

NEW JERSEY **BUSINESS** MAGAZINE

NJ STEM Month 2026 Launches with Call to Engage 60,000 Learners



Science & Technology

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The New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (NJSPN) officially kicked off NJ STEM Month at Genmab in Plainsboro last Friday, bringing together leaders from across the state to celebrate innovation, education, and workforce development in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

For the ninth consecutive year, March has been formally recognized as NJ STEM Month through a gubernatorial proclamation and ceremonial legislative resolution. The statewide initiative is co-led by the NJSPN and its parent organization, Research & Development Council of New Jersey, and continues to serve as a unifying platform to spotlight STEM opportunities across the Garden State.

The 2026 campaign aims to engage 60,000 learners through hands-on events, classroom activities, industry partnerships, and community programs. Organizations hosting STEM events throughout March are encouraged to submit their impact data to help advance this statewide goal. Since its inception, NJ STEM Month has impacted over 300,000 learners.

The Kickoff event was hosted by Genmab, an international biotechnology company focused on antibody therapeutics for cancer and other serious diseases. Attendees heard welcoming remarks from Manish Gupta, senior vice president and global head of translational & quantitative sciences, who emphasized the critical role of scientific innovation and collaboration in advancing healthcare breakthroughs.

Nearly 100 STEM champions representing schools, higher education institutions, nonprofits, corporations, and government agencies attended the event. The program began with a video reading of the 2026 Gubernatorial Proclamation by students from Jose Marti STEM Academy in Union.

“We are proud to mark nine years of celebrating NJ STEM Month and the collective energy behind this movement,” said Kim Case, executive director of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey and manager of the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network. “What began as a vision to elevate STEM awareness has grown into a powerful statewide collaboration. Each year, we see stronger partnerships, deeper engagement, and a broader reach that connects learners to real pathways in innovation and industry.”

The event’s keynote address was delivered by former Fox Weather meteorologist and founder of Drizzle Weather, Jason Frazer, who shared an inspiring message centered on “weathering life’s storms.”

Drawing from his professional experiences forecasting severe weather and navigating unpredictable conditions, Frazer connected the science of meteorology with personal resilience and career perseverance.

Attendees also connected with exhibitors including American Water, Drizzle Weather, Inspired Growing, Inc., Lectec, Liberty Science Center, PC University, Ramapo College of New Jersey, and Students 2 Science.

The Kickoff also highlighted the continued success of NJ STEM Month's mini-grant initiative, which provides grants of up to \$500 to organizations hosting STEM programs during March. In 2026, over \$20,000 in mini-grants were awarded, supporting initiatives across 19 New Jersey counties. These grants were made possible through generous support from American Water New Jersey, Comcast and the Overdeck Family Foundation.

2026 NJ STEM Month Award Winners

The program concluded with the announcement of the 2026 NJ STEM Month Award recipients. These awards recognize outstanding leadership, advocacy and innovation in STEM education and workforce development across New Jersey.

STEM Advocate of the Year: HealthCare Institute of New Jersey (HINJ)

STEM Civic Leadership Award: Dr. Rick Anderson, Co-Director of the Makerspace at Rutgers University

STEM Collaboration of the Year: Paterson Museum, Paterson Great Falls National Park, P-Tech Planetarium/ Paterson Public Schools and NASA Solar System Ambassador

STEM Corporate Champion of the Year: American Water

STEM Educator of the Year: Dr. Sheila Tabanli, Associate Teaching Professor of Mathematics at Rutgers University-School of Arts and Sciences (SAS)

Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program

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