Public Platform

Promoting the Expansion of and Access to STEM Programs

Purpose

The Student Association for STEM Advocacy (SASA) was founded in 2020 as a way to further and expand STEM advocacy efforts nationwide.

Our mission is to develop student advocates to expand access to STEM opportunities. We envision a future where students enter the workforce engaged in the democratic government of the United States because they were involved in some kind of Advocacy effort to expand and promote STEM Education in high school or college.



To achieve our mission and realize our vision, SASA works toward the following goals:

- Grow the reach and impact of the National Advocacy Conference.
- Organize and run State Advocacy Conferences.
- Grow a diverse membership base.
- Compile existing state regulations and laws that fund afterschool STEM engagement activities as a template from which other states can learn.
- Develop tools for schools and programs to understand how current state and federal resources can be used to aid afterschool STEM activities.

Our Core Beliefs

SASA is driven by a core set of beliefs in all of the work we do and relationships we build. We will not support programs or efforts that do not share these beliefs.

Promote and Embrace Effective STEM Programs

The future of the US economy is knowledge-based and depends on workers trained with STEM skills. That is why we support the expansion of STEM programs to give more students access to these activities.

We do not believe every student should go into a STEM field, but every student must be afforded the opportunity to experience STEM and choose that as their future path. Moreover, the skills students learn while participating in STEM programs will translate to any career path on which they decide. Promoting STEM engagement activities for students will increase the ability of our future workforce to effectively participate in our knowledge-based economy, regardless of their profession.

We want to remove the stigma that STEM education is hard and promote the idea that it is a collaborative problem-solving method that anyone can learn and use.

As an organization, we invite-in and support students from all backgrounds. We do not believe in just one STEM program, but instead, we support any and all effective curricular and extracurricular STEM programs. We believe students, schools, and administrators should be empowered to decide what STEM program is

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best for them. Our drive is to make sure STEM programs are available and accessible across the nation so that all students are exposed to them.

Data-Based Decision Making

We believe in using objective data-based decision making to evaluate STEM programs, legislation, and outcomes. We believe in using data above politics and partisan ideologies to create policy. SASA supports applying the scientific method to solve problems.

Democracy Requires an Engaged, Educated Citizenry

We believe that the strength of our nation and its democracy requires an engaged and educated citizenry. That is why, as an association, we promote student civic engagement to ensure strong participation in our democracy for future generations. We believe it is essential that our members understand how the government works to be able to effectively influence the process.

Furthermore, we believe that creating an engaged citizenry requires building relationships with policymakers and elected officials.

STEM is Not Exclusive

Nothing in our organization's platform excludes the arts and humanities or STEAM. Real-world careers are interdisciplinary. The application of STEM concepts to the arts and humanities is not a new idea and has led to profound human progress, from people such as Leonardo Da Vinci to the Wright Brothers. STEM programs teach students how to problem-solve by thinking critically, creatively, and collaboratively. These skills can and should be used to tackle real-world problems in every industry.

We believe that STEM and the arts are not mutually exclusive, and we do not support the promotion of STEM at the expense of other programs. STEM is an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving, but it is not the only thing.

Policy Priorities

SASA calls on states, Congress, and the Administration to meaningfully incorporate policies that ensure every student has equitable access to STEM engagement programs. SASA's top priorities:

- ✓ Ensure that all schools have adequate funding to provide STEM-based programs, especially in underserved and underrepresented communities.
- ✓ Align teacher professional development requirements and programs with participation in STEM activities.
- ✓ Increase funding for grants used for STEM engagement activities at every level, including raising funding for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) Grants in ESSA Title IV-A to its authorized level of $1.6 billion and STEM Education Programs run through the National Science Foundation to its authorized level of $1.95 billion.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive STEM workforce pipeline by using a small portion of Department of Defense contracts to invest in STEM engagement activities, therefore creating the future workforce that defense contractors and our future economy will need.

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