



Get on board for the Governor's STEM Challenge

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In the first-ever New Mexico Governor's STEM Challenge program — announced July 12 in Albuquerque — New Mexico high school students are challenged to form small teams and develop solutions showing how they would use science and technology to keep the world safer.

Los Alamos National Laboratory formulated the challenge question that participating schools will use as a co-curricular learning tool and a problem-solving focus in science and math classes. [Schools entering STEM teams must register by Aug. 30](#) and submit a written plan and a 10-minute presentation on their model solution by Nov. 22. Among other criteria, the solution must include a computational model, a computer simulation or a physical prototype, and test results.

The Challenge will recognize student achievement in STEM and help New Mexico's student population appreciate the potential that STEM jobs have to address local, state, and global challenges.

Though all STEM classrooms may participate, schools will choose a team of up to 10 students and two teacher mentors by the registration deadline of Aug. 30. The competition is also open to home-educated students, but they would have to join a public high school team.

Public schools will receive funding for teacher stipends, professional development and supplies.

Each STEM team member will receive a New Mexico Activities Association Varsity letter, the same award student athletes receive when they participate on a varsity sports team.

Team-based approach

At the July 12 news conference, Laboratory Director Thom Mason explained that the Laboratory's participation in the challenge is tied to its commitment to create the workforce of tomorrow.

"Applying science, engineering and technology to making the world safer is something we do every day, so this is a challenge that really resonates with us," he says. "The team-based approach is the way that we at the Lab solve those problems, and getting that into the stage of the educational process where people are making their career choices is really important."

"This is not a dry activity," he notes. "This is a hands-on contact sport and definitely deserves a letter!"

The Lab's Community Partnerships Office will be helping to coordinate the STEM Challenge over the next nine months.

The following New Mexico STEM employers are also supporting the challenge: Chevron Mining, Virgin Galactic, Deloitte, Meow Wolf, Freeport McMoran, Intel, Pattern Energy, Facebook, Presbyterian, Descartes Labs, N3B, El Paso Electric, PNM, Boeing, Air Force Research Labs and Sandia National Laboratories.

The LANL Foundation will be managing the STEM businesses' contributions, and also contributing funds for supplies and travel for the student teams.

The challenge will culminate at the [New Mexico Governor's STEM Showcase](#), to be held Dec. 7 in Los Lunas.

STEM employers will judge answers based on the quality of the work and the degree to which the answer uses skills required by New Mexico STEM businesses. Each student on the winning teams will receive \$500, provided by the STEM employers.

This program combines support from teachers and businesses to show our students that learning STEM skills has real meaning and worth," says Bill McCamley, secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. "STEM jobs pay really well — the average salary of an engineer in New Mexico is \$65,000. We want our students to know if they work hard and study these subjects that they can get a great job right here.

[>more information on the Governor's STEM Challenge](#)

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