

EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSUMER &
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A group of 32 people met in March for the first STEAM strategic planning meeting for the Greater Peoria region. Lisa Bievenue from Champaign Urbana Community Fab Lab facilitated the workshop that set the stage for strengthening STEAM education throughout the area.

Strategic Program Planning Process Sets the Stage for Strengthening STEAM Education

In March, University of Illinois Extension, in collaboration with Illinois Informatics Institute and Champaign-Urbana Fab Lab convened a half-day workshop at the Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum that brought together experts and leaders in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) teaching and learning to share their ideas and recommendations for strengthening STEAM education throughout the Greater Peoria region. More than 30 individuals, representing a wide range of expertise, contributed to the plan.

Engaging in STEAM educational activities provides youth with opportunities to foster critical thinking skills and inspires them to engage in innovative learning experiences, which also help:

- Improve high school graduation rates.
- Develop creative problem-solving skill sets among our future workforce
- Develop collaborative skill sets among our youth.

Goals set forth through the planning process largely focus on strategies that will leverage and strengthen our 'communities of practice.' Building a truly engaged community of practice will draw upon the knowledge, tools, resources, and expertise of many to create rich STEAM teaching and learning experiences, in and outside formal school settings.

GOAL 1: Build an engaged and networked community of practice focused on STEAM education

GOAL 2: Develop a social marketing campaign – highlighting the relevance and value of STEAM education for our region

GOAL 3: Expand volunteer engagement in STEAM educational programming

The priority to support STEAM education is reflected in numerous programming and outreach efforts within the Greater Peoria region. The planning group acknowledged that developing and achieving a forward-thinking approach to STEAM education is a complex and evolving task.



The group expects and trusts that the vision described in the report will be revised and refined as new knowledge, evidence, and experiences are gained in the process of pursuing these goals.