

Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem

Structure & Strategy

Goals

- Ensuring ALL students have access to quality STEM education in Philadelphia.
- Functioning as a collaborative network between educators (formal & informal), community groups, businesses, organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Improving students' access to pathways towards STEM careers
- Developing STEM literacy and responsible STEM citizenship across the board

Structure

- The Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem encompasses the rich environment of STEM programming, in-class education, and opportunities throughout Philadelphia. As an organization we use a collective impact model with three components: a backbone organization, an Advisory Committee, and workgroups.
- **The backbone organization**, the Philadelphia Education Fund, facilitates connections between ecosystem members, sets the mission & vision, and ensures the continuance of the local ecosystem movement. It also facilitates online communication and disseminates the Ecosystem's work through a web presence.
- **The Advisory Committee** is a collective of stakeholders actively engaged in guiding the ecology of the Philadelphia STEM Ecosystem.
- **Workgroups** are smaller groups of Ecosystem members, tasked with specific goals related to STEM education in Philadelphia and to the Ecosystem itself.
 - Workgroups are formed around a topic of interest. The group sets a goal and develops a plan of action to be accomplished within a year. The group evaluates progress throughout and at the end of the year and decides whether to continue work on the topic with a new goal for the next year, or whether to disband.
 - Any member of the Ecosystem can volunteer to chair a workgroup, based on an interest in addressing a specific need. The backbone organization works with the chair (or co-chairs) to assemble a team of diverse stakeholders, representing lived experience with the problem being tackled.
 - Workgroups regularly present findings and progress at Ecosystem Advisory Committee meetings throughout the year.

Flow

- Advisory Committee Meetings are convened by the backbone organization two to three times per year.
 - The backbone organization presents updates for the Ecosystem at large.
 - A representative from each workgroup presents progress and results.
 - Ecosystem members address sets of "big picture" issues and questions regarding the Ecosystem and STEM in Philadelphia. This is done through a design charette, or Theory of Change-type model, in which small groups form, discuss, and generate solutions, visions, and ideas. This allows for an active networking opportunity, while informing the rhythms and functions of the Ecosystem.

Workgroup Chair Responsibilities

- Work with backbone members to recruit a diverse membership.
- Communicate within the workgroup and report out to the larger Ecosystem community
- Facilitate discussions, and help the group come to consensus around goals and approach.
- Set meeting times and schedule. Workgroups typically meet on a monthly basis initially to come to consensus on goals and action plan, but can determine their own schedule.