LOUISIANA SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (LASTEM) ADVISORY COUNCIL

STATUS REPORT TO THE LOUISIANA SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

LA STEM
SCIENCE · TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING · MATH

LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS

December 2025

Executive Summary

Act 392 of the 2017 Regular Session, authored by Senator Sharon Hewitt, commissioned the Louisiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Advisory Council (LASTEM). Under the auspices of the Louisiana Board of Regents, the LASTEM Council has been charged by the legislature to do the following:

- Coordinate and oversee the creation, delivery, and promotion of STEM education programs;
- Increase student interest and achievement in the fields of STEM;
- Ensure the alignment of education, economic development, industry, and workforce needs; and
- Increase the number of individuals who graduate from a postsecondary institution with a STEM degree or credential.

The Council, chaired by the Commissioner of Higher Education, is comprised of 29 members, including representatives of both K-12 and postsecondary education, state agencies, business and industry, professional organizations with links to STEM education, training, and workforce development, and economic development entities.

As required by Act 392, this report provides an update on the work of the Council, emerging initiatives, and recommendations for legislation and policy changes. During its first year, the Council was required by law to meet monthly; the Council began quarterly meetings beginning in February 2019. In the Fall of 2019, the Council selected nine Regional STEM Centers (RSCs) and allocated funds to support their operation. In 2023, all nine centers applied for continuation and were approved based on their impressive work over the first period and the strong partnerships established both throughout their regions and statewide. The RSCs are currently in the final year of their second three-year cycle.

During 2025, the network of nine Regional STEM Centers and LASTEM expanded their engagement of and services to populations across Louisiana, from providing STEM fundamentals to K-12 students to upskilling adults, helping to strengthen both educational opportunities and provide workforce pathways in STEM-focused fields. Notable achievements include:

- $1.1M in industry investment supporting LASTEM programs throughout Louisiana.

- 69,000 students, teachers, and individuals served statewide through participation in LASTEM programming offered through the regional centers, including summer camps, in- and after-school events, field trips, weekend family STEM days, parent-student outreach, teacher professional developments, internships, and many other events.
- Active engagement with stakeholders, practitioners, and industry experts through quarterly Advisory Council meetings and expanded partnerships with industry and educational institutions across the state

Throughout this year, the network of nine Regional STEM Centers and LASTEM expanded their engagement of and services to populations across Louisiana, from K-12 students to upskilling adults, helping to strengthen both STEM-based education and training, as well as the workforce pipeline. As a result, STEM awareness, engagement, excitement, and opportunities in the state have never been greater.

Introduction

This report, filed pursuant to Act 392 of the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, highlights the significant progress made by the LASTEM Advisory Council in 2025. The law charges the LASTEM Advisory Council to:

- Create a comprehensive, statewide STEM plan that has clear objectives to guide the development of STEM education and STEM career opportunities and aligns elementary, secondary, and postsecondary STEM curricula, programs, initiatives and activities;
- Coordinate all state STEM education-related programs and activities;
- Create a new STEM culture and promote activities that raise awareness of STEM education and STEM career opportunities;
- Integrate employers and educators by engaging business and industry, employers, professional and community-based organizations, STEM education stakeholders, and career and talent programs and activities;
- Encourage industry and business entities to provide funding, resources, and technical assistance to elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools to promote interest in STEM discipline courses and career opportunities;
- Connect STEM education resources, initiatives, and programs regionally and throughout the state;
- Establish an information clearinghouse, to be housed at BOR, to identify and provide best practice resources for both the secondary and postsecondary educational systems and to review and acquire STEM education-related instructional materials;
- Empower STEM teachers and provide support for high-quality professional development for teachers of STEM subjects;
- As appropriate, join and participate in a national STEM network and collaborate with other states in STEM education program development; and
- Establish a competitive grants program to fund robotics competitions to provide students at all appropriate grade levels opportunities to improve STEM skills by participating in events sponsored by science and technology development programs.

LASTEM Advisory Council Goals and Objectives

The LASTEM Advisory Council and its subcommittees utilized this broad-based charge from Act 392 to develop three goals to guide the work of the Council and support of the Regional STEM Centers (RSCs):

- **LASTEM Goal 1:** Build strong foundations for STEM literacy by ensuring that every American can master basic STEM concepts and become digitally literate.
- **LASTEM Goal 2:** Increase participation in STEM and provide all Louisianans with lifelong access to high-quality STEM education, especially those historically underserved and underrepresented in STEM fields and employment.
- **LASTEM Goal 3:** Prepare the STEM workforce for the future – both college-educated STEM practitioners and those working in skilled trades that do not require a four-year

degree – by creating authentic learning experiences that encourage and prepare learners to pursue STEM careers.

The Council set purposeful and ambitious goals around the establishment of Louisiana RSCs and selection of their directors. The RSCs have now been operational for five years, addressing and implementing all three LASTEM goals. The rapid expansion of their work, serving thousands of students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders, has grown awareness of STEM opportunities and the value of STEM learning in our increasingly tech-focused world, preparing our citizens to participate fully in 21st-century work and life. The work of the past year was fully informed and driven by these defining goals and objectives, nested in Act 392's comprehensive charge.

LASTEM Advisory Council Meetings

During its 2025 quarterly meetings, the LASTEM Advisory Council explored and discussed ongoing initiatives and learned about new trends in STEM education and ensured work was responsive to Louisiana's priorities and needs. Meetings are often held at STEM-rich locations across the state, providing attendees the opportunity to see facilities and work related to LASTEM initiatives, and featured STEM organizations and champions discussing exciting work and opportunities for growth and development around the state. Quarterly meetings in 2025 included:

February 16, 2025 (STEM Library Lab, New Orleans): Hosted by GNOrocs, Region 1 STEM Center located at GNO Inc., the meeting focused on LDOE's Louisiana Content Standards for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, as well as computer science and teacher education programs. GNOrocs provided an update on internships and programs offered by the Center across the greater New Orleans region. In addition, STEM Library Lab provided an overview of its offerings and a demonstration of the Edopportunities Database, a local database of STEM programs and activities, which they hoped to expand statewide.

May 1, 2025 (Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge): Hosted by the Board of Regents, this meeting focused on Women's Health Month, showcasing Louisiana's programs and

emerging technologies students are utilizing while training to join the healthcare workforce. Presentations were provided on Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University's simulated teaching environment, LSU Health Sciences Center – Shreveport's recruitment and engagement strategies, and Fletcher Technical Community College's allied health and cardio-sonography programs. In addition, the Council approved an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Education Working Group to gather information about the AI education landscape in Louisiana and LDOE provided an update on the math standards review.

August 27, 2025 (ULL Student Union, Lafayette): Hosted by the Region 4 STEM Network Center housed at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, this gathering featured the region's economic development partner, One Acadiana. The Council engaged in a robust conversation around One Acadiana's presentation of their new ConnectEd program and ideas for connecting education and industry. In addition, with Sci-Port Discover Center relinquishing leadership of the Region 7 STEM Center at the end of fiscal year 2024–25, the Council approved Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) as the new host center for 2025–26, the final year of the three-year designation. Last, LDOE presented on the Greauxing STEM Stewards grant and the host center (Region 4) provided an update on recent work and outcomes achieved by the Center.

November 5, 2025 (Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge): Hosted by the Board of Regents, this meeting highlighted key administrative updates—including the transition of LASTEM and the Regional Center administration to Louisiana Works—and emphasized the cross-agency collaboration guiding LASTEM into its next phase. This next phase focuses on preparing Louisiana's people for the future of work, strengthening the state's workforce pipeline, and closing STEM workforce gaps. In addition, Louisiana Works presented the Request for Applications (RFA) for the next three-year designation cycle for the Regional Centers, and outlined the agency's vision for the work moving forward, with an emphasis on expanding scope, assessing regional needs, and updating performance metrics. A meaningful dialogue followed among LAWorks staff, Council members and the directors of the Regional Centers. Finally, Bossier Parish Community College (Region 7) provided an update on the Center's transition of hosting from Sci-Port

Discovery Center to BPCC. The meeting concluded with the announcement that LASTEM would participate in the LSTA/LATM Joint Conference.

Notable Contributions

LASTEM and the Regional Centers have been instrumental in building both capacity for and access to high-quality STEM learning and experiences for all Louisiana residents. From hosting Maker Faires, summer camps, and other opportunities to expose more people to STEM concepts to providing professional development for teachers moving into STEM or taking on new fields, such as computer science, the Centers are hubs in their communities. The impact of their work has been recognized beyond the borders of Louisiana, serving as a model for other states and garnering national attention.

Working to address the education-to-workforce pipeline on a national scale, the Greater New Orleans Development Foundation (GNODF) was awarded the NASA Space Hub Designation, one of 15 in the country. The hub serves the southern region through the Regional Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (GNO RAAMP) with NASA. GNO RAAMP encompasses 50+ partners and aims to expose (building awareness and inspiration), train (aligning training and hands-on learning with industry), and sustain (building long-term workforce capacity and growth). Using Region 1's STEM Center programs (GNO Innovation Internship Program and WISE Women NOLA) as a model, GNODF authored a white paper outlining national model for internships, which was presented at the Kennedy Space Center.

The Region 7 Center, hosted at Bossier Parish Community College, has developed a Museum in a Box kit to bring the physical sciences of flight to students in grades K-12. Created in partnership with NASA, the box – exciting hands-on/minds-on lessons with an aeronautics theme to inspire future scientists, mathematicians and engineers – is available nationwide.

LASTEM joined the 3rd Annual STEMx on the Hill event, joining fellow STEM leaders on Capitol Hill to meet with elected federal officials and key policymakers to inform them about the Louisiana STEM Network System and the state's STEM priorities as well as discuss legislation surrounding STEM education and workforce development.

Highlights from Regional STEM Centers

LASTEM reaches stakeholders in every corner of Louisiana through its combination of centralized statewide support and the work of the nine RSCs, which identify the priorities and unique needs of their regions and tailor programming to address existing gaps and explore new opportunities. Below highlights the range of regional work happening across the centers.

Region 1 (New Orleans Region): Located within Greater New Orleans, Inc., the Greater New Orleans Region One Center for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (GNOrocs) has demonstrated significant impact by advancing STEM education and workforce development opportunities. In 2025, GNOrocs' flagship Innovation Internship Program (GIIP) engaged 36 interns across five tracks: Startup, STEM, Engineering, Energy, and Venture Capital/Private Equity, bridging the gap between academic pursuits and workforce opportunities. Interns received over $170k in internship salaries with 100 percent of the summer's graduating interns employed by their host companies. Through the Women in the STEM Economy (WISE Women) Mentorship Program, the Center cultivated 20 mentees pursuing STEM careers providing access to high-growth STEM pathways. The Center secured $500,000 in external funding from Boeing, Chevron, Brown Foundation, Delta Regional Authority, City of New Orleans ARPA, and H2 the Future, among others.

Region 2 (Greater Baton Rouge Region): The Capital Area STEM Network Center at Louisiana State University and A&M College continues to elevate STEM learning and workforce development. Through seven summer camps and other hosted events (Louisiana State VEX Robotics Tournament, STEM Days, etc.), the Center reached over 6,000 K-12 students across the region. The Center's IGNITE Initiative, which provides professional learning in computer science, hosted seven cohorts (480 teachers) with 52 workshops, impacting 63 school districts across the state. The Center's SPARK Event provides skill-building activities in electrical work, HVAC, and automotive technologies for single parents entering the workforce. In partnership with The Greater Baton Rouge

Economic Partnership and in collaboration with 15 local industries, the Center helped place over 800 STEM interns and secured approximately $270,000 in investments.

Region 3 (Bayou Region): Fletcher Technical Community College's BayouSTEM Center engaged 3,700 students through field trips, summer camps (expanded reach into rural areas), and after-school activities. In partnership with NASA and the Georgia SPACE Consortium, BayouSTEM delivered professional developments on machine learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to 46 teachers in 10 school districts in the region. With support from Shell, Chevron, and Conoco-Phillips, the Center secured more than $95,000 in industry investment to support BayouSTEM programming.

Region 4 (Acadiana Region): In 2025 the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's STEM Network Center (R4SNC) continued innovative initiatives focusing on K-12 enrichment and teacher professional development. The signature event, STEM Extravaganza, brought together over 530 students from five school districts to engage and inspire students with STEM learning. In addition, preservice and in-service teachers were provided opportunities to learn by doing, creating and facilitating STEM activities for the students. R4SNC hosted the Regional Science and Engineering Fair, which provided middle and high school students with a platform to showcase their research and innovation in STEM. In addition, the WISE Women program, established by GNOrocs, expanded into the Acadiana region, providing externships for students to explore career paths in STEM.

Region 5 (Southwest Region): Calcasieu Parish School Board's Regional STEM Center secured $169,000 in industry funding and impacted 7,300 individuals through competitions, conferences, community events, field trips, professional developments, and summer camps. Partnerships with Phillips 66, LyondellBasell, Woodside Energy, Air Products, Alcoa, and United Way SWLA strengthened regional workforce development. The Center's robust, competitive robotics program featured robotics-specific summer camps, professional developments and other events, including participation in VEX

Robotics World Championship, to engage students in robotics and provide career exposure.

Region 6 (Central Region): Northwestern State University's CenlaSTEM Center focused on statewide rural STEM opportunities, more than doubling participation in its RECIPE for Rural STEM initiative, bringing together 3,500 students, growing the program to two separate days in both Alexandria and Monroe, and impacting 60 parishes within the state. RECIPE for Rural STEM also expanded into the Youth Challenge Program, reaching cadets from parishes throughout the state. The Center's continued partnerships with regional industry – including RoyOMartin and Entergy – support the delivery of high-quality STEM events and summer camps for students and families.

Region 7 (Northwest Region): The Region 7 STEM Center transitioned from the Sci-Port Discovery Center to Bossier Parish Community College in July 2025. Across these two hosts, the Center engaged more than 21,500 participants in in-school, out-of school, and community STEM events. The Center expanded its innovative Bars without Barriers program, designed to empower incarcerated fathers to become STEM role models for their children, hosting 16 sessions that served 98 offenders, children, and caregivers. The Shreveport-Bossier Maker Faire, a festival of invention where "makers" showcase experiments, creation, and innovative projects, welcomed 9,400 visitors and featured competitions, demonstrations, and presentations. Beyond engaging participants in STEM and STEM careers, the event also transformed a life in real time: during one of the field trips, a young participant born without a left hand was introduced to pediatric oncologists from Johns Hopkins, who were exhibiting at the Faire. Through the ENABLE Alliance, they were able to provide the child with a 3D-printed prosthetic hand.

Region 8 (Northeast Region): Louisiana Tech University's STEM Center focused efforts to expand its reach into the most rural areas of the region, hosting events like RECIPE for Rural STEM, SCILS Mini Summit, and others, that drew more than 12,400 participants.

In addition, summer camps and distribution of STEM kits served 235 students, while professional development opportunities were provided to 232 teachers across 12 school districts. In collaboration with the National Girls Collaborative Project, the Center received an NSF grant to develop and provide computer science books for underrepresented K-2 students throughout the region. While serving thousands across the region, the Center also celebrated a member of its local team, who participated in the first-ever LEGO League National Competition.

Region 9 (Northshore Region): Southeastern Louisiana University's Regional STEM Center has been highly active across the Northshore, as it hosted 30 events including the Regional Science Fair, SeaPerch, STEM Scholars, Ocean Commotion, and STEMposium, among others. The Center served over 7,600 students, expanding experiential learning opportunities and providing students a chance to experience the real-world applications of STEM knowledge. With continued support from industry partners, the STEM Center secured $35,000 to enhance programming and strengthen workforce alignment initiatives.

Conclusion

The continued expansion of STEM learning, programs, and opportunities for Louisianians of all ages and in every region demonstrates the LASTEM Advisory Council's and Regional Stem Centers' sustained commitment to advancing STEM education, workforce development, and opportunity across the state. The Council has diligently worked to achieve the statutory goals of Act 392 through its high-level engagement with STEM issues and ideas, in tandem with the implementation work ongoing at the RSCs. This approach, enabling both innovative conceptual discussions with a group of dedicated, regionally focused, outreach-oriented centers, is the key to LASTEM's success, ensuring that ideas can be studied, tested, implemented, and scaled in ways that serve the unique environments in which the ideas will take root.

As LASTEM moves into 2026 and the initiative shifts to LAWorks, its efforts to grow STEM learning and skills will both continue and adapt to the rapidly changing landscapes of learning and work. The shift of administration from the Board of Regents to LAWorks will allow the Centers to build on the strong foundations established through six years of support and build out the full expanse of classroom-to-career STEM opportunities.

The remarkable achievements of LASTEM and the Regional Centers would not be possible without the collective efforts of those involved, the statewide commitment to collaboration and resource-sharing, and the consistent support of the Legislature and the Governor. It is the hope and desire of the LASTEM Advisory Council that this work continues to produce long-lasting impacts for Louisiana throughout 2026 and beyond.