

ABC CREATE Quarterly



Vol .04
December 2023

LIVE STUDENT CODING SESSIONS



FUTURE READINESS CONFERENCE



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

LEVERAGING EDUCATION
to ACCELERATE DIVERSITY
and SUCCESS

ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM

STEAM LEARNING

PARTNERS: SCHOOLS,
BUSINESS, COMMUNITY

COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES

EXTENDING IMPACT

A LOOK INSIDE L.E.A.D.S.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

FAMILY STEAM NIGHTS



Elementary CS/STEAM



STUDENT SESSIONS WITH CODEJOY

Photo Credit: Dr. Stan Whiteman, [@DrStanWhiteman](#)

Live virtual coding sessions with CodeJoy are back again this year! We will never tire of seeing the excitement on students' faces as they watch their code controlled robots move around in the CodeJoy studio in real time.

The first of four planned series, Robot Memories, took place in November. Already, more than 534 students across nine districts joined Kelsey and Matt the Robot from [CodeJoy](#) for this interactive virtual field trip session. Participants learned to code loops, pause blocks, and parallel programming to help Grandma Dottie share her stories with her grandchildren.



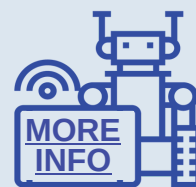
"My students LOVED our CodeJoy experience. Matt and Kelsey did a great job filtering through the comments. My students felt so heard! I'd love to do this again!"

*– Danielle Bratton
Franklin Regional*

Upcoming Series

**Robot Aerobics
(Hummingbird):**
Jan. 16 - 18

**Robot Relaxation
(Micro:bit):**
Jan. 30 - Feb. 2



About Student Sessions

- Ideal for beginner to intermediate coders in grades 3-8
- 30-45 minute sessions
- Students need computers or tablets; no robots required
- Open to ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts
- Sessions can be scheduled at a time during the scheduled weeks that works for the class

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. STEAM LEARNING



SCHOOL2SCHOOL SHOWCASE

ABC CREATE's School2School Showcase is a new teacher peer-based professional learning format that is actively being tested and implemented across six districts. Matched schools are opening their doors to learn from each other during the school day.

The idea for the School2School Showcase came out of leadership team meeting in fall 2023, as leaders from across the collaborative wrestled with the difficulty of releasing teachers for PD due to the substitute shortage being experienced. The idea resonated with many, and so a group of teachers and school leaders came together to form a plan.

Six districts were the first to express interest and to volunteer to develop the new format.



REGION 1:
Freeport
Allegheny Valley
Burrell (Bon Air)

REGION 2:
Apollo Ridge
Franklin Regional (Primary)
Kiski Area (North Primary)

Educators can nominate themselves and school district administrators can volunteer to have some of their teachers offer a lesson in their classrooms; those teachers will then host educators from other ABC CREATE districts who will visit and observe a STEAM-integrated classroom lesson in a core subject. This is designed to support peer-to-peer relationships while also strengthening STEAM teaching and learning.

SCHOOLS, BUSINESS, COMMUNITY



PennState
New Kensington

FUTURE READINESS CONFERENCE

This Fall, the Education Vanguard Conference hosted by Penn State New Kensington convened more than 100 educators, business professionals, and academic faculty to build awareness of the AI and other technology-driven changes ahead, and to activate college-level collaboration and knowledge sharing across the region.



“I was impressed by our students’ professionalism, preparedness and thoughtful reflections of their learning and future readiness not only during the session they presented, but also while interacting with the other conference participants.”

- Laura Fleisher Proaño,
Highlands School District

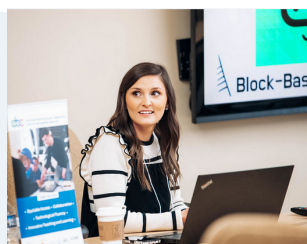
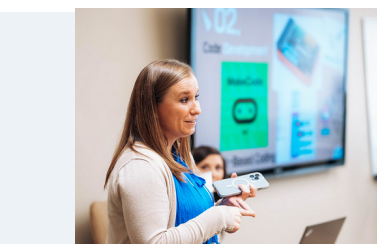
SCHOOLS, BUSINESS, COMMUNITY



PennState
New Kensington

FUTURE READINESS CONFERENCE

ABC CREATE brought K-12 student and teacher voices into the room -- giving higher ed faculty and other professionals a chance to learn more about the future-ready skills that area students are developing:



flickr
EVENT ALBUM



- **Jessica Queck** and **Kimberly Osheskie** led a session entitled “*Robot Relics: The Art of a Digital Petting Zoo*”
- **Colleen Smith** highlighted “*Impactful Collaborative Partnerships*” and the 2023 Kids’ Summer STEAM Camp
- **Laura Fleischer Proaño** along with six of her students presented “*Building Future Readiness: STEAM Integration in the World Language Classroom*”
- **Courtney Barbiaux** led a session entitled “Global Goals, Local Impact; Project-Based Learning and Community Engagement”
- **Darcy Holtzman, Carmen Loughner, Courtney Barbiaux, and Laura Fleischer Proaño** joined Penn State’s **Justin Aglio** and **Colleen Smith** and Westmoreland County Forum for Workforce Development’s **Anthony Princeton** on a panel to discuss “Preparing K-12 Learners to Thrive”

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES



FAMILY STEAM NIGHTS + DIGITAL PLAYGROUNDS

ABC CREATE continues to create and model community-based events, led by expert teachers across the region, to engage school-aged learners, their families, and the greater community in hands-on computer science, STEAM, and future-ready learning experiences.

In early December, ABC CREATE was proud to support Jessica Queck and Freeport's South Buffalo Elementary educators at their inaugural Family STEAM Night. The event served both as a family engagement night and as ABC CREATE's first L.E.A.D.S. K-2 Digital Playground. Freeport teachers paired with educators from across ABC CREATE to lead Polar Express themed STEAM stations and to learn from one another.

Wow, what an amazing evening at Freeport! Everyone did an amazing job! We really enjoyed the evening and it gave us a boost of energy moving into the holiday season! We are excited to show our students these activities. THANK YOU!

Lorin Ervin,
New Kensington-Arnold

It was so good to see old friends and make new ones. I left the event with more vigor in my step and some new ideas for the year.

Cathy Favo, a primary school teacher from Riverview, who has long been active in ABC CREATE



**2+ HOURS
OF FUN**



**10 STEAM
STATIONS**



**100+
ATTENDEES**



**9 VISITING
DISTRICTS**



**20 VISITING
TEACHERS**

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

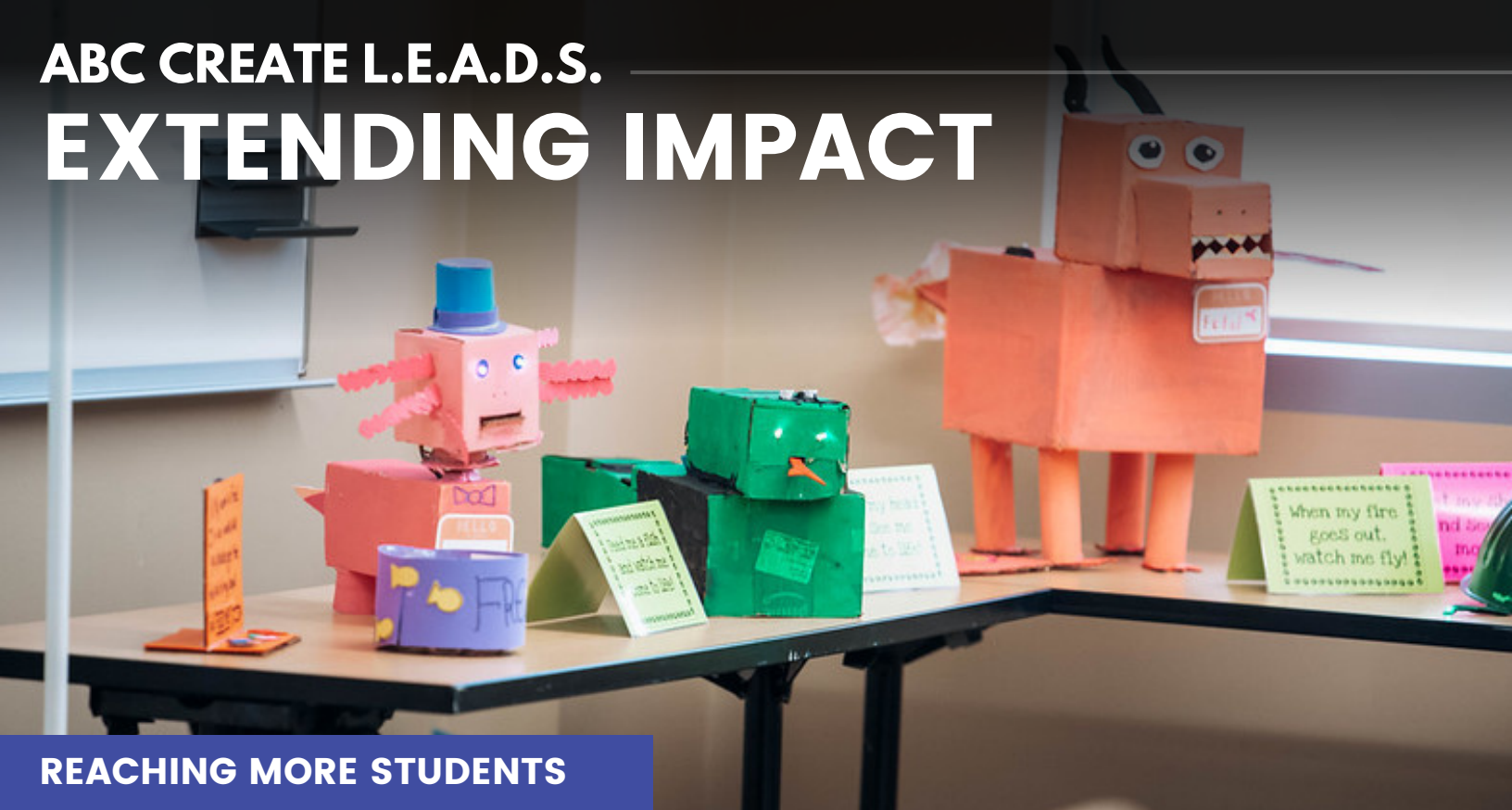
COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES



While dozens of students, siblings, parents, and grandparents had fun learning and trying out various robots and technologies on hand, elementary teachers from across the region who were interested in learning more about STEAM used the event as a playground to explore, experiment, and observe the enthusiastic engagement of students and families.



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. EXTENDING IMPACT



REACHING MORE STUDENTS

With a record of impact and a vision of being a change agent in the Alle-Kiski Valley by investing in the next generation of students through innovative STEAM education, ABC CREATE is growing our footprint!

Since its founding in 2014, ABC CREATE has been a joint effort of 14 member school districts in the Alle-Kiski region, coordinated by Penn State New Kensington. As we look ahead to soon beginning our tenth year as a collaborative, we are embarking on several efforts to extend our reach.

Most significantly, ABC CREATE will be inviting up to ten new school districts to become contributing members of the collaborative beginning in the 2024-25 school year. To kick that off, seven districts have begun a pilot membership this school year that aims to provide a taste of what participation both requires and offers in the way of professional development, tools, and collaboration.

Additionally, we continue to reach outside the collaborative as opportunities present themselves. For example, this fall Christy Orloskey, a former Armstrong teacher, partnered with ABC CREATE to introduce the Spheros and Finch robots to elementary pre-service teachers at Mt. Aloysius College.

PARTNER DISTRICTS

Allegheny Valley | Apollo-Ridge | Armstrong | Burrell | Deer Lakes | Fox Chapel | Franklin Regional
Freeport | Highlands | Kiski Area | Leechburg | New Kensington-Arnold | Plum Borough | Riverview

PILOT DISTRICTS

Greensburg Salem | Homer-Center | Indiana | Jeannette City | Marion Center | River Valley | United

A LOOK INSIDE L.E.A.D.S.



TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, ABC CREATE is proud to have developed a reputation for high-quality and relevant professional development (PD). The task of getting the PD to teachers, however is one that requires creativity and fortitude.

In response to teachers' requests for out-of-school, deep learning experiences that allow for peer connection across the region, ABC CREATE has hosted a number of successful full-day showcases and workshops that have been well attended and appreciated. However, a regional substitute shortage is increasingly making it impossible for teachers to leave their buildings, and as a result we are having to stay flexible and find new modes of getting PD to teachers.



More and more, we are tapping into teachers' time outside of the school day by scheduling afternoon, evening, and summer sessions.

We now budget teacher stipends into our grant applications, so that we can value and incentivize the extra investment being made by teachers to attend PD after hours. We are also trying more embedded strategies like the School2School STEAM Showcase.

There is no perfect design of PD delivery. What's most important is to listen to teachers, partner with districts, and stay nimble and responsive to finding an approach that gets teachers the high-quality PD they want and deserve.

TIPS FOR GETTING OPTIONAL PD TO TEACHERS



ASK TEACHERS

What do teachers want, and when do they want it? Never make assumptions. Ask teachers about what it would take to get them to attend optional PD. Learn about current barriers, and problem solve together. Enlist a teacher advisory group.

WORK WITH DISTRICTS

Do what you can to understand district PD calendars and structures. Learn about their priorities and, again, the barriers. Get creative together.

TRY AND TRY AGAIN

Be willing to try new formats. Pay attention to what works and what doesn't. Communicate well, keep the barriers to entry low, and keep trying.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

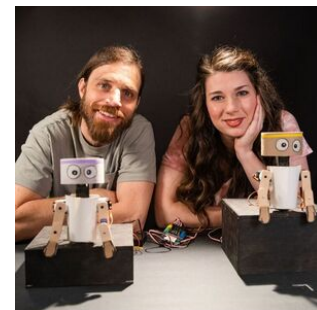
ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM

CodeJoy Virtual Student Sessions

Sessions now through February 2, 2024

Join Kelsey and Matt the Robot from CodeJoy for this interactive virtual field trip session for students!

- Ideal for 3rd-8th grade; beginner to intermediate coders
- 30-45 minutes, scheduled at YOUR convenience
- Up to 400 participants with computers or Chromebooks, **no robots required**

[REGISTER](#)

CodeJoy Virtual Teacher PD Sessions with Hummingbird, Finch, and Micro:bit

Beginning in February 2024

Free, 3-hour, virtual professional development for beginner level teachers in [ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts](#)

- Attending educators will receive a **\$40/hour \$tipend**
- A free Micro:bit, Hummingbird, or Finch robot will be given to eligible participants (while supplies last). Click [HERE](#) to see if you are eligible to receive a free robot.

[REGISTER](#)

SCRIPT Training

January 24-25, 2024 @ Penn State New Kensington
(Allegheny County schools)

February 28-29, 2024 @ Penn State New Kensington
(Armstrong and Westmoreland County schools)

The Strategic CSforALL Resource & Implementation Planning Tool (SCRIPT) framework guides district teams through collaborative visioning and goal-setting exercises to create or expand upon their PK-12 computer science education plan.

- ABC CREATE is coordinating sessions to enhance regional collaboration.
- Contact Colleen Smith at cms64@psu.edu to learn more.

ABC CREATE

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

CS/STEAM

ABC CREATE LEADS Botluck

March 14, 5 - 7 PM, @ Penn State New Kensington

REGISTER



Bring a robot, a question, an idea, or just an open mind to this free, 2-hour, in person professional development.

- Novice and seasoned educators welcome; any subject, any grade level
- All [ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts](#) teachers who attend will receive a **\$40/hour \$tipend**

Coming in Winter/Spring 2024

ABC CREATE LEADS Mini-Pathway Writing Sessions

- Mini-pathways writing sessions led by experienced ABC CREATE educators will bring together teachers who are integrating CS/STEAM lessons to capture and share these proven and promising practices for use by other educators.
- These writing sessions will be held during out-of-school time (likely offered in-person and virtually) and will be ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. **\$40/hour \$tipend**-eligible.

PARTNERS: SCHOOL, BUSINESS, COMMUNITY

FREE BirdBrain Teacher Professional Development

Learn robotics and coding through hands-on experiences and how to integrate robotics into any subject or grade level.

LEARN MORE +
REGISTER



- **Cultural Connections with Hummingbird:** December 9 – February 5
- **Python with Finch Robot:** December 2 – January 20

EXTENDING IMPACT

Westmoreland Intermediate Unit's STEM Network

December 15, 2023

February 6 and May 14, 2024

LEARN MORE



- Hosted by WIU7, full-day opportunities for educators in the region to network, learn, and collaborate.
- Contact Lauren Cunningham at lcunningham@wiu7.org with any questions related to this network.

CONNECT WITH US:



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