

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Moving beyond the racial gap in STEM takes each of us doing our individual work to contribute to the collective work. Use this framework, designed to focus in on goals you can accomplish in 6 to 18 months, to create an action plan specific to your expertise, interests and sphere of influence. See the following pages for examples of action plans for different types of roles.



1. Choose your "who."

Who are you in a unique position to reach? This could be parents, youth, funders, educational leaders or civic partners or your neighbors.

ASK: Why is it important to engage this group? How am I uniquely qualified to engage this group?



2. Define a personal power statement.

This is what you return to when things get challenging and overwhelming.

ASK: Why is moving beyond the racial gap important to me personally? Why is it important in the work I am doing? Why is it important for the young people I serve?



3. Name your goal(s).

Define a specific next step that you personally want to take to contribute to the collective goal of moving beyond the racial gap in STEM. Use the barriers as a starting point.

ASK: How do aspects of those barriers manifest in my work or my personal life experience?



4. Get proximate to power.

Identify three people who can help you move toward your specific next step. These may be educational leaders or political players, but they also might be an engaged parent, a charismatic student or a colleague who is well networked.



5. Identify your strategy for engaging power.

Think about how you will engage your three people.

ASK: How will each of these people or their organizations benefit from supporting my efforts?



6. Build your community.

Connect with others committed to moving beyond the racial gap in STEM. Consider those working in similar roles and environments, but also think about people in totally different learning environments. Power and transformation comes from the synergy of each individual doing their part in collaboration with the collective.

ASK: Who can I call for emotional support when I just need to complain (or brag)? Who are my professional connections? Who can help me understand the landscape of the work and how to think about it strategically?

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EXAMPLE: STEM program manager



WHO: Parents and guardians

Parents are a powerful force in the life of their child. Inviting them into the learning at whatever level they are interested in will reap long-term benefits. I am uniquely qualified because I am a parent who has thought deeply about connecting my child to opportunities for their development.



WHY: I want a better world for my child and those I serve.

I work with many youth of color who feel disconnected from their community and from their potential with no sense of joy about what their future holds. That scares me. I don't want to be a senior citizen in a city that has generations of youth who feel hopeless. And more importantly, I do not want my child raised in that environment.



MY GOAL: For parents to be excited about this program.

I want to get my program participants' parents excited about the production work in the lab because I believe their encouragement will increase how long youth will participate. My specific goals:

- Parents visit the space regularly and engage with staff.
- Parents are comfortable talking about the work in the lab and specifically about their student's projects.



MY POWER 3: Identify and connect with three people who have the power to assist

Jarrold, my lead facilitator, is good at engaging with parents. When he can get in conversation with them it totally changes how they view and interact with the program.

Isaiah's mom, **Cheryl**, enthusiastically supports his involvement in the lab. She often comes in and talks to staff and is a big cheerleader for the program in the community.

Sasha is a regular participant with an outgoing personality and is a leader in the lab. Her mom readily drops her off and picks her up for the program, but doesn't come in. Sasha conveys to staff that her mom is "fine" with her participating.



MY STRATEGY: Start with parent input

Work with Jarrod to create micro-focus groups with the parents he talks with regularly. Start with Cheryl. We want to learn:

- What does she appreciate about the lab?
- Why does she send her son there regularly?
- What does she want him to get from the experience?
- What does she need from us to love the program even more?

Use this initial feedback to conduct quick focus groups with other parents. Then we can use this information to create specific ways to communicate with parents. For example:

- 1) Parent-only nights where they can just relax, play, and learn more about the lab.
- 2) Parent/student events with the youth as the teachers.
- 3) Design ways to tell parents who can't come to the lab about their child's work there. Send home positive feedback about their child.



MY COMMUNITY: Name my emotional, social & professional connections

I can reach out to others who run programs for youth in my community. They don't all have to be STEM focused.

I also have my group of girlfriends who will let me complain, cry or scream if I need to.

Another group could be the parents of my son's friends. We have cordial relationships and they could help me think through ways they as parents would be interested in this work.

EXAMPLE: STEM program facilitator



WHO: Youth ages 9-19

I am going to focus on youth ages 9-19 because that is the current demographic being served through my program. I am uniquely qualified because I work with this age group on a daily basis.



MY POWER 3: Identify and connect with three people or organizations with the power to assist

The **KC STEM Alliance** delivers FTC programs. They can help think through innovative ways to use the FTC components for off-season learning and connect us to other teams that could support that effort.

My **Development Director** has access to funders who could sponsor equipment we could use for engineering and coding activities in the lab.

An established FTC team willing to work off season could be a powerful partner in sharing their learning.



WHY: STEM confidence leads to opportunities.

Getting the youth I serve comfortable with STEM as a concept is paramount to their potential future success. STEM careers will be some of the most lucrative opportunities. Therefore, creating an environment now that is safe and non-threatening that allows them to play, explore, and learn is my mission.



MY STRATEGY: Seek connections + funding

Draft a document that outlines the intention of introducing youth to FTC components outside of the regular season.

Get familiar with the FTC teams in the region. Attend competitions to meet teams and coaches and to get a feel for who might be a good fit.

Send the document to the KC STEM Alliance requesting assistance. Specifically asking for connections to established teams that might be willing to work with youth during the off season, and for guidance on creative ways to work with the FTC components.

Work with my organization's leadership to identify potential sponsors or funding.



MY GOAL: To use robotics as a springboard.

I want to use the components from *FIRST* Tech Challenge outside of the competition season to get youth excited about robotics. Specifically:

- Youth who can't participate during the regular FIRST season are introduced to the concepts of engineering and coding through robotics.
- Youth can connect the concepts from this robotics program to other STEM-related activities.



MY COMMUNITY: Name my emotional, social & professional connections

I have access to a network of professional, intelligent Black men through my fraternity. Some of them work in STEM and I can call on them for support.

I also have a tight-knit family I can rely on when things get a little stressful.

There are many folks out here working with youth directly. I could reach out to some of them.

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EXAMPLE: STEM professional



WHO: Latinx youth ages 10-12

I would like to focus on Latinx youth between the ages of 10-12 primarily. That time is often when we are figuring out who we are and what we like to do. I want to make sure that they know my path, a STEM path, is possible for them too.



WHY: To be a positive representation for Latinx youth

My parents are from Mexico. Although I was raised in the United States, I am steeped in our cultural heritage. As a physicist I don't see many Latinx people in my field. I want to be a force for good and positive representation for Latinx youth. My goal is to show them, just by being me, that their ability to grow and succeed in STEM is possible.



MY GOAL: To volunteer quarterly and bring students into my workplace

- I want to be in front of students, volunteering in some capacity, once per quarter.
- It's important for students to visit real work spaces, so I intend to identify one school or program that focuses on Latinx youth and create opportunities for them to visit my work environment.



MY POWER 3: Identify and connect with three people or organizations

My niece, **Laura**, is in the the fourth grade. I'll start talking with her, her friends and her parents to get a better idea of what they are learning in science both in and outside of the classroom.

Stacy in Human Resources leads my company's volunteer program. She can provide insight on the process and help me think through ways

other staff members could participate in an effort.

Revolución Educativa is an organization that supports Latinx empowerment and advocacy. Getting more connected and involved in that organization can open access to resources that support my goal.



MY STRATEGY: Ask questions & network

Talk directly to the source by setting up an informal focus group + ice cream with Laura and friends.

Prepare a few age-appropriate questions in advance to see where and how they are learning basic science concepts. Do the same with her parents and other parents I know with elementary age students.

Reach out to Stacy for a coffee to **learn more about how the company supports volunteer opportunities** for employees. Identify if there is a process for recommending a school or program to be supported.

Attend Revolución Educativa events. Find out what programs they support and begin to create a network of individuals interested in the same goal.



MY COMMUNITY: Name my emotional, social & professional connections

I am part of an organization that focuses on supporting Latinx professionals in science.

I can reach out to my group of friends from college who also chose to pursue a STEM career.

I am still connected to the predominantly Latinx community where I grew up. Some of my longtime friends now work with youth. I could stop by and see what they need.



1. Choose your "who." Who are you in a unique position to reach? Describe who and why here.



2. Define a personal power statement. Return to this "why" when you need a recharge.



3. Spell out your goals. Be specific.



4. Get proximate to power. List three people or organizations with the power to help you meet your goals.



5. How will you engage with the three people or organizations listed above?



6. Build your community. Who will you turn to for support? Who can help you with information or introductions? List them here.

MY TIMELINE:

