2025 - 2026

Annual Report

Columbia Gorge STEM Hub

Columbia Gorge STEM HUB
Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics

Columbia Gorge Education Service District

Prepared by : **COLUMBIA GORGE STEM HUB**

A Department of the Columbia Gorge Education Service District
400 E. Scenic Drive #207 - The Dalles, OR. 97058

WWW.GORGESTEM.ORG







About Us

The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub is one of 13 regional STEM Hubs across Oregon. We accomplish our goals through a Collective Impact Model, partnering with school districts, community-based organizations and STEM industry leaders to increase access to quality STEM learning experiences for youth PreK - 12th grade. The Hub is supported by the Oregon Department of Education and various local donors & sponsors.

Our Mission

The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub supports a regional network of schools, educators, community-based organizations, and business partners working to ensure that ALL learners in the region are STEM literate and future-ready. STEM literate students are able to think critically, design, and apply skills, concepts, and content from science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to understand and solve problems. Future-ready learners have an interest and confidence in STEM topics, the capabilities and skills to succeed in the modern workforce, and a sense that a STEM career is possible for them.

WHO WE SERVE & SUPPORT

- Youth
- Educators
- Community-Based Organizations
- Industry Partners

- **Oregon Counties:** Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco & Wheeler
- **Washington Counties:** Klickitat & Skamania



Our STEM Ecosystem

STEM Hub Staff



Julie Cucuel
STEM Hub Director

Kate Wurster
STEM Hub Coordinator





Carolyn Felderman
STEM Hub Coordinator

Jennifer Hart
STEM Hub Coordinator





Nicole Tolmie
STEM Hub Admin Assistant

Our Funders
2025-26 School Year

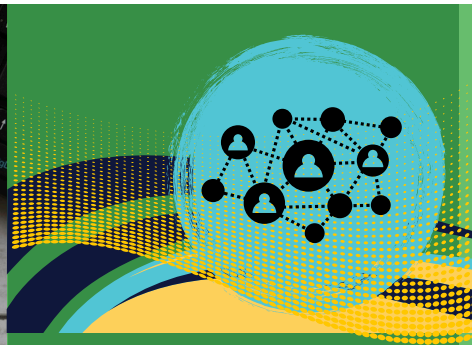
Curious about who powers our work? Check out the full list of our past and present funders here: https://www.gorgestem.org/funders

Our Partners

Our partners—across education, industry, and community organizations—play a vital role in advancing the STEM Hub's mission. Whether through financial support, in-kind donations, or volunteer time, their contributions help drive impactful programs and expand opportunities for students across the region.

For a full list of regional partners visit: **https://www.gorgestem.org/partners**





Connecting Across the Gorge

Effective communication is essential in serving our wide and diverse region. This year, the Columbia Gorge STEM Hub strengthened connections through multiple channels—eNewsletters, a new online forum, and an enhanced website—to ensure educators, partners, and community members remain informed and engaged.

Each month, we shared eNewsletters with our regional network, featuring professional development opportunities, resources, community events, job openings, and educator spotlights. **These newsletters serve as a central hub for timely updates and connection across districts.** Additionally, several articles were shared with local media outlets for publication!

This year, the STEM Hub launched a new online forum for educators and industry partners to connect, collaborate, and share resources. Users can exchange teaching strategies, ask questions, and coordinate projects—**creating a growing professional learning community that's especially valuable for rural and remote districts.**

The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub website was significantly updated this year to enhance usability and expand available resources. It now features an events calendar, downloadable teaching tools, and dedicated pages for educators, families, and partners. **As a living site, it provides 24/7 access to regional initiatives, grants, student opportunities, and STEM career information.**

www.gorgestem.org/newsletter
www.gorgestem.org/groups

1,500 +

contacts across education, industry and community!

Educator Spotlight

We proudly recognize inspiring educators from across our five-county region through our **Educator Spotlight** series. Featured in our newsletter and website, these stories celebrate their dedication, innovation, and impact on students and the broader education community.

www.gorgestem.org/educator-spotlight

2025-2026 EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHTS

Matt Rutledge and **Mandy Webster** were selected for the Fall 2025 aiEDU Trailblazer Fellowship, a 10-week national program that supports K–12 educators as they explore and lead the future of AI readiness in teaching and learning.

Sarah Anderson was named as one of Oregon's 16 2025-26 Regional Teachers of the Year by Oregon Department of Education!

Leah Ferguson was named the 2026 National New Teacher of the Year finalist for Region V by the Association for Career and Technical Education.

Jorma Henson was honored for his thoughtful, hands-on approach to bringing engineering thinking into every corner of his classroom.

Robert Wells-Clark was named the 2026 Oregon Career and Technical Education Professional of the Year by the Oregon Association for Career and Technical Education.



Sarah Anderson


Leah Ferguson


Jorma Henson


Robert Wells-Clark

STEM Champions

Beginning this year, we also honored our **STEM Champions** - industry professionals, regional companies, community-based organizations and individuals supporting our youth in career exploration & STEM awareness. STEM Champions are celebrated in our newsletter and website.

www.gorgestem.org/stem-champion

2025-2026 STEM CHAMPIONS



Danny Cosgrove was named the 2025 Gorge Technology Alliance STEM Educator of the Year for leading STEM outreach at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center. He and his team expand STEM awareness through hands-on events, including Maritime Career Days, Natural Resources Career Day for middle schoolers, and the Discovery Center's popular Grossology event, where students explore science through messy, interactive activities.

Special thanks to **Overwatch Imaging** for its generous $10,000 sponsorship supporting next year's competitive robotics teams across the Gorge. This funding continues our robotics mini-grant program for a fourth year. Over the past three years, in partnership with Gorge Technology Alliance, the program has provided $47,000 in funding to benefit more than 500 students at 12 schools, helping reduce financial barriers to robotics participation.



Early STEAM

Professional Development for early educators and childcare providers, serving our littlest learners.

Over 90 Educators earned a cumulative 430 hours of PD!

Exploring Math Through Play (Oregon Math Leaders Conference)

Educators from across the state came together to explore and share ideas about providing playful math learning opportunities in early childhood and elementary classrooms. We took a look at the K-5 math standards and engaged in hands-on learning and idea sharing.

Preschool/Kindergarten PlayLabs

FOUR RIVERS FAMILY EARLY LEARNING & PARENTING

Supported through funding from Four Rivers Early Learning & Parenting Hub, our region's early educators took part in collaborative conversations and tasks to develop a shared understanding of Kindergarten readiness milestones. Together, they explored play-based experiences that support Kindergarten readiness skills!

Journey to the Stars: Regional Early Learning Conference



In partnership with Child Care Partners and Four Rivers Early Learning & Parenting Hub, we created a day-long Early Learning Conference. Participants gained new strategies in STEM-pedagogy and early literacy. Most important, the conference provided a space for educators to collaborate with others from across our 5-county region.







Funded by: Oregon Department of Education, Four Rivers Early Learning & Parenting Hub

In Partnership with: Child Care Partners, Four Rivers Early Learning & Parenting Hub and Oregon Math Leaders

What's happening in 26-27? We will continue to support the integration of STEM across content areas by offering professional development for PreK educators & child care providers.

District Integrated PD

The STEM Hub collaborates with K-12 districts to integrate free, specialized professional development right into their scheduled training days, building collective efficacy for the district's educators. By bringing these programs directly to campus, we make it easy for educators to grow as a cohesive team and drive school-wide STEM opportunities & learning for students.

PD OFFERINGS

- Problem-Based Engineering
- Code.org for Computer Science Integration
- Artificial Intelligence in Education
- Supporting Gen Z
- Power of Productive Struggle
- Next Generation Science Standards
- Google Workspace Tips & Tricks
- Teach Engineering

NEARLY 800 HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EARNED BY 250+ EDUCATORS

2X MORE THAN LAST YEAR!







Funded by: Oregon Department of Education

What's happening in 26-27?
We will continue to offer STEM Professional Development, at no cost to our region! **As technology rapidly changes, we anticipate a bigger need for AI in Education training for our educators.**

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS / PROGRAMS:

- Columbia Gorge Community College
- Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum
- Columbia Gorge Education Service District
- Dufur School District
- Hood River County School District
- North Central Education Service District
- North Wasco County School District

STEM in Schools

Bringing activities into local elementary schools & community programs to inspire students and empower teachers!

This year, we visited classrooms & programs to bring hands-on STEM directly to students in classrooms & out-of-school programs. Students experience design challenges, engineering and computer science & teachers were shown through active modeling how to integrate STEM into their lessons!

Storybook STEM

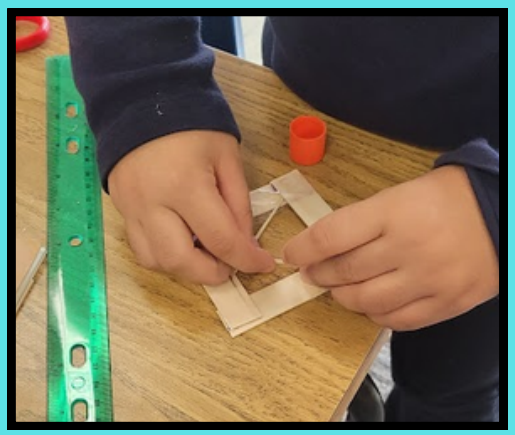
Participating Schools & Programs:

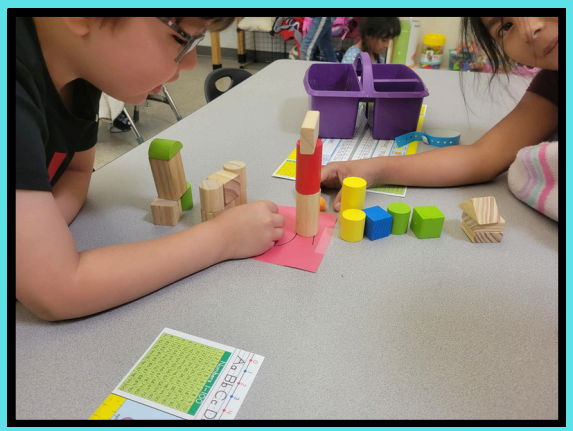
- Arlington School District
- St. Mary's Academy
- Chenowith Elementary School
- Chenowith Elementary - Afterschool Program
- Rivera's Preschool
- Spray Elementary
- Wy'East Middle School - Afterschool Program
- The Dalles Public Library

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education

Ready to spark some STEM excitement in your classroom? Invite Carolyn, our Guest STEM Teacher, to your classroom! She'll bring the "wow" factor with real-world experiences that get your PreK & Elementary students fired up. **Email: cfelderman@cgesd.k12.or.us**

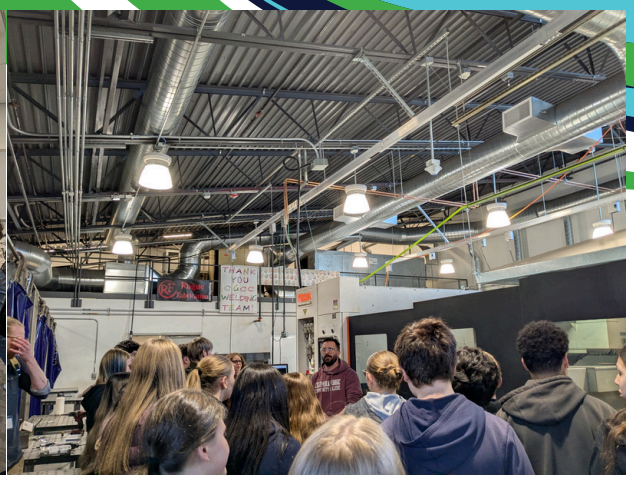












Next Steps: Careers in The Gorge

The Next Steps career awareness event engaged nearly 200 eighth-grade students in hands-on exploration of regional career pathways. In partnership with Columbia Gorge Community College, students participated in interactive sessions, campus tours, and direct conversations with industry professionals, helping connect classroom learning to real-world opportunities.

Future-Focused Students:

- The Dalles Middle School: 169, 8th graders
- Mosier Community School: 16, 8th graders
- St. Mary's Academy: 14, 8th graders

"It was really cool because you got to hear about the little details of the jobs. I liked the park ranger and the trail technology stuff, and the wheat scientist talking about how the balance between what types of wheat that farmers want to grow and which ones the deer want to eat was also really interesting. It made the jobs feel more real." 8th Grader, The Dalles Middle School

Future-Focused Partners:

- Adventist Health
- Oregon State Parks
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Oregon Veterans' Home
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Columbia Gorge Education Service District
- Columbia Gorge Community College
- OSU Extension

Participating in the event was "a powerful opportunity to engage with students who are just beginning to explore career pathways and help them envision their potential role as future land stewards. Visibility matters, representation matters, and conversations matter, helping students see themselves reflected in meaningful, place-based careers."
-Elika Paki, Park Ranger 2 with Oregon State Parks

East Cascades WORKS
Connecting Talent To Opportunity

COLUMBIA GORGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COLUMBIA GORGE DISCOVERY CENTER & MUSEUM
HOME

DEQ

Funding: East Cascades Works, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
In Partnership with: Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, Columbia Gorge Community College
What's happening in 26-27? We are excited to announce continued funding from East Cascades Works to host another Middle School Career Awareness event at Columbia Gorge Community College. This event will bring together CGCC faculty and regional industry partners to provide students with hands-on exploration of maritime careers and other high-demand local industries.

Oregon Math Project



In partnership with STEM Hubs across Oregon, educators from our region engaged in math-focused professional learning through the Oregon Math Project. Opportunities for professional development were provided both statewide and regionally, supporting educators in shifting their instructional practices. The learning centered on math mindsets, insights from neurological research, alignment with math standards, and strategies to boost student engagement. Additionally, progress continues on the development of +1 High School Math courses - a project unique to Oregon!

Sum It Up: A Year of Math PD

Counting More Than Hours — Celebrating Learning & Growth

PD Offerings:

- AMTE Annual Conference
- Regional Middle School PLC
- K-8 Mindset Mathematics
- Statewide Mathish Book Study
- Statewide Middle School PLC

73 educators from the Gorge received over **430 hours** of math-focused professional learning

+1 High School Math Course Development - in progress!

"It was great to be with other teachers who were vulnerable and honest about their struggle with teaching math. It made me feel brave and normal, with hope that it can change in the future. I can't wait to start making some changes in my approach, based on what I learned during these sessions!

"My favorite part of the book study was meeting in grade level groups and discussing resources and how they related to the ideas we learned about."

OREGON MATH PROJECT
Meaningful Math for Every Student

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education - Oregon Math Project

In Partnership with:
Oregon's STEM Hub Network

What's happening in 26-27?
There will continue to be opportunities for educators to participate in math-focused professional learning.



Community Events

The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub supports free, community-led events by offering hands-on STEM booths—featuring activities like catapults, LEGOs, and robots—or by providing custom kits for larger events like Grossology Night or Eagle Watch!









FALL

Grossology Night at the Discovery Center
GNAC Trunk or Treat
Sherman County Trunk or Treat

WINTER

Eagle Watch - The Dalles Dam

SPRING

Cherry Festival
Dia del Nino Celebrations
Wasco County Children's Fair
Math Day @ CGCC

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education

Events Led by: Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, Child Care Partners, Hood River County Library, The Dalles Dam Visitor Center, Gorge Native American Collaborative, YouThink, Region 6 Migrant Education Program, Columbia Gorge Community College, Child Care Partners, US Army Corp of Engineers

What's happening in 26-27? The STEM Hub will participate in community and organization sponsored events during the 2026-27 school year!

School STEM Events






STEM Events are one-time, hands-on events held across the Columbia Gorge region that make STEM fun, engaging, and accessible for students and their families. These events feature a variety of activity stations all designed to show that STEM is for everyone. Each event is made possible through partnerships with local schools, working together to bring meaningful, community-centered STEM experiences directly to students and their families. Additionally, STEM learning stations were integrated into school events like Field Day and CTE Fairs.

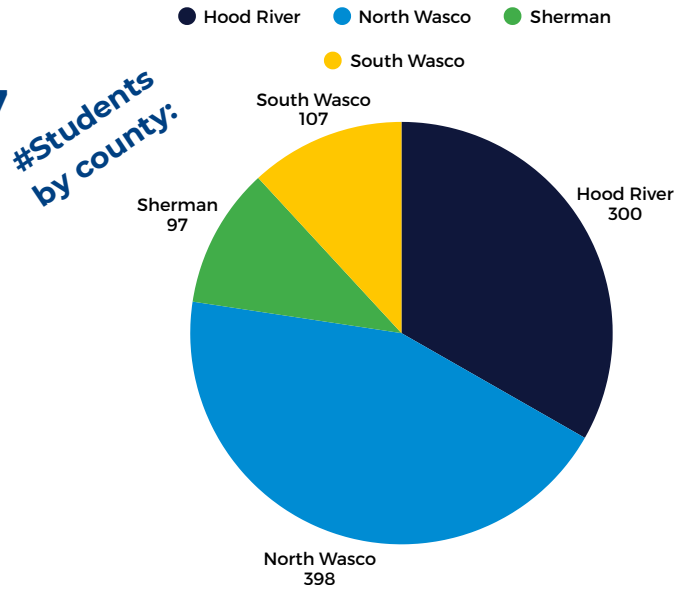
STEM Night Snapshot

District/Program Partners: 7

Chenowith Elementary School
Chenowith Afterschool Program
Dufur School District
Hood River County School District
Rivera's Bilingual Preschool
South Wasco County Library
Sherman County School District

Students impacted: ~900

#Students by county:



"Our families LOVED this spectacular, hands on event. What an amazing resource you provide for getting children excited about Math, Science, Engineering and Technology! Thank you for making such a difference with our students!!"
– Jane Osborne - Assistant Principal, May Street Elementary

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education

What's happening in 26-27? We will continue to offer STEM Kits to schools and programs interested in hosting STEM Nights and STEM events!

Championing STEM:

Celebrating STEM through regional, statewide, and national events that inspire innovation, empower future talent, and embrace tomorrow's technology!

National STEM Day

For National STEM Day, sponsored by Oregon STEM, educators were encouraged to try STEM Bites, a K–6 open-source science curriculum developed by the STEM Hub Network.

Computer Science Ed Week

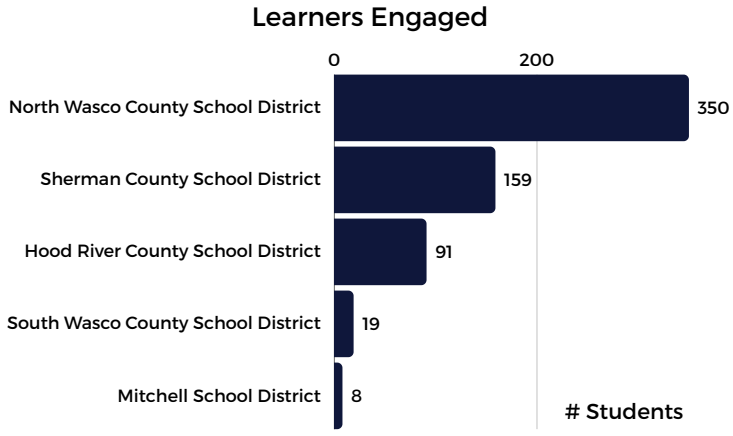
Computer Science Education Week featured AI Literacy modules for K–5 classrooms and Cybersecurity modules for Middle & High school students. These lessons introduced students to AI concepts and ethics, sparking curiosity and building a strong foundation.

600 Students and 14 Educators joined the national celebration!

Oregon STEM Week

Sponsored by Oregon STEM and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)—the week-long celebration featured ready-to-use activities for educators! Along with highlighting previous curriculum and resources from STEM Week's past, this year featured mini lessons combining AI with traditional classroom engineering challenges!

623 students from 5 districts celebrated OR STEM Week 2026!!



"This is AMAZING! Thank you for the slides! You make it really easy to implement and share with students."
- Krista Cushman, Westside Elementary

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education, Oregon STEM, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers

What's happening in 26-27? Resources from past celebrations will remain available to educators on our website. We will continue hosting and elevating STEM celebrations!

Microgrants

With support from the **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality**, our grants this year opened doors to new career pathways for local students.

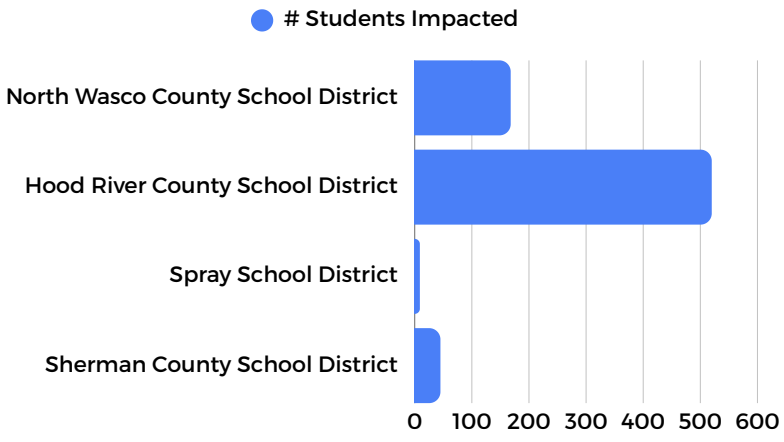
Through engaging field trips, **742 students across 14 schools and 4 districts** got a firsthand look at their future. They had the opportunity to visit places like Columbia Gorge Community College, Madras Airport and local construction sites and advanced manufacturing facilities; funding provided opportunities for some to attend Central Oregon's Skills Trades Fair, and even team up with scientists out in the wetlands!

"For many, this was their first time visiting an operating airport facility. Students were able to experience the magic of flight on this trip, while exploring potential careers in aviation."
- **Ms. VanSickle, Spray School District**

One student noted: "I've always wanted to fly, but I never knew there were so many jobs on the ground too, This made it feel real - something I can do!"







Funded by: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
What's happening in 26-27? We are actively seeking funding to support our Microgrant Program. Due to recent reductions in funding from Oregon Department of Education, our Microgrant program will be placed on pause until additional funds can be secured.

Since 2017, the Columbia Gorge STEM Hub has invested an incredible $153,464 in Microgrant funding!

Lending Library

Our Free Resource Library

https://www.gorgestem.org/lendinglibrary

Our Lending Library offers educational kits and materials at no charge to educators in Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, and Wheeler counties in Oregon, as well as Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington. Delivery to and from their school or after-school program is included.

Participating Students: 1,200+ | Participating Educators: 30+



"Having access to these materials means we can offer engaging activities without purchasing and storing large collections ourselves. They help create a welcoming environment for youth while their families participate in important community programs." Danny Cosgrove - Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum

Participating Schools & Programs:

ABC Huskies Daycare
A05 Robotics at HRVHS
Chenowith Elementary
Colonel Wright Elementary
Condon Elementary
Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum
Dry Hollow Elementary
Great & Small Childcare
Hood River Valley HS
Hope Academy
Horizons Chrisitan School
Klickitat Elementary
May Street Elementary
Mill A School
Mosier Community School
OCDC at Mid Valley
Parkdale Elementary
Sherman County SD
Sunshine Preschool
Westside Elementary

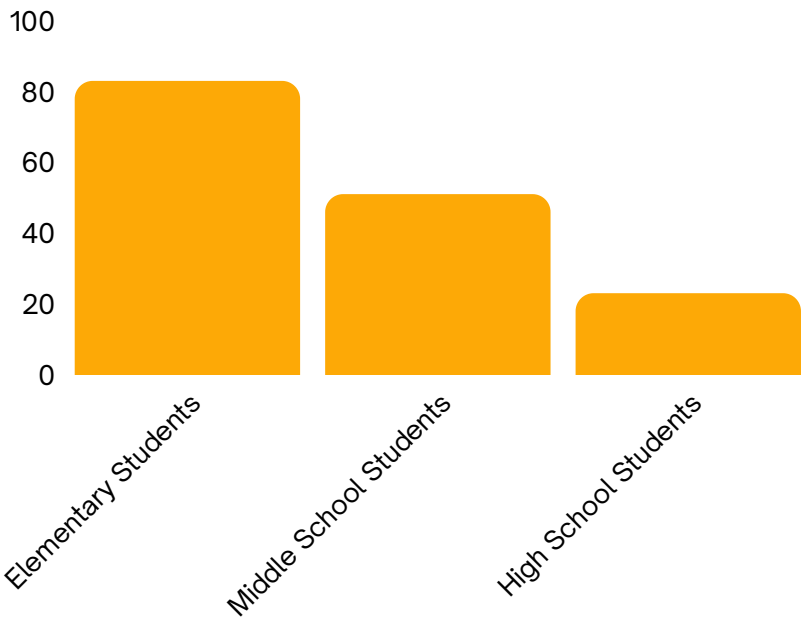
Funded by: Oregon Department of Education, Airbus Flexrotor, East Cascades Works, Gorge Community Foundation (Salvador Fund)

What's happening in 26-27? We remain committed to providing our Lending Library resources and will expand our collection as funding permits. We welcome industry partners to **sponsor a Lending Library Kit**, helping to give students practical, hands-on experience in their field and increasing access to high-demand career pathways throughout the region.

Gorge Community Foundation · AIRBUS FLEXROTOR · Oregon Department of Education · East Cascades Works — Connecting Talent To Opportunity

Robotics in the Gorge

ROBOTICS MINI GRANTS:
$17,600 in mini-grants sponsored by Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA) were awarded to support regional robotics programs, allowing **163 students** to participate at no cost - ensuring equitable access and removing barriers for our students & their families! Additionally, Lego Robotics kits were made available for lending to Elementary programs, at no cost.







PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS & PROGRAMS:
Hood River Valley High School Solar Storms
Gorge Makerspace
South Wasco County School District
Hood River County School District
North Wasco County School District
HRCSD - Unified Robotics

Funded by: Gorge Technology Alliance, Oregon Department of Education

What's happening in 26-27? Funding for competitive and exploratory robotics programs will continue, thanks to a strong and ongoing partnership with the Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA) and sponsorship from Overwatch Imaging. The GTA and its members play a vital role in shaping the region's future workforce, consistently investing time, resources, and expertise to support hands-on STEM education and innovation.

Little Free Library Project

The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub's Little Free Library initiative paired real-world learning with community impact. Local CTE students designed and built libraries that are now installed in regional schools, parks, and childcare centers—strengthening their career skills while giving families easy access to books to boost early literacy.

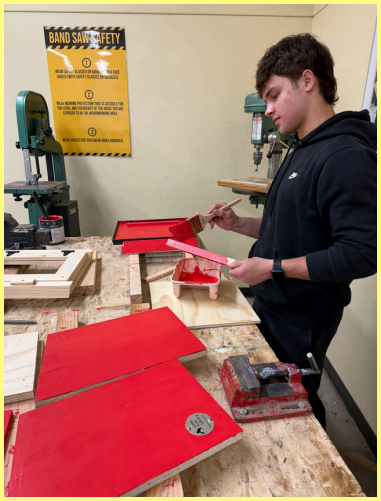
21 Library Hosts:

- Arlington Elementary & Preschool
- The Forge Coffee Shop & Azure Market
- Hood River History Museum
- Chenowith Elementary
- South Gilliam Health Clinic
- Little Explorers Preschool
- The Annex & Gloria Center
- Burns Park
- Cascade Locks Elementary
- South Wasco Skate Park & Baseball Field
- Local orchards & Migrant housing hosts

Student Builders:

- Hood River Middle School
- Hood River Valley High School
- Arlington School District
- Dufur High School
- South Wasco County High School
- Wildwood Academy







We are incredibly grateful to our generous sponsors for funding the construction of our Little Free Libraries and putting books directly into the hands of local families:

- **Roundhouse Foundation**
- **Oregon Community Foundation**
- **Four Rivers Early Learning Hub**

Thanks to our sponsors for making this project possible and fostering a love of reading across our community!



CTE Regional Advisory

In partnership with High Desert ESD and East Cascades Works, the Hub continues to lead the Regional CTE Advisory Committee—a biannual convening that strengthens collaboration among educators, industry, and community partners across the Gorge. The committee is a coordinated regional action focused on strengthening consistent industry engagement, expanding real-world learning opportunities, and aligning around a shared framework for career readiness.

2025-26 School Year Participants

Education:

Arlington
CGESD
CGCC
Dufur
HRCSD
NWCSD
SWCSD

Industry & Organizations:

Avangrid Power
Adventist Health
Workforce OR
OSU Extension
One Community Health
Curtis Homes
Crestline Construction
Cardinal IG
Intel
Trillium Engineering
East Cascades Work
The Next Door, Inc.
Four Rivers Early Learning Hub
Columbia Gorge Health Council
OR State Parks & Rec
Asphalt Pavement Association
US Army Corp of Engineers
Kiddie City
Zepher
Smoke Wring BBQ
Cousins Restaurant & Inn
Kaneda Consulting
Kracken Creative LLC
Columbia Gorge Discovery Center
Child Care Partners
OR Employment Dept
MCEDD / GTA

Funded by: Oregon Department of Education

What's happening in 26-27? The Regional CTE Advisory Committee will continue to meet biannually, with a stronger focus on action and implementation.

Thank You









We're filled with gratitude for the incredible educators, partners, and volunteers who have powered another impactful school year of STEM education in the Gorge! Your passion and dedication have been the spark behind everything we've achieved, opening doors of opportunity and igniting curiosity in the next generation of innovators.

Because of your support, we've made meaningful strides—expanding access to STEM and strengthening our community. You've helped turn bold ideas into real progress, and we're truly thankful.

Here's to all we've built together and to the exciting road ahead. We can't wait to keep growing and inspiring with you in the coming school year...and beyond!

~The Columbia Gorge STEM Hub Team