Berkeley Public Schools Fund

Berkeley PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Excellence • Equity • Engagement • Enrichment

Closing STEM Opportunity Gaps in Berkeley Public Schools

Berkeley Public Schools Fund Report

Summer 2026

REGULAR STEM PROGRAMMING

MAKER CAMP

In June and July 2026, the Berkeley Public Schools Fund hosted its fifth annual Summer Maker Camp in partnership with BUSD. The program served 173 rising 6th–9th grade students, fostering creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, and technical skills through real-world, hands-on projects. High school and college near-peer mentors worked alongside campers throughout the summer, providing invaluable support and encouragement.

Students participated in six specialized, grade-level STEM courses tailored to their development level:

- **Rising 6th Graders (Hosted at King Middle School)**
  - Zoo Design: Built interactive displays with simple circuits, created digital art, and programmed predator-prey games.
  - City Planning: Designed model cities, built solar-powered cars, and solved sustainability engineering challenges.



MAKER CAMP DEMOGRAPHICS

Black or African American	24%
Hispanic or Latine/x	36%
Asian or Pacific Islander (incl.SWANA)	14%
White (incl. SWANA)	13%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Two or More Races	12%
Female	49%
Male	51%
Multilingual Learner	3%
Special Education	19%
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	54%





"Access is so incredibly important along with the opportunity to do project-based learning—which doesn't get to be part of the school curriculum. Maker Camp serves students—particularly those from historically underrepresented communities—creating opportunities that many young people might not otherwise have."
--- Maker Camp Parent

MAKER CAMP CONTINUED

- **Rising 7th & 8th Graders (Hosted at King Middle School)**
  - Stop Motion Animation: Produced original short films using animation, music, and green screen technology.
  - Game Design: Learned coding and engineering fundamentals using Scratch and micro:bits to build physical carnival games.
- **Rising 9th Graders (Hosted at Berkeley High School)**
  - RoboCamp: Explored advanced engineering by building and programming LEGO robots.
  - Multimedia Projects: Mastered digital design and storytelling to create original comics and digital artwork.



MAKER CAMP STAFF & MENTORS

To strengthen sustainable STEM learning systems, we continued to invest in developing nontraditional and classified educators as STEM mentors and facilitators. During Summer Maker Camp, 29 high school and college mentors supported programming, including 15 returning mentors and 9 new mentors, resulting in a 52% retention rate from previous sessions. Mentors who reflect our students' backgrounds play an important role in creating engaging, welcoming, and inclusive STEM learning environments.

"With summer camps being so expensive, it is wonderful to have a free option for our kids that provides educational and fun activities."-- Maker Camp Parent



Staff participated in 20 hours of training to strengthen their ability to support students and create positive STEM learning experiences. Mentors are also supported throughout their first employment experiences by a high school counselor who helps them develop professionalism, understand workplace culture, build resumes, and prepare for interviews. This creates an additional layer of support within our STEM workforce pipeline, helping young people build skills and gain experience that can support their future education and careers. Maker Camp educators consistently rate their work experience with STEM very highly:

Survey Item (Adults)	Likert Scale
Built strong relationships with students of color	4.62 / 5.00
Built strong relationships with girls and gender-expansive youth	4.90 / 5.00
Gained new STEM knowledge	4.77 / 5.00

We are deeply grateful to Wareham Development whose generous support makes these enriching STEM experiences possible and helps us continue closing opportunity gaps for all students.