



a program of Atlanta Science Festival Inc.  
191 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 3400, Atlanta, GA 30303  
[AtlantaScienceFestival.org](http://AtlantaScienceFestival.org) 770-322-4992

---

10 May 2019

Dear Chief Science Officer,

Congratulations on becoming a Georgia Chief Science Officer! We are honored to count you among our ranks, as you represent the bright future for our state and country. Following this letter you will find information to orient you and your family to the program. Please share this Welcome Packet with your parents/guardians. We look forward to meeting you at our Student Showcase on May 16 from 5:30-7:00pm at Emory University, and at the CSO Summer Institute on July 24-26, 2019. After you have a chance to read through this Welcome Packet, feel free to reach out to me with any questions.

You are now part of an exciting new leadership development program. The Georgia Chief Science Officers (CSO) initiative will cultivate a cadre of diverse student leaders in middle and high schools across the state, enhancing their leadership, communication, and advocacy skills to meet the growing demand for these skills in STEM careers. The CSO program empowers students with a voice in STEM programming at their schools and in their communities. CSOs build relationships with STEM industry mentors and connect with companies and careers in their region. CSOs meet with legislators, school board members, and policymakers to lend their voices to conversations about STEM education and workforce development in our state. The program is modeled on a successful initiative launched in 2015 in Arizona, and Georgia is one of the first states to be a part of an international roll-out. You are joining more than 1000 other CSOs in Arizona, Oregon, Michigan, Delaware, Florida, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, Kuwait, Mexico, Kenya, and Colombia.

As a Chief Science Officer (CSO), you will serve for 1 year implementing STEM initiatives at your school, participating in community events as a leader, and sharing ideas with legislators, board members, CEOs and other decision-makers. In preparation for this, you will attend a 3-day summer institute (July) and three all-day Cabinet Meetings (September, February, May) to develop your leadership skills and implement an action plan for the upcoming year. Additionally, you will have access to an online community via Google Classroom where you are expected to participate weekly. Including the Summer Institute, the total expected commitment is 115 hours of participation throughout the year, averaging approximately 2 hours per week.

The Summer Leadership Institute, scheduled for July 24 -26, 2019 at Georgia Tech, will prepare you for the CSO role through a mix of personal growth and team building opportunities including networking, project management, public speaking, strategic planning, design thinking, and action planning. Out of this, you will develop an Action Plan for enriching the STEM community at your school. During the school year, you will have the support of a Site Advisor (teacher/administrator at your school), a Leadership Coaches (STEM industry professional), and a CSO program staff member to empower you to be a leader in the following ways:

- On campus, where you will serve as the voice of your peers to administrators, supporting existing STEM programs or identifying new opportunities such as speakers, field trips, science

nights, afterschool programs, community service, and ensuring such opportunities reflect the interests of your peers;

- Off-campus, where you will advocate for youth interests at places such as city council and school board meetings, conferences and local businesses. Through these experiences, you will observe business norms and put into action skills learned at the summer institute;
- At regional cabinet meetings, where you will interact with STEM professionals and embark on collective action projects to address our state's STEM education and workforce challenges.

Student CSOs from other states have had unique opportunities to engage the nation's most influential leaders. They have developed a brief about barriers and solutions to workforce issues with state representatives, advised the Governor on student perspectives on STEM education, healthcare, water and economic development, and presented at the White House to President Obama's Science and Technology Advisors. As a Georgia CSO, you will have similar opportunities to share your voice on key STEM issues.

In order to be successful as a CSO, you, your family, and your school are committing to a set of responsibilities (see enclosed). We look forward to supporting you, helping you to grow as a leader, learning from your ideas, and being inspired by your passion for STEM. On behalf of the Georgia CSO Steering Committee, and our sponsors, The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, NCR Foundation, United Way of Greater Atlanta, UCB, UPS, Georgia Tech Research Institute, and Delta Community Credit Union, I am proud to welcome you to the program!

**Immediate Next Steps:**

Go to the website: <http://scienceatl.org/cso-welcome> and complete the following:

1. Parents should complete the Parent Registration Form
2. Students should complete the Student Registration Form
3. Parents and students should RSVP to the Student Showcase and New CSO Info Session, May 16, 5:30-7:00 pm at Emory University.

Sincerely,

Eric Knapp  
Program Director, Georgia Chief Science Officers  
[eric@atlantasciencefestival.org](mailto:eric@atlantasciencefestival.org)  
(828) 507-6817

## GEORGIA CHIEF SCIENCE OFFICERS Program Overview



Georgia Chief Science Officers (CSO) is a leadership development program for students, designed to:

1. Create a pipeline of diverse STEM leaders
2. Amplify student voice in STEM conversations in the community
3. Enrich school STEM culture and career awareness

Georgia Chief Science Officers is a program of Atlanta Science Festival Inc., a Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, in collaboration with other Chief Science Officers programs throughout the world. The program begins with the school's intent to participate in agreement with Atlanta Science Festival Inc. (see enclosed Agreement), school elections or selection of the student Chief Science Officer(s), and parental approval. The school identifies a staff member to serve as the school's Site Advisor and liaison to program staff. The Site Advisor will support the CSOs at their school. The school pays an annual activity fee (waived for 2019-2020) and the relationship can be renewed at the end of each school year. CSOs serve for a term of at least one year, with the potential for additional years of service at the discretion of the Chief Science Officer program staff and school representatives.

The Chief Science Officer (CSO) program was created in Arizona and is growing internationally. Students in 6th – 12th grade are ELECTED by their peers to represent their school for STEM and innovation. In Georgia, the inaugural 2018-2019 CSO cohort consisted of 22 students from three school districts in metro Atlanta. Our three-year plan is to expand to 100 students per year from across the state.

CSOs are elected in the spring, attend a 3-day summer institute to gain leadership and communication skills, serve for at least 1 year implementing STEM initiatives in their school and community, per the Action Plan they develop at the Summer Institute. During the school year, schools enable CSOs to play a major role in selecting and promoting STEM programming and building a culture of STEM awareness. Schools identify a local adult advisor to mentor CSOs, facilitate local student action, and maintain communication with the state organization. Businesses, industry and communities engage with the schools by including CSOs in STEM events and discussions, coaching, and providing hands-on learning experiences. CSOs connect with coaches from industry/academia who bring real-world expertise and help students connect with career opportunities. At three Cabinet Meetings throughout the year, and at partner events, the program creates opportunities for CSOs to meet with legislators, school board members, and policymakers to lend their voices to conversations about STEM education and workforce development in our state.

### LEADERSHIP

The Georgia CSO Program Director, Eric Knapp, leads the day to day program operations and is responsible for the students' leadership development, in consultation with Atlanta Science Festival Executive co-Director, Jordan Rose. A Steering Committee helps to guide operations, with representation from sponsors as well as TAG-Ed, Georgia State University, Emory University, SEM Link, redefinED, Georgia

Partnership for Excellence in Education, SMASH Morehouse, and Metro Atlanta Chamber.

The Georgia CSO Program is sponsored by: The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, NCR Foundation, United Way of Greater Atlanta, UCB, Inc., UPS, Delta Community Credit Union, and Georgia Tech Research Institute.

## TIMELINE

The CSO Role begins with the student's attendance at the Summer Institute. Early in the school year, CSOs will meet with school administration to discuss program objectives and get buy in on their action plans. CSOs are requested to organize at least 2 school events/projects and attend at least 2 community events outside of school as leaders. Parents are requested to provide transportation and technology access as needed. Each week, CSOs are to stay connected with the program by interacting online in Google Classroom with peers and completing program assignments.

- March-May – Schools identify Site Advisor and hold elections
- May – Student Showcase & New CSO Info Session
- July - Summer Institute (July 24 -26, 2019)
- Aug-May - Action Plan implementation, Weekly Participation in Online Community, Attend Off-campus Leadership Opportunities
- Oct – Maker Faire Atlanta
- Oct - Fall Cabinet Meeting
- Feb - Spring Cabinet Meeting
- Mar - Participate in Atlanta Science Festival events as leaders (March 6-21)
- Apr-May- Elections for 2020-2021 cohort
- May – Georgia STEM Day
- May - Graduation Celebration

## Georgia Chief Science Officers Roles and Responsibilities



### Site Advisor/Liaison:

The Site Advisor is a teacher/administrator who will serve as the primary contact for the CSO students, parents, and project team throughout his/her term. A STEM coordinator, coach, or other flexible position is helpful. The Advisor will:

- Manage school-based CSO election process
- Facilitate communications between the CSO program team, students and parents.
- Attend at least one full day of the Summer Institute, July 24-26, 2019.
- Attend the full day Fall Cabinet Meeting TBD October 2019.
- Throughout the academic year, meet at least 2 times per month with CSOs for at least a 15 minute check-in to help move the CSOs' Action Plans forward.
- Empower CSOs to take on leadership roles in the school community, and provide opportunities to speak with administrators, parents, and community members.
- Be available to CSO students, listen to their ideas, help them problem solve and get assistance as needed
- Organize field trip paperwork, school transportation and chaperone as needed for the three Cabinet Meetings (Oct/Feb/May), and other external opportunities as they arise.
- Provide feedback for improvements to students, and CSO program team.

### Student:

In their role as a Chief Science Officer, each student will develop and implement an Action Plan to advocate for STEM in their community. Through the Action Plan, CSOs will:

- Build STEM culture at the school and across the region
  - Create, market, and advocate for student participation in their school's co-curricular STEM opportunities (speakers, field trips, afterschool programs and science nights), ensuring these opportunities reflect the interests of their peers.
  - Represent the student voice to school administrators and board members.
  - Organize and host at least two school-based events for peers and community members. In total, events should engage at least 30% of the school population.
  - Engage the student body in conversations about STEM and the workforce.
- Be a STEM Ambassador in the community
  - Serve as their school's ambassador as they participate in state and local conversations on STEM education and workforce through panels, discussions, workshops, blogs.
  - Attend at least two community events outside of school as a CSO leader
  - Interact with business, community, and industry partners
  - Connect with local, state, and national civic leaders and public officials
- Participate in the CSO Community of Practice
  - Participate in regional Cabinet meetings, including collective action projects
  - Interact online with CSO peers weekly through Google Classroom
  - Ensure "Succession Planning" for CSO position and share lessons learned
  - Complete program surveys and interviews, and provide feedback for improvements to the CSO program

### Family:

The school agrees to participate in the Georgia CSO program and pays any applicable activity fees. There is no cost to students' families!

- Parents are requested to complete an online Registration Form which includes permission and release forms by May 15, 2019.
- Attend the Parent/Student Info Session in May/June.

- Support student's participation in out-of-school opportunities by providing or arranging transportation when possible.

#### Leadership Coach:

STEM industry professionals will mentor CSOs through a variety of mechanisms throughout the program. Leadership Coaches will:

- Facilitate sessions at Summer Institute and Cabinet Meetings
- Coach CSOs to develop and implement successful Actions Plans during monthly conversations

#### CSO Program:

The Georgia CSO initiative is a program of the Atlanta Science Festival Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is bringing people together through the wonder of science and creating an identity for Atlanta as a science city. The Georgia CSO Program Director, Eric Knapp, works with a Steering Committee (member list can be found at <http://scienceatl.org/cso>) of engaged community members to design and develop the Georgia CSO program, offering learning experiences, skill-building exercises, and leadership opportunities for students. Together, the program will:

- Recruit and engage sponsors, partners, STEM mentors, and schools to work together in support of student success.
- Plan and lead the Summer Institute and three Cabinet Meetings, with curriculum provided by the International CSO office.
- Facilitate online CSO community via Google Classroom, including topical discussions, blog-writing assignments, Action Plan feedback and reflection, etc.
- Identify and facilitate community-based leadership opportunities for students on panels, conferences, meetings where the youth voice is needed.
- Conduct site visits to schools to support student success in Action Plan implementation
- Keep CSO community informed about program updates, news, and opportunities
- Collaborate with the international CSO community to improve the program and develop national/international leadership opportunities for students.



As the proud parent of a Chief Science Officer you are an integral part of the community supports systems for the CSO. You are also an incredibly important part of your student's success in this role. To support your child as he/she embraces the role of CSO we suggest you consider the following tips:

1. Put your CSO's events on your calendar. Most events can be calendared in advance, but please be prepared for amazing opportunities which just pop up.
2. Your CSO will need transportation to and from CSO events and Institutes. The program will also need chaperones for field trips. Be prepared to support your CSO in this way. Reach out to other CSO parents to provide transportation to and from events.
3. Review your CSO's Action Plan. Inquire as to how they are going to implement their plan. Offer suggestions by asking the question, "What do you think would happen if...." and then offering a practical solution.
4. Stay in contact with the CSO Liaison at the school, and help your CSO advocate for him/herself with the Liaison rather than owning the interaction yourself.
5. Support your STEM-minded CSO at home by listening to their ideas and asking questions to help them solve problems and overcome challenges. Try to answer the CSO's questions by asking more questions, encouraging the CSO to think through the problem for him/herself. An advocacy and leadership role may be new for your CSO and having the listening ear of a trusted parent can go a long way to boost their confidence.
6. Encourage your CSO to actively engage in the CSO program both in the Leadership Institute and beyond. There are events scheduled throughout the year for your CSO to participate in. Beyond these Regionally scheduled events, your CSO will be scheduling events to complete his/her Action Plan.
7. Help your CSO build their STEM and workforce skills while exploring new avenues of learning. These skills include the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, think critically in order to solve problems and answer questions, bring creativity to possible solutions, and consider global impact.
8. Be aware of the commitments your CSO has made and what it will take to meet these commitments with excellence. Many of these commitments can be found in the Action Plan. Check in with your CSO regularly to see if they have updated the plan to include additional commitments.
9. Participate in community and campus events led by your CSO if it makes sense. Just seeing a friendly face in the crowd can be all they need to soar. If there are other CSOs at your school, support them as well. This will demonstrate for your CSO how to support others.
10. Recognize the contributions your CSO is making to the school and the community. Your CSO is, in essence, charged with strengthening the STEM culture of both the school and the community. It is in this way they will impact their world.
11. Celebrate your CSO's successes with them and help them to find the lessons-learned when something they planned is not as stellar as they had anticipated. Consider the word "FAIL" really represents First Attempt In Learning. Failing forward is how all of us learn. Often youth don't see adults as people who make mistakes and missteps. Share this information with your CSO when things aren't going well.