

SPOTLIGHT STEM SUCCESS

When students feel like they can see themselves in the curriculum, they feel represented. Create a space to showcase STEM professionals to help students envision themselves in STEM fields. Use the below lists of activities and important figures in STEM to help you create your space.

Activities

Monthly Bulletin Board

Decorate a bulletin board each month with information about a selected STEM professional. This could include the professional's picture, name, profession, major achievements, life dates, etc. For example:

- Ursula Burns (1958): First-generation college student. She earned both a B.S. and M.S. degree in mechanical engineering. She began an internship as a mechanical engineer at Xerox where she later became the CEO, becoming the first black woman to lead a Fortune 500 company.
- “Dreams do come true, but not without the help of others, a good education, a strong work ethic, and the courage to lean in.”—Ursula Burns

Quarterly STEM Week

During the first week of each quarter, highlight different STEM professionals during each day of the week. Engage students with activities like an individual research activity over different STEM professionals, a writing competition with a reward system, or a personal reflection. Consider having students write reflections that include information about a professional that stood out to them, that person's career, how their career relates to what students are currently learning in class, and how the individual student relates to that professional.

Consider highlighting different STEM professionals on a schedule like the following:

- *Modern Monday*: STEM professionals from the most recent decades
- *Tinker Tuesday*: STEM professionals who are in the fields of technology and engineering
- *Worldly Wednesday*: STEM professionals who are making a difference in our world or are from around the world
- *Throwback Thursday*: showcase STEM professionals from before WWII
- *Future Friday*: Have students write about what they imagine for their future selves

STEM Professionals

Nikola Tesla (1856): inventor and engineer, first-generation college student

Grace Hopper (1906): mathematician, computer scientist, and known as the “Queen of Code”

Chien-Shiung Wu (1912): known as “the First Lady of Physics”

Katherine Johnson (1918): first-generation college student, mathematician, and one of the first African American, female NASA scientists

Martin Cooper (1928): electrical engineer; known as the “Father of the Handheld Cell Phone”

Shirley Ann Jackson (1946): first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. from MIT

Mae Jemison (1956): chemical engineer and first African American woman to travel to space

Ursula Burns (1958): first-generation college student, mechanical engineer, and first Black woman to lead a Fortune 500 company (Xerox)

Ellen Ochoa (1958): engineer and first Latina to travel to space

Brian Greene (1963): first-generation college student who studied theoretical physics