

Northeast STEAM Coalition (NESC)

Meeting Summary — Redacted

August 14, 2026

I. Attendance & Organization Count

For the August 14 session, the coalition tracked representation across the following sectors based on the verified attendance log. (Names have been redacted to organizational role for this summary; NESC's own facilitators are not counted as a separate "seat" since they represent the convening coalition itself.)

- Total Verified Seats/Organizations: 13
- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): 3 (Oregon Mesa; OregonASK; Project LEDO)
- Science, Technology & Research Partners: 1 (Emscope — Mentoring Scientific Careers with Opportunities in Pathology Education)
- Education Agencies & Industry Partners: 2 (Oregon Computer Science Teachers Association; PMSP)
- Strategic Consultants & Infrastructure: 1 (CETI — maker/lab space and technology infrastructure)
- Philanthropy & Grantmaking: 2 (Collins Foundation; Oregon Community Foundation)
- K-12 Education & School Districts: 2 (KairosPDX; POIC)

II. Focus: AI, Infrastructure, Workforce & Community Advocacy

- Regence Boys & Girls Club Closure: The coalition discussed the closure's impact on the ~50 youth served at that site. A transition plan will route those youth to the Blazer Club and SEI's after-school program at Rosa Parks. The building is for sale, with a possible Black-led community buyer, though nothing is finalized; Portland Public Schools' offer on the building was below asking price. A parallel case (Lentz Boys & Girls Club, sold with a lease-back arrangement) displaced other co-located partners, including POIC, which has since relocated. Members also flagged a broader risk: some school districts are beginning to charge steep facility-use fees to co-located community programs.
- PPS AI Governance, Student Privacy & Responsible AI Use: Following PPS's Board pause on new/expanding generative-AI vendor contracts, members discussed the need for broad AI literacy (for students, educators, and parents) before tackling specific governance questions. Concerns raised included the environmental cost of AI infrastructure, inconsistent teaching of critical/ethical literacy around AI, and a gap in guidance on newer risks such as over-reliance on AI or students forming parasocial attachments to AI tools. CETI proposed convening a larger cross-sector AI-literacy symposium; Project LEDO flagged FreeGeek as an existing digital-inclusion partner the coalition could lean on.
- Energy Affordability, Data Centers & Workforce Pathways: The coalition reviewed findings from Oregon's Data Center Advisory Committee. New, processing-intensive data centers are sited near power sources rather than cities, and hosting communities can see local budgets jump sharply with few guardrails ensuring funds reach residents. Community-college-to-employment pipelines (e.g., Blue Mountain Community College's certificate program) were cited as a promising but underused model; a member cautioned that operating data centers employ very few people once built. Members discussed whether young people have accessible pathways into hands-on technical training such as Linux systems administration, citing FreeGeek and CETI's planned fall/spring workshops (hardware, sensor networks, chip fabrication) as existing and emerging resources.
- Advocacy Committee Formation: With time limited, the group briefly touched on standing up a quarterly Advocacy Committee, with an initial priority of determining how the coalition will engage the school board this year to ensure youth and families have a direct voice in policy decisions — rather than being represented only by proxies. Detailed guiding questions on committee membership, priorities, and 501(c)(3)/501(c)(4) partnership strategy were not walked through live and remain open for a future session.

III. Community Spotlight: Partner Space & Program Updates

- CETI's New Lab Space: CETI shared that it has moved into a larger lab (111 SW Columbia St, Suite 400), growing from roughly 1,200 to 10,000 square feet with support from an Oregon broadband grant. The space includes sewing, 3D printing, and electronics/wearables rooms, with open-lab hours expanding (currently Wed–Fri, 11 AM–5 PM). Upcoming events: a drop-in info session on August 20 for their "Constellations: Living in Turing's Futures" show, and a Creatathon build weekend October 23–25.
- PMSP Collaboratory Relaunch: PMSP announced its first Collaboratory meeting of the year on September 16 (in person, location TBA), open to nontraditional and out-of-school educators, with a fuller calendar of professional learning to follow.
- Alignment / Next Steps: Both spaces expand hands-on, out-of-school STEAM capacity that directly supports the coalition's digital-inclusion and AI-literacy priorities discussed under Item II; NESC is also updating its Social Media & Permissions Directory so partner updates like these can be cross-promoted.

IV. State Funding Policy & Grant Tracker

- Power Act (HB 3546) / Oregon Data Center Advisory Committee: The coalition reviewed the Advisory Committee's findings on energy affordability and public incentives, and discussed efforts under HB 3546 to shift more infrastructure/energy costs from residential and small-business ratepayers to large data centers, alongside concerns about property-tax abatements and whether current incentive structures still reflect the state's economic position.
- PCEF Mini Grants: Up to \$5,000 for climate-related outreach, training, and small-scale STEM/environmental projects. Flagged as a strong fit for community/climate-justice-related STEM work; orgs that already used one mini-grant may be eligible to apply again. Next deadline: October 1, 2026.
- Autzen Foundation — Fall 2026 Cycle: Education, youth development, and related priorities, with particular consideration for smaller organizations. Flagged as a near-term opportunity to watch. LOI due September 4, 2026.

V. Decisions & Action Items

- Advocacy Committee: Meets quarterly; first priority is defining how NESC engages the school board this year to ensure youth/family voice in policy decisions. Assigned to: NESC facilitators, with member input.
- Makerspace Resource List: Clarify the intended use case(s) (referrals, partner discovery, gap analysis, equipment sharing) before building the list. Assigned to: NESC facilitators.
- Regence Boys & Girls Club Monitoring: Continue tracking the building sale and share updates with the coalition as they become available. Assigned to: NESC facilitators.
- AI-Literacy Symposium: Advance planning for a cross-sector AI-literacy symposium championed by CETI, with interest from Project LEDO and OCSTA. Assigned to: CETI, with coalition support.
- Social Media Directory: Confirm/verify organizational handles and co-marketing preferences in the NESC Coalition directory. Assigned to: all member organizations.