



A Moment of Science from ISTA

Idaho Science Teaching Association President's
Newsletter

December 2024



A Word (or two) From Your ISTA President!

As we charge full STEAM ahead into the next semester, let's focus on cultivating future-ready minds by building connections that ignite excitement and passion for learning and discovery. How can we, as educators, create these connections to inspire our students and equip them with the curiosity and skills they'll need for the future? What does "building connections that ignite" look like in your classroom?




Are you actively helping students forge meaningful connections that strengthen your classroom culture and community? By fostering these relationships, we set the stage for critical thinking, collaboration, and innovation—skills essential for thriving in an ever-evolving world.

Through your membership in the Idaho Science Teaching Association (ISTA), you have the opportunity to expand these efforts beyond your classroom walls. ISTA offers a platform to connect with passionate science educators, exchange ideas, and collaborate on advancing science education across Idaho. By participating in ISTA events and discussions, you're not only growing your professional network but also gaining tools and insights to enrich your teaching practice and better prepare your students for the challenges ahead.

Be part of the vibrant dialogue shaping the future of science education. Follow us on social media, tune into our podcast on our website, and explore regional events on Sched. Together, let's leverage these connections to fuel innovation in our classrooms and inspire the next generation of scientifically literate, future-ready citizens.

Let's ensure that the sparks we ignite today illuminate a brighter future for our students and communities.

Warm regards,
Tanya Elmer
President
Idaho Science Teachers Association

Review Team Invitation Reviewer Application

PERKS OF BEING A REVIEWER

SCIENCE **CTE**

- An opportunity to see & review curriculum that may be adopted by your LEA
- Expand your professional resume and network
- Receive a stipend for the valuable work you'll do (all from the comfort of home!)
 - Keep all materials you review

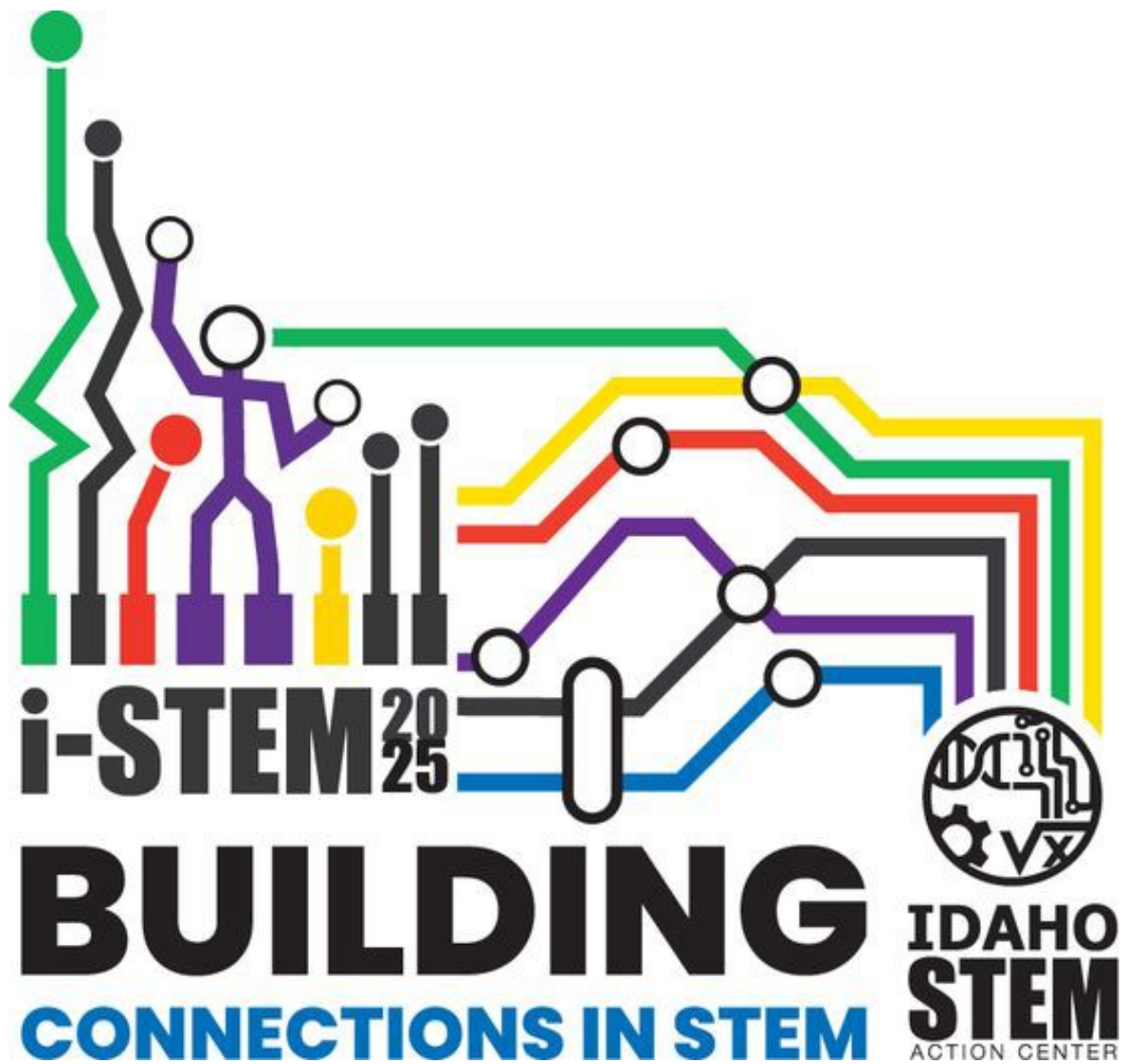
Visit the Curricular Materials webpage to learn about how your work directly impacts LEAs and students throughout the state!

Curriculum Reviews are Needed

Here is a great chance to work with the IDE on reviewing science curriculum for use in the state of Idaho!

[Invitation to review.](#)

[Application to review.](#)



i-STEM Strand Instructors Needed

Are you a STEM education subject matter expert? The i-STEM Strand Instructor application is live! Your expertise could impact hundreds of students across the state of Idaho and help teachers bring cutting edge STEM education into their classrooms. Applications close December 6th, so don't wait!

Apply today here: <https://stem.idaho.gov/istem/istem-instructors/>

RECRUITING NOW

MASTER'S IN TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

Boise State University's STEM Teaching Fellowship

Boise State University is offering a STEM Teaching Fellowship for a community-based cohort of Master's in Teaching candidates that includes at \$10k/salary supplement!

Candidates must be dedicated to high-quality STEM teaching in Idaho's RURAL-serving schools. Program features:

- Initial teacher certificate & Master in Teaching degree
- FULLY paid tuition and fees AND a stipend for living expenses
- \$10,000/year salary supplement for first 4 years of teaching and more!

Interested in more information? Go to bit.ly/stemteachfellow

Upcoming Info Sessions:

- Monday, Nov. 18th, 7:00-7:30 pm
- Tuesday, Nov. 19th, 7:00-7:30 pm

 **THE 2024-2025 PAEMST** 

APPLICATION CYCLE IS NOW OPEN!

APPLY OR NOMINATE AN OUTSTANDING 7-12TH GRADE STEM TEACHER, TODAY



Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Are Now Open!

Do you know an amazing science teacher? We think that you probably do! [Nominate that person](#) for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) the nation's highest honors for teachers of STEM (including computer science). We KNOW Idaho science teachers are doing great work and want to see those efforts celebrated!



Idaho's Externship Program

Externship experiences allow educators to build stronger connections in their communities and bring industry-standard skills and experiences to the classroom! Applications for both hosts and educators will open in January, but you can learn more and sign up for communication [HERE!](#)

Apply or Nominate Today!



Be recognized for your accomplishments and leadership as a science teacher!

Shell Science Teaching Award

Shell Urban Science Educators Development Award

Learn More
www.nsta.org/shell

 **nsta**
National Science Teaching Association

NSTA Science Teaching Awards

There's only one month left to apply or nominate an outstanding teacher in science education for one of the Shell Awards! Don't miss this opportunity to recognize excellence in science teaching. Read more about the awards and how to apply at <https://bit.ly/4fs2Nw5>.



Learning Blade
Powered by eDynamic Learning

Computer Science Education Week

Login to Learning Blade to Explore:

- ✓ Intro to Coding
- ✓ Intro to AI
- ✓ Hack Attack Mission

Learn More

More Information
LearningBlade.com/States



The screenshot shows a lesson page titled "What is Artificial Intelligence?". It features a section "Three Types of AI" with the text: "There are three main kinds of Artificial Intelligence: Narrow AI, General AI, and Super AI. Click on each type of AI to learn more about it:". Below this text are three small images: a futuristic car, a person holding a glowing orb labeled "CHAT AI", and a person interacting with a robot. A paragraph below the images defines General AI: "General AI, also known as strong AI, uses previous knowledge and skills to accomplish new tasks in a different context. In other words, general AI can understand, learn, and apply its knowledge across different areas, just like humans. General AI doesn't exist yet but it probably will in the future!". The page footer indicates "Page 3 of 32" and includes an "Exit" button.

December 9th to 15th, 2024


Learning Blade and Computer Science Week

Kickstart your [#CSEdWeek](https://twitter.com/CSEdWeek) plans with Learning Blade! Join them for a virtual session on Tuesday, December 3rd at 4 PM EST!

What's in it for you?

- Explore computer science lessons in Learning Blade
- Gain actionable ideas to make CS Ed Week unforgettable!

[Register Now!](#)



**Changing the world's
energy future and
securing our nation's
critical infrastructure**

INL Idaho National Laboratory

K-12 Classroom Grants from INL

Idaho National Laboratory's [K-12 Classroom Grants](#) are now available for Idaho teachers and administrators to improve student understanding of and learning experiences in STEM. This grant seeks proposals that support innovative student-centered projects and experiential learning in the classroom. Grant requests vary, with a maximum award of \$2,000. The funding should be used to cover project materials and equipment.



Power To Explore STEM Writing Challenge

Check out NASA's new U.S. K-12 student writing challenge, "Power to Explore." This year's topic is moons of the solar system. Maximum 275 words. Deadline is January 31, 2025. Three grand prize winners will tour NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio next summer.

For more information, click [HERE!](#)

Idaho NASA EPSCoR Summer Faculty Fellowship



Interested in understanding how your research and expertise might meet the needs of NASA?

During this summer fellowship, faculty researchers in Idaho are given time and resources to analyze where their existing research and expertise can benefit NASA.

Application Submission Deadline: January 24, 2025

For more information about the budget and to apply visit:

 www.IdahoNASAepscor.org/summer-faculty-fellowship

Idaho NASA EPSCoR Summer Faculty Fellowships

Are you a faculty researcher at an Idaho college or university? The Idaho NASA EPSCoR is offering Summer Faculty Fellowships to help you explore how your research and expertise can align with NASA's needs.

This opportunity provides the time and resources to:

Analyze NASA's needs through tools like NSPIRES, the NASA Technology Taxonomy, and more.

Identify how your expertise can contribute to NASA's missions.

Connect with the Idaho NASA EPSCoR team to understand processes and pathways to collaboration.

Submit a completed Faculty Fellow Application with:

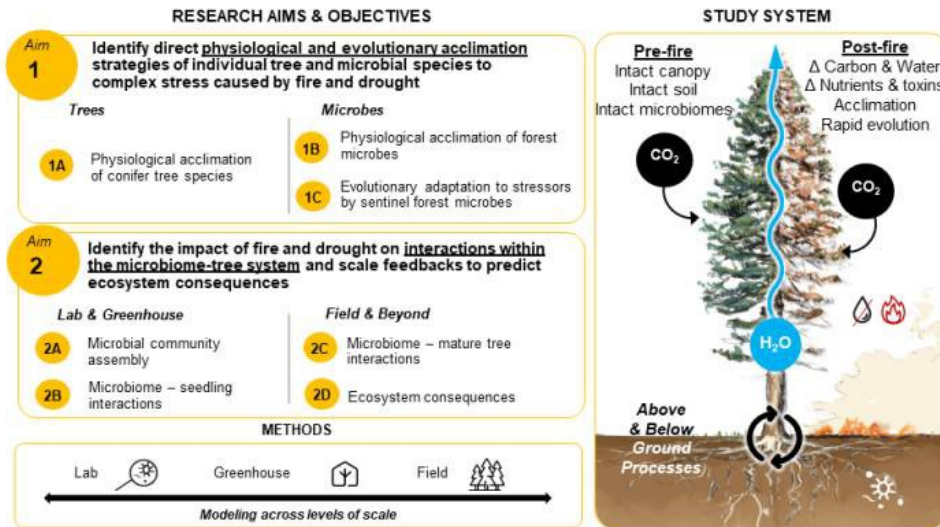
A direct budget for \$5,000 + your institution's F&A (templates available).

A letter of support from your Department Chair.

****Deadline: January 24, 2025****

Don't miss this chance to elevate your research and contribute to NASA's innovative projects!

Learn more and apply today! www.idahonasaepscor.org/summer-faculty-fellowship



Climate Education with the EMBER Project

Attention Educators!

Are you passionate about climate change education and its impact on forest ecosystems? Clean Energy. Bright Futures. is offering stipended professional development opportunities for K-12 teachers as part of the EMBER Project, a 6-year NSF-funded initiative with the University of Idaho (<https://embersci.org/>).

Explore how climate change affects Ponderosa Pine and Douglas Fir forests in the West, and learn to bring hands-on, phenomenon-based lessons into your classroom. Workshops and PD sessions in Winter and Spring 2025 will focus on wildfire ecology, forest recovery, and transdisciplinary science skills.

Sign up to participate or help spread the word!

Complete the interest form: <https://forms.monday.com/.../1f8c9222fb59bd68b0618dc74529...>

Let's empower the next generation of climate problem-solvers together!



DIVERSITY IN STEM EDUCATION SUMMIT

March 21-23, 2025
Washington, D.C.



SEEKING MENTOR AND TEAM APPLICATIONS

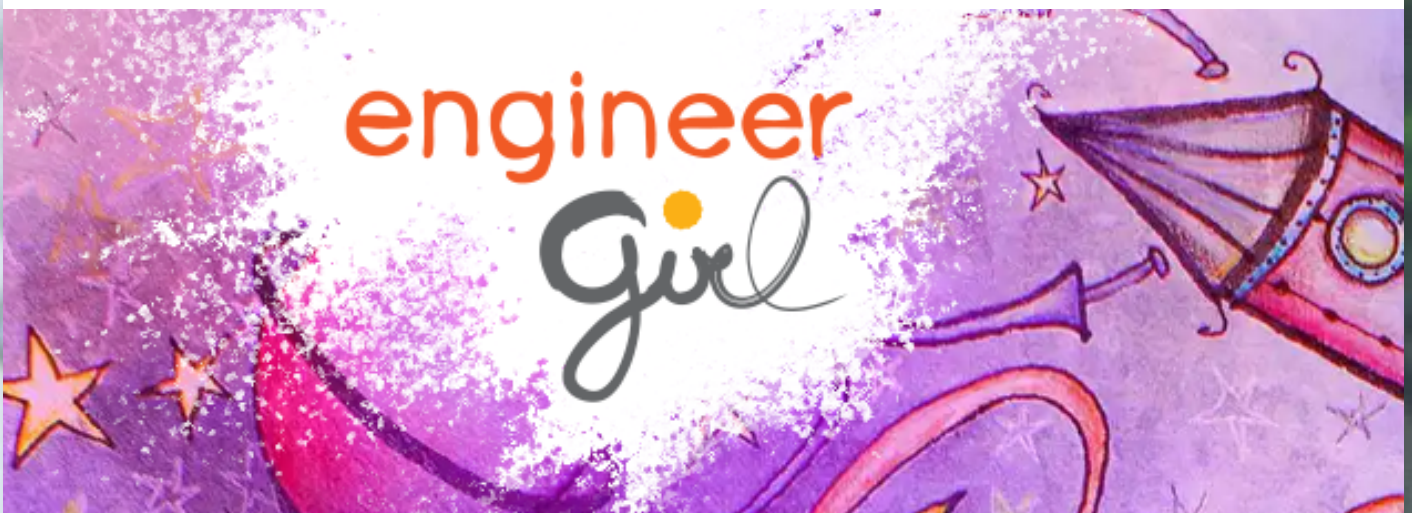
Open to educators, administrators, and
education leaders

Apply by December 13th at 5:00 PM ET

2025 Diversity in STEM Education Summit

Join a vibrant community of educators and leaders helping address the STEM teacher shortage by supporting and creating opportunities for teachers from underrepresented groups! Learn more about the (free!) 2025 Diversity in STEM Education Summit, taking place next March in Washington, D.C., by December 13, 2024: s.si.edu/DISE-Summit

Participants selected for the program who reside outside a 50-mile radius of Washington, D.C. will receive travel and accommodations provided by the Smithsonian Science Education Center.

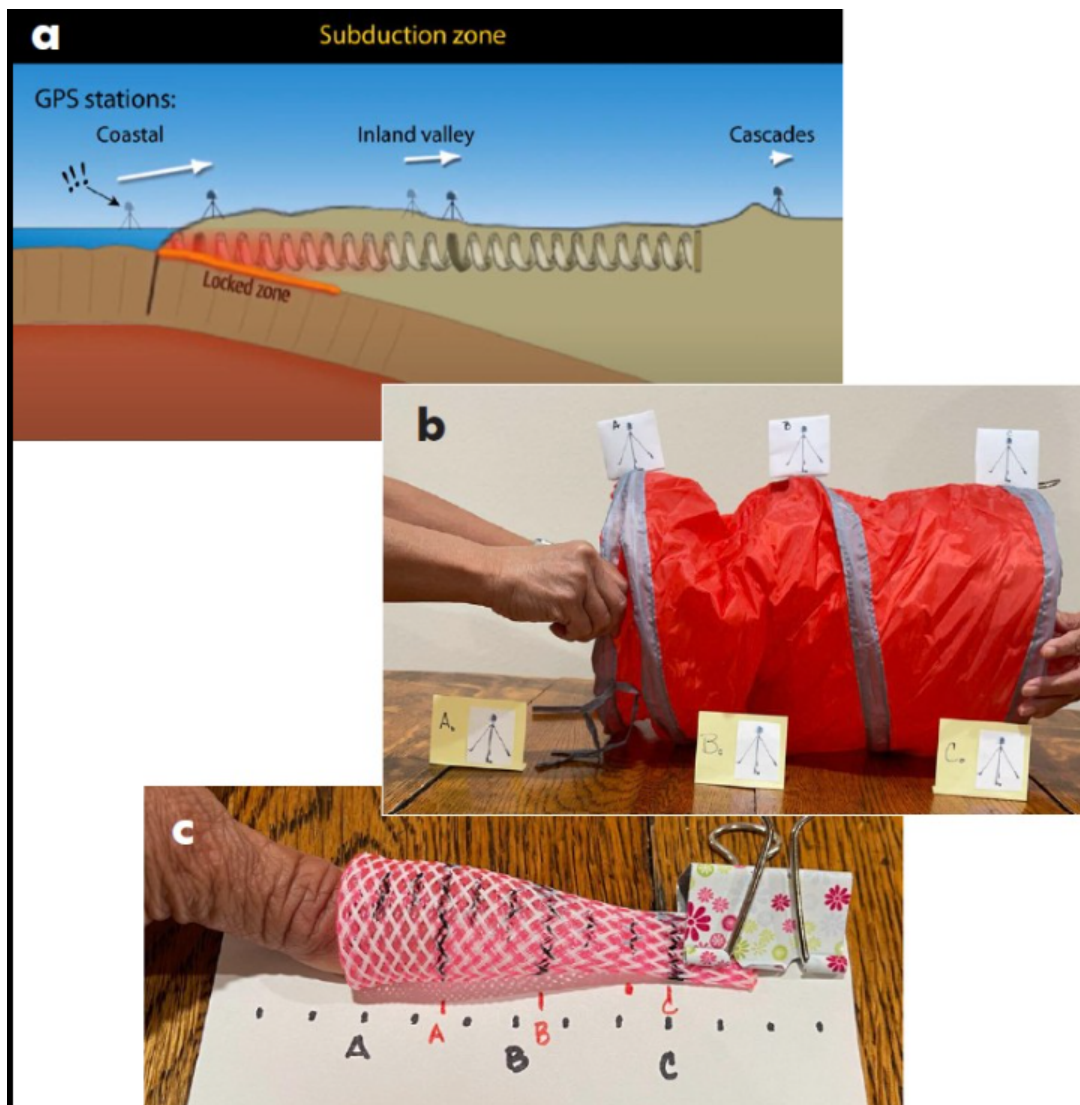


2025 EngineerGirl Writing Contest

The [2025 EngineerGirl Writing Contest](#) invites students to write a piece describing a common object you would make "smart". Tell us what it would do, how it would help people, and what could go wrong.

"Smart" objects are electronic devices that perform some level of computing, and they connect with other devices via the internet. These devices create all sorts of new possibilities for ways that the objects in your home can help you, but that means they also come with new risks.

Imagine an object you wish to make smart—a household appliance, a toy, a piece of furniture, or other technology. Think about the information your smart device would need to function and consider risks or problems you might encounter by making your object smart.



NEW Educator Resource from EarthScope Consortium

ShakeAlert: Pacific Northwest and the Big Squeeze

Through hands-on models, data collection, and vector map analysis, students gain an understanding of how tectonic forces shape the region and the importance of earthquake preparedness.

<https://loom.ly/QrEOWOA>



LiftOff Summer Institute for Educators

LiftOff Summer Institute for Educators is Live!

Calling 5th-12th Grade STEM Educators and Pre-Service Teachers. Application Deadline for the 2025 LiftOff Summer Institute is December 20, 2024.

Learn more using the link below:

<https://www.csr.utexas.edu/liftoff/>

ISTA Board Members 2024-2025

Project Learning Tree Resources

Help multilingual students flourish this year with Project Learning Tree's multidisciplinary approach to teaching. Hands-on activities use nature to improve literacy, build STEM skills, increase engagement, and more! Visit plt.org/explora to learn more.

BOARD MEMBERS



TANYA ELMER
President
Sawtooth High School
Sawtooth School District
tanya@idahoscience.org



CHRIS STOKER
President Elect
Science Coordinator
West Ada School District
cstoker@idahoscience.org



NEVA TELFORD
Past President
Madison Junior High School
Madison School District
ntelford@idahoscience.org



EARLA DURFEE
Executive Secretary
Youth Coordinator
Canyon High School
Payette School District
durfee@idahoscience.org



EMILY SARHA
Region 1
Paul R. Taylor High School
Paul R. Taylor School District
esarha@idahoscience.org



LEE SLICHTER
Region 2
224 Regional Science Center
Lee School District
lee@idahoscience.org



HAILEY BULL
Region 1
Valley Middle School
Valley School District
hailey@idahoscience.org



MCKENZIE SONDRIGGER
Region 5
American Heritage Charter School
Sondregger@idahoscience.org



JAMIE CLARK
Region 5
William Thomas Middle School
American Falls School District
jamie@idahoscience.org



LINGPEI ZOU
Region 6
Ridge Middle School
Julesburg School District
lingpei@idahoscience.org



GINA KWID
Region 7
Canyon STEC Academy
West Ada School District
kwid@idahoscience.org



BETTY PRALL
Elementary Representative
Lewiston Elementary School
Caldwell School District
prall@idahoscience.org



STEVE SHROPSHIRE
Higher Education
Representative
Physics Professor
Idaho State University
shrop@idahoscience.org



ANDREA BAERWALD
State Department of Education
Science Coordinator
baerwald@idahoscience.org



CHRIS TAYLOR
NSTA Region XV Director
Sawtooth Elementary School
Sawtooth School District
ctaylor@idahoscience.org



DARRYL GERBER
Administrator
Science and Health Educator
Sawtooth School District
gerber@idahoscience.org



MELYSSA FERRO
Communications Coordinator
Sawtooth Middle School
Sawtooth School District
mferro@idahoscience.org



Tanya Elmer
Idaho Science Teaching Association President
2023-2025

Email: idahoscienceista@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.idahoscience.org/>
Facebook: [facebook.com/idscienceteachers](https://www.facebook.com/idscienceteachers)
Twitter: [@IdahoScience](https://twitter.com/IdahoScience)



Melyssa Ferro
Melyssa is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters