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### ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EXPANDS TO FOUR NEW SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**PHOENIX (JULY 9, 2019)** – As the education conversation in Arizona continues common themes like teacher retention and professional development dominate. To address these recurring topics, Arizona Science Center, in partnership with the APS Foundation, continues the growth of its Rural Communities Expansion Project, providing teachers from rural areas throughout Arizona the opportunity to receive hands-on professional development within the walls of their own school.

Currently, the Rural Communities Expansion Project operates in the Prescott, Humboldt, Holbrook, Sedona, Winslow, Cottonwood-Oak Creek, Verde Valley, Florence, and Saddle Mountain (Tonopah) school districts. In 2019 the Science Center added four new districts including:

- Edkey School District (Camp Verde)
- Deer Valley Unified School District (N. Phoenix)
- Crane Elementary School District (Yuma)
- Yuma Elementary School District (Yuma)

Entering its seventh year, the Rural Communities Expansion Project focuses on the professional development of K–8 teachers in STEM subjects by providing them with the tools, resources, and confidence needed to keep up with the ever-changing curricula in STEM subjects, ensuring the same opportunities for success for all students, regardless of geography. The project sends Arizona Science Center staff to schools around the state, where they deliver tailored professional development programs for teachers, training for administrators, and student programs featuring hands-on STEM programming and STEM Extravaganzas. These events provide teachers and students the opportunity to expand their STEM knowledge through various hands-on science activities.

To date, the program has impacted more than 600 teachers and 14,000 students from 32 schools in 13 districts where opportunities for high-quality STEM professional development were once limited. The Rural Communities Expansion Project was first launched by Arizona Science Center in 2012 with grant funding from the APS Foundation now exceeding \$2.4 million.

“As our state continues to see the relocation of many bioscience and tech-focused companies, the need for STEM-literate students, and teachers, has never been more important,” says Jessica Hickey, VP of innovative learning strategies at Arizona Science Center. “This program instills the confidence needed in these teachers to effectively engage their students and inspire them to connect with science and bridge between fact-based learning and real-world application.”

For more information on Arizona Science Center's programs for educators, please visit [www.azscience.org/educators](http://www.azscience.org/educators).

### **About Arizona Science Center**

The mission of Arizona Science Center is to inspire, educate, and engage curious minds through science. The Center, located at 600 E. Washington Street in downtown Phoenix, features more than 300 hands-on exhibits, live demonstrations, the state-of-the-art Dorrance Planetarium, and the five-story screen Irene P. Flinn Theater. Adjacent to the main building, is CREATE at Arizona Science Center®, a 6,500 square foot community makerspace providing workshops including 3D printing, laser cutting, microcontrollers, woodworking, and sewing. The Center also offers various programs for all ages including CAMP INNOVATION, professional development and learning for educators, and a monthly adults-only evening, Science With A Twist. For additional details, please visit [azscience.org](http://azscience.org).

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