

West Virginia's Comprehensive Approach to STEM Education

Background: In 2017, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) established the West Virginia Advisory Council for a Comprehensive Approach to STEM¹ Education. The Council's purpose is to ensure STEM work across the state is coordinated, connected, and inclusive. This includes fostering collaboration among advocates across the state to expand STEM awareness, promoting 21st century skills, and supporting computer science education.

The challenge: To create a comprehensive state plan for STEM education

What we did: Staff at the ARCC helped WVDE by:

- Assisting in articulating the state's STEM education vision, mission, and theory of action
- Facilitating the development of a logic model for the STEM approach
- Creating a policy brief on exemplary state models of computer science education
- Engaging the STEM Advisory Council by, for example, managing work flow, producing outputs, and reporting on outcomes
- Serving as co-leaders and facilitators of two of the effort's five collaborative, cross-organization workgroups on key priority areas
- Summarizing workgroup recommendations
- Developing a survey to report STEM Advisory Council members' level of satisfaction with their involvement in the Council and as a member of a specific workgroup

What happened: By 2019, West Virginia:

- Invited workgroup leaders to become members of the WVDE Technical Assistance STEM Team and all workgroup members to join WVDE's STEM "think tank" to offer technical assistance as the state puts recommendations into practice
- Reviewed, considered, and prioritized STEM Advisory Council recommendations
- Determined how recommendations would be actualized in the state's four-year STEM work plan

¹ STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.