Education Outreach Programs at the Savannah River Site Presents
“STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts”

R.E.S.E.T. your classroom by Reinventing Excitement for Science, Engineering, and Technology with a new program, STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts. Students and educators engage with real-life scientists, engineers, or other professionals from the Savannah River Site asking anything STEM! The experience also exposes students to STEM careers, unlocking a world of opportunity.

**Program Goals**

- Increase student interest and engagement in science, engineering, and technology topics by providing real world connections
- Break down barriers among students who are less likely to develop career aspirations in higher education through personal connections
- Expose students to different STEM careers

**Who Can Participate?**

Any class, afterschool program, or club interested in STEM

**How Does This Work?**

1. **To enroll** in this exciting new program, complete the educator/leader application at this link ______

2. Education Outreach Programs will review your application and connect your class with a STEM expert at the Savannah River Site.
   - There are two options for conversing with your SRS expert.
     - Option 1: As a class, you compile a list of STEM questions you would like answered. These questions can be based on current class discussions and/or may include questions about careers.
     - Option 2: The teacher can choose to enhance students’ literacy skills by writing a friendly letter to the SRS expert. The students’ ideas and questions will be combined into one friendly letter from the class.

3. **Submit** Questions or Class Letter at this link ______

4. Your assigned SRS expert will review and answer your question(s) or letter. The program coordinator will send the response to the educator via email. Please be patient. It may take the SRS expert up to 2 weeks to respond.

5. The class may submit additional questions or a new letter to an SRS expert. The STEMulating conversations continue!

1-8 Suggestions to “make it your own” are noted next page.
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Make it Your Own

1. This can be any STEM organization in the community that has an outreach program.
2. This program requires a considerable amount of oversight. For that reason, we recommend the STEM organization respond to a local community or region.
3. At SRS, we have an account with SurveyMonkey using online survey software to connect with educators. This is just one option. There is a cost associated with this account. We have found this simple tool to be easy to use and dependable.
4. Volunteers were on board ready to respond prior to program release. Letters and Questions from educators are typically sent to two volunteers to ensure a timely response. This is an option if you have a large team of volunteers.
5. This program supports literacy at many levels.
6. A second link created in the SurveyMonkey account allows educators to upload letters/questions.
7. At SRS, we choose to review for age appropriate content.
8. We have many STEM fields represented at SRS. Depending on the next letter/questions we may choose other volunteers or even divide the questions between several. We do try to maintain the personal connection when possible helping to foster a class mentor role.
Frequently Asked Questions: STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts

1. What types of questions should my students ask?
   • Your class may start by asking simple career questions.
     o What does an engineer do? What are different types of engineers?
     o What type of scientist are you?
     o What do you do as an IT professional?
     o Where did you go to school? What is your degree?
     o What are your current assignments?
     o How do you affect society?
     o What is the average salary of your profession?
     o What do you enjoy most about your profession?
   • Your students may also ask questions about topics they are studying in school.
     o We have over 90 SRS experts enrolled in this program that can answer questions about your curriculum.
     o Many have advanced degrees in their field of study.

2. Can we set up a virtual meeting with our SRS Expert?
   • Not at this time. Security is very important to us at the Savannah River Site and electronic devices such as video recorders, cameras, or personal cell phones are not allowed in many SRS facilities. We are exploring other options and hope to connect you soon.

3. Can I ask questions about two different STEM careers?
   • Yes, create a separate class letter for questions about each career.

4. How do I upload my questions?
   • First save your class questions/letter as a word document or pdf.
   • Submit your letter/questions at the link provided by the program coordinator.
**STEMulating Conversations with SRS Experts**  
*Writing Prompts and Tips for Volunteers*

**Writing Prompts**

*If you are addressing your class through a friendly letter, some suggested prompts below make your conversation more personal with the students.*

- What first inspired you to like science, engineering, and/or technology? When was that?
- Why did you decide to pursue a STEM career?
- Where did you go to college, what did you study, and what degree(s) do you have?
- Did you attend graduate school?
- What do you do?
- How does your work impact individuals in your community or around the world?
- What are your favorite activities to do outside of work/science?
- Have there been obstacles during your education or career? How did you overcome these challenges?

**Tips**

Explaining your STEM career can be challenging and complex. It is important to remember the age of your audience. Answers to high school students will be very different than answers to middle school or even elementary school students.

- This may be the students first real encounter with science so try to explain things in terms that they will understand.
- Try to avoid difficult vocabulary or use a common term to convey the idea.
- Is there a way to explain your answer that uses descriptive language to 
  a) create an image? 
  b) connect to a real-life experience? 
  c) excite students to learn more?

If you have any questions, please contact the Program Coordinator.
In the body of your letter, you will answer questions from the class and provide some additional information using the writing prompts provided by the program coordinator. Make sure to write the letter in terms elementary/middle school students will understand.

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Closing

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Your Name