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**Equity**

We are driven to challenge current narratives around who belongs in STEM by asking new questions: How can STEM skills help others? How will you share the importance of these skills with other students? Looking at the data of who participates in STEM, what will you do to change the numbers? What will YOU do to broaden participation in STEM in schools and in careers? How do you see yourself, as a female, [belonging in STEM](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USED/bulletins/331c91d)?

**Lessons Learned & Insights Gained**

*“One of the things that I love most about this…was how we got to learn about all the different possible careers that we could use if we…learned to fly drones…I had no idea the wide variety of doors that were opening.”*

*“We get to get our hands on technology that other kids our age haven't even heard of yet…and it gives us the opportunity to be a part of that development and to use it in our future careers to do a world of things.”*

Find more at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOcfengNcBA>

Expanding who belongs in STEM means shifting how conversations, careers and learning around STEM skills take place, challenging stereotypes and social constructs, and broadening the way students and educators view, talk about, and connect to STEM.

**Take Flight: Using Drones to Get Rural Middle School Girls Interested in STEM Careers**

[Amanda Bastoni](https://www.cast.org/about/staff/amanda-bastoni), CAST (PI); [Jess Gropen](https://www.cast.org/about/staff/jess-gropen), CAST (Co-PI); [Sam Johnston](https://www.cast.org/about/staff/sam-johnston), CAST (Co-PI);

Eric Feldborg, former CTE State Director NH and STEM Education Consultant

NSF Award Number​: 2146613 Dates: 2022 - 2026

Project type:​ Developing and Testing Innovations (DTI) proposal

Project URL: <https://www.cast.org/our-work/projects/take-flight-drones-rural-middle-school-girls-stem-careers>

Project Overview: This project will provide critical insights and research into effective strategies for supporting female students in rural communities, and all students, in exploring STEM careers, and how Universal Design for Learning can play a role in removing barriers and increasing access for a broad range of learners.

**New Challenges & Next Steps**

**Change the message.** Messages about STEM must include communal, collaborative, and altruistic goals to increase the motivation of rural female students.

**Employ disruptive technology.** Drones help break stereotypes and promote communal goals; a perfect “vehicle” for a new message about STEM identity.

**Use strengths-based approaches.** Design learning contexts to engage female students, mitigate stereotype threat, and leverage students’ assets.