

JMU STEM Corps Guide to Success

For Boys & Girls Club program learning facilitators and leaders

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I. How do I sign up for specific dates?

At the start of the semester, we will share a Google Form link with a completion deadline. The form asks you to mark “yes” or “no” for each of the dates that semester. “No” means “I’m certain I won’t be there”. Yes means “I *plan* to be there”. If that commitment changes, just email Dr. Cresawn (cresawko@jmu.edu) to cancel.

Cancellations due to unavoidable conflicts and sickness are understandable. Being a “no-show” is not. You will be dropped from the STEM Corps roster after two no-shows.

For Fall 2025: This was shared in a Canvas announcement on Sept 1st. Due Sept 12th.

II. What do “LF” and “SLI” mean?

LF: Learning Facilitators are the volunteer members who teach and engage the kids for the hour-long lesson in small learning groups. We use this term because (1). It’s what you are doing and (2). It stands out more on an application or resume.

SLI: STEM Leadership Intern. Members with 1 or more years of LF experience in paid positions selected from a competitive application process. In addition to overseeing operations of the Friday afternoon program, planning, and preparation, they support LFs with coaching, guidance, and community-building activities. The SLIs work closely with Dr. Cresawn on a variety of projects aimed at improving the STEM Corps experience. Find your SLIs on page 5.

III. How do I prepare for the lesson?

Preparation is just as important as what you do at the club. If you did not prepare, please consider cancelling. Showing up unprepared is unfair to your partner LFs, the kids and yourself. You won’t enjoy yourself and the kids will lose trust and disengage from the lesson. This creates a negative experience for everyone. Choosing not to prepare or not having the time to do so likely means you need a break, so take it! Keep in mind, you are only doing this for the weeks you attend (max of 4 in the Fall and 6 in the Spring).

Preparation Materials

- Lesson plans and supplemental materials are posted to the “lesson plans” page of Canvas by Tuesday afternoon. You will be given printed copies at the club. If you prefer a printed copy for reviewing, please email Dr. Cresawn.
- Your goal is to have a general understanding of the underlying science and/or engineering ideas and practices, what the kids will be designing, testing, etc. in the hands-on activity and how that relates to those ideas and practices.

- At a minimum, you need to watch the full tutorial without distraction; read through the lesson plan thoroughly right before or after; summarize what the students will be doing; be comfortable leading the intro discussion using the images and talking points; know how data or other outcomes will be collected and/or discussed; and give examples of what we hope they will learn or better appreciate by the end of the lesson.
- The most effective process is different for everyone. SLIs will share preparation tips and provide support as you identify the process that works best for you.

IV. Where do I go and how do I get a ride?

Both programs take place in the school cafeteria

Bluestone Elementary School (BSES)- 750 Garber's Church Road, Harrisonburg.

The first lot you will see as you approach Bluestone is the front lot, which is used by buses and is chaotic at this time. Instead, **go past this first lot and take the next right** (at the "Heritage Oaks Golf Club" sign) **into the big parking lot. New this year: everyone must enter through door #8 on the side of the building** (not the front/main entrance).



Stone Spring Elementary School (SES)- 1575 Peach Grove Road, Harrisonburg.

Park in the **front parking lot**, use the doors on the left (if facing the building) and walk straight back to the cafeteria.

Ride Needs: If you indicated that you need a ride, you will be contacted by a SLI on the community-building team. If your ride status has changed, please contact: James or Kayla for Bluestone or Katie for Stone Spring (page 5).

V. What do I do when I arrive?

- Arrive at the cafeteria **5-10 minutes before the 3:30** pre-lesson meeting starts

- o Give yourself .5 extra minutes from the GPS time to park and get in.
- Make sure the attendance-taker see you and marks you off.
- The pre-lesson meeting starts promptly at 3:30. During this time, you will connect with your partner LFs, get tips from SLIs on how to make the lesson fun and successful, ask questions, and get your materials.
- Go to your assigned table. Most of you will be working with 4-6 kids in K-2 OR 3rd -5th grade. A few experienced LFs will work with blended groups.
- The kids should be assigned to a group number and stick with that group for the year. Be prepared for fluctuation as the B&GC staff try to address behavior issues and accommodate inconsistent attendance.
- We anticipate 5-6 groups at Stone Spring and 9-10 groups at Bluestone.

VI. What does this one-hour “lesson” look like?

- The lessons starts with a brief introduction on the underlying concepts using grade-level appropriate terms and explanations. We use printed copies of familiar images with minimal text.
- Most of the time is dedicated to the hands-on activity. Students in each group work together on a design challenge, science investigation, technology practice, or combination. In the last 5-10 minutes we wrap up by asking students what they learned and clean up so the space is left how you found it or better.
- Sometimes we start late due to club-related circumstances we can't control. If that happens, do not worry about rushing through the lesson; the SLIs will give you tips on how to make the most of the time you have.

See here for photos of what these parts of the lesson <https://tinyurl.com/27tlrypp>

VI. Who do I contact for questions or concerns?

Dr. Cresawn: cresawko@jmu.edu.

Office Hours, EnGeo 3132: Tuesdays 2-4, Wednesdays 9-11 or by appointment

- To cancel participation in an upcoming or future lesson (by email).
- One-on-one meetings for a get-to-know; learn about other STEM outreach opportunities; discuss how to best represent STEM Corps on grad. school apps, resumes, etc.; and concerns you don't feel comfortable sharing with the SLIs.

SLIs

Contact via DM in Flare or by email.

Coaching & Instruction Strategies

BSES: Leah Friedman, friedmlj@dukes.jmu.edu

SES: Davis Stiles, stilesdg@dukes.jmu.edu

When to contact C&I:

- Clarifying questions about lesson plans and to check your understanding of the lesson.
- You have concerns about you or your partner LF being unprepared or would like ideas and tips for being prepared.
- You have feedback for SLIs – we always want to know how we can improve!

*Davis's Office Hours: Thurs. 1-2. In-person on weeks of B&GC programs in Rose Library Starbucks area. By email or Flare DM on other weeks.

Community Development

BSES: James Rodriguez rodri7jm@dukes.jmu.edu & Kayla Glenn
glennkm@dukes.jmu.edu

SES: Katie Campbell campb9ca@dukes.jmu.edu

When to contact CD:

- You have carpooling needs, questions, or concerns.
- You are having a challenging time connecting with other LFs or SLIs.
- You have ideas for icebreakers or other activities.

VII. Advice from experienced facilitators

We asked experienced LFs to give one piece of advice to new LFs by thinking about what they learned over time and wish they had realized earlier. See what they had to say here:

<https://tinyurl.com/26p6ekhf>