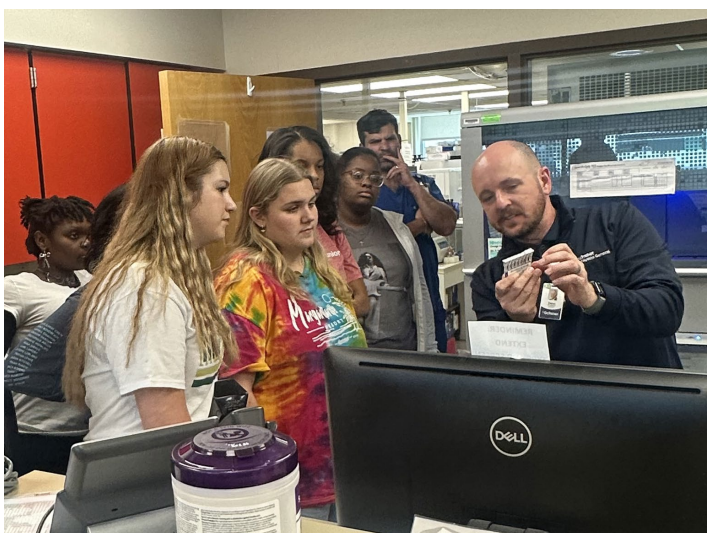


The Regional Science and Engineering Fair provides middle and high school students with the opportunity to showcase their research and innovation in STEM.



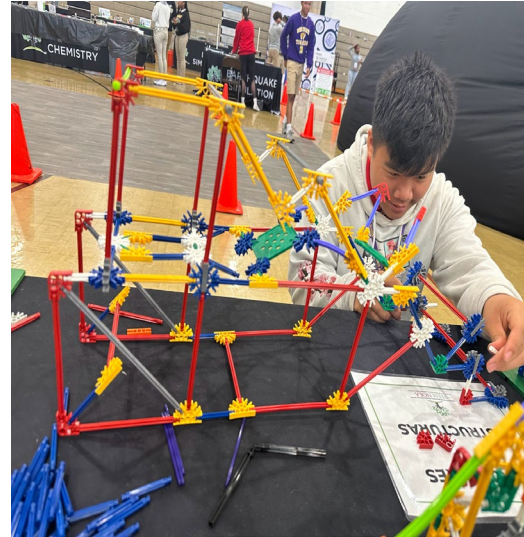


# WISE Women Acadiana





# Other Outreach



**Hour of Code  
w/ Northside  
High**

**Iberia STEM  
Fest**

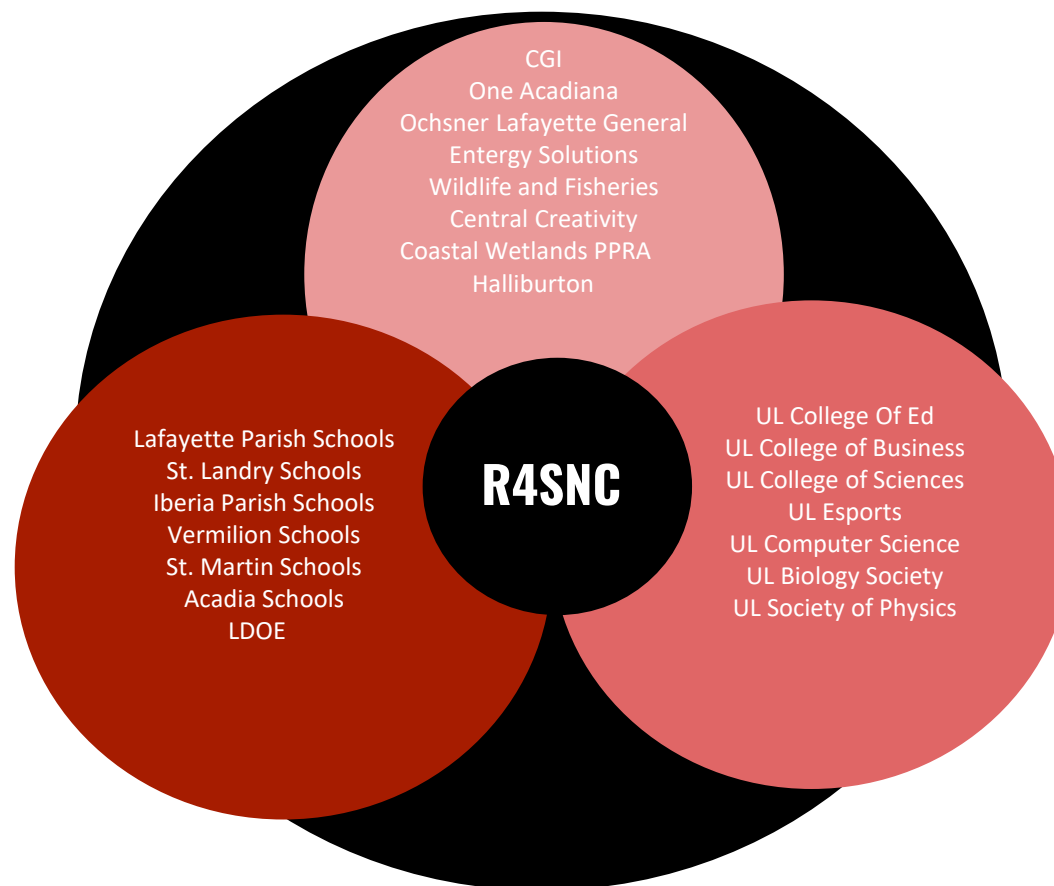
**STEM Day at  
Acadian Middle**



**VEX Robotics  
Competition**

**STEM  
Conferences**

# Partnerships





U N I V E R S I T Y *of*  
**LOUISIANA**  
L A F A Y E T T E ®

Thank you for attending today's presentation.

# 3rd Quarter LASTEM Council Meeting

## LDOE Update



August 27, 2025



**Donata Haley**

K-12 STEM Education Consultant  
Louisiana Department of Education



# Greasing STEM Stewards



NATIONAL  
ACADEMIES *Sciences  
Engineering  
Medicine*  
GULF RESEARCH PROGRAM

  
**Sea Grant**  
LOUISIANA



# Gulf Research Program

## Funding Opportunity: Empowering K-8 Youth Through Place-Based Education

ABOUT      AWARDS      GULF FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS



- About
- Description
- Contact

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Gulf Research Program (GRP) aims to increase the scientific and environmental literacy and problem-solving skills of children and youth in the Gulf of Mexico region. This funding opportunity will support the next generation of informed citizens, scientists, engineers, and decision-makers in understanding the socio-environmental challenges of their local communities. GRP is seeking proposals that engage children and youth in place-based educational activities that will foster the development of the scientific and environmental skills, competencies, and capabilities that are critical to solving complex issues in the Gulf now and into the future.



FAMILIES & STUDENTS    SCHOOL & SYSTEM LEADERS    EDUCATORS    EARLY CHILDHOOD    DATA & REPORTS    ABOUT

## LOUISIANA AWARDED OVER \$400,000 FOR INNOVATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL STEM AQUAPONICS INITIATIVE

SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

2024

Share



# Goals and Outcomes

The goals of this project are to create

- a model location for CEA visits and replication,
- a year-long open educational resource curriculum for grades 6 through 8 on aquaculture,
- a community of practice for participating Louisiana teachers, and
- a set of place-based learning lessons specific to Louisiana.

# 2024-2025 Progress





# Louisiana Aquaculture Network

- Goal/Objective: To encourage aquaculture networking in Louisiana.
- Different guest speaker each month - covering a variety of topics, including aquaculture, aquaponics, hydroponics, etc.
- Teachers, researchers, hobbyists, and others with a passion for learning and sharing more about aquaculture in Louisiana are welcome to join.





# Place-Based Learning Trips

- Field Trip 1
  - Nicholls Farm
  - Wetlands Acadian Cultural Center (WACC)



# Greauxing STEM Stewards Curriculum

- Year-long draft complete
- Six units
  - Wetlands
  - Variety of Life
  - Biogeochemical Cycles
  - Pollution
  - Erosion
  - Culminating unit

# Future



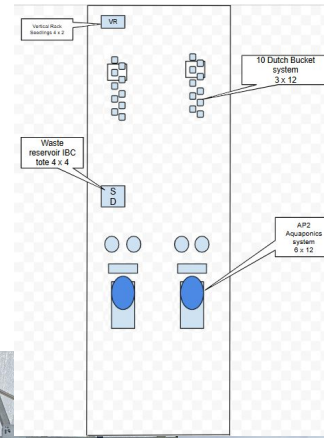
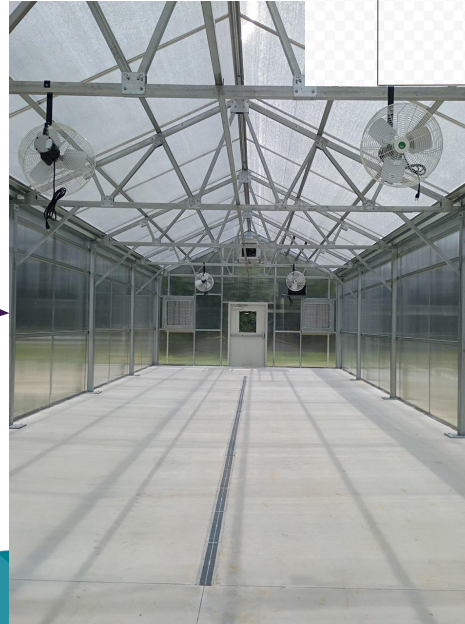


# Model Location

- CEA construction began early July 2025
  - Kenneth Rust



July 8



August 12

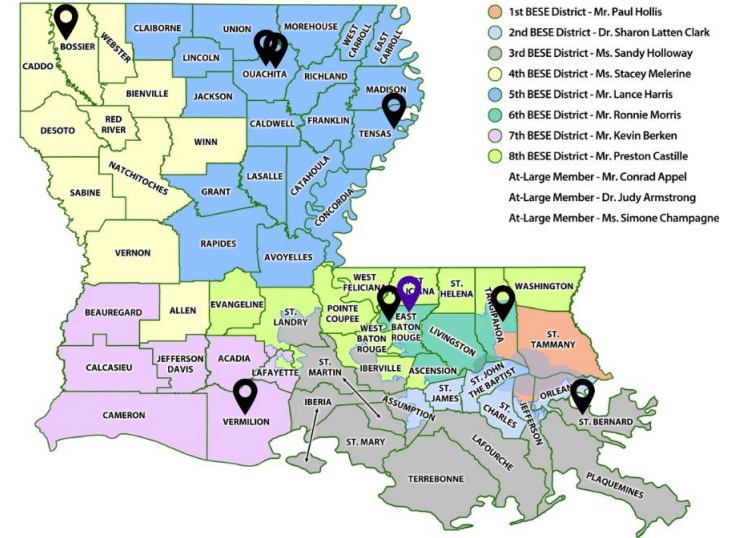
NATIONAL ACADEMIES  
Sciences  
Engineering  
Medicine  
GULF RESEARCH PROGRAM





# Greauxing STEM Stewards Fellowship

- Virtual Community of Practice
  - 9 teachers from across Louisiana
    - Grades 6-12
  - Goals
    - Build community
    - Create a set of standards-aligned, place-based learning lessons specific to their region



# Greauxing STEM Stewards

Thank you!



NATIONAL  
ACADEMIES *Sciences  
Engineering  
Medicine*  
GULF RESEARCH PROGRAM

  
**Sea Grant**  
LOUISIANA

# Other Business/Adjournment

**See you in Baton Rouge for the Q4 LASTEM Advisory Council meeting!**