Chief Science Officer (CSO) Program

The Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12 in conjunction with the FrAY STEM Ecosystem is launching the Chief Science Officers (CSO) Program for the 2026 - 2027 school year. The CSO Program is for students in 6th – 12th grade who demonstrate an interest in science, technology and/ or innovation and have a desire to impact their community.

Program Goals	Individual CSO Goals
Create a global network of diverse STEM leaders.	Be a voice for their schools.
Foster communication and collaboration among CSOs.	Bring STEM opportunities to their peers.
Enrich school STEM culture and career awareness.	Bring change to their communities.
Amplify student voice in STEM conversations in the community.	

Benefits of Establishing a CSO Program at Your School:

- Students participate in hands-on learning opportunities geared to practice workplace skills in communication, leadership, strategic planning and team building.
- Student voices amplified in their school and community by working on key issues related to civic action and STEM.
- Partnerships cultivated with school administrators, teachers, parents, students, and business and community leaders.
- Student perspectives incorporated in conversations about STEM and education with local businesses, media and policymakers.
- Students practice employability skills such as teamwork, work ethic, critical thinking, problem solving and verbal and written STEM communication with STEM professionals.
- Students advocate for STEM in their school and community.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the overall CSO Program commitments?**

Commitment	Person Responsible
Designate a faculty advisor	School District
Organize an on-campus CSO Election (if feasible)	Advisor
2-day Leadership Training Institute • **Sept 30**, 9:00am - 1:00pm at Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12 • **Oct 1st**, 9:00am - 1:00pm at Capital Area Intermediate Unit	Advisor and CSOs
Attend 2 Cabinet Meetings • **Nov 10th**, 9:00am – 1:00pm at Gettysburg College • **March 3rd**, 9:00am – 1:00pm at the Gettysburg Municipal Authority	Advisor and CSOs
Attend End-of-Year Celebration/Showcase • **Apr 20th**, 9:30am – 1:00pm at location TBD	Advisor and CSOs
Complete STEM Action Plan	CSOs
Online Engagement in Google Classroom – check in once a week online for updates and opportunities	CSOs
Meet with CSOs at least two times a month for 30 minutes to review Action Plan and Google Classroom progress	Advisor and CSOs

2. **What is the time commitment for advisors?**
   Advisors should meet with their CSOs at least twice a month for 30 minutes to review the CSOs STEM Action Plan progress and their engagement with the Google Classroom resources. Additionally, advisors will need to complete the CSO advisor training program which is four 20-minute webinar modules.

3. **What is the time commitment for students?**
   CSOs should check in once a week in the Google Classroom for updates and opportunities. CSOs should develop and implement a STEM Action Plan. CSOs should meet with their advisor at least twice a month for 30 minutes to review their STEM Action Plan progress and their engagement with the Google Classroom resources.

4. **How should student elections be handled?**
   Ideally, students should be elected by their peers. An election can be held school-wide, in an after school club or in a STEM pathways cohort. It is up to the school to determine how the election can be handled. If a student election is not possible, then students may be elected by teachers and administrators. If a school would like support with the election process, please contact Abbey Lichtenberg at alhathaway@iu12.org or 717-624-6458.

5. **What are sample STEM Action Plans?**

   CSOs can choose to hold a STEM night at their school, develop an after school STEM Club, teach hands-on STEM lessons to elementary school students, organize and implement guest speakers from businesses, higher education and/ or informal science education centers or any other comparable project the CSO wishes to develop and implement.

6. **Are advisors compensated for their time?**
   Compensation of advisors is left up to the discretion of the school district.

7. **What happens after a school completes the site intent form?**
   Abbey Lichtenberg will contact you to provide you with more information for the program and your next steps.

8. **What are the times for the Cabinet Meetings?**
   All two events will be from 9:00am – 1:00pm.

9. **What are the times for the Leadership Training Institute?**
   Both days will be from 9:00am – 1:00pm. There is the possibility for an evening reception on one of these days.

10. **Does a CSO need to attend both days of the Leadership Training Institute (LTI)?**
    Yes, for program fidelity, CSOs must attend both days of the LTI.

Process to Enroll

- **Complete Site Intent by Aug 31, 2026**
- **Each CSO completes registration form via Moodle by Sept 11, 2026**