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Transforming Science Education through Research-Driven Innovation

## **New BSCS Report Presents Guidelines for Designing Citizen Science Projects that Merge Science and Education**

### ***BSCS Science Learning Convenes Citizen Science Experts to Advance the Field***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** – Over the last two decades, there has been an explosion in the number of citizen science projects underway. And despite initial skepticism by scientific traditionalists, citizen science has proven itself as a method for conducting rigorous science. In parallel with the science, there have been many discussions of the educational benefits that participants in citizen science projects can gain.

However, conventional wisdom holds that a project has to choose between scientific or educational goals. In a recently completed project, BSCS Science Learning—an independent nonprofit dedicated to transforming science education—set out to show that it is not necessary to choose and has released a report that presents guidelines for designing citizen science projects with scientific and educational benefits.

With funding from the Pisces Foundation, BSCS convened a group of scientists, educators, and technologists with experience organizing citizen science projects to consider challenges and share insights on achieving both outcomes. The resulting report offers design recommendations for individuals and organizations who seek to create citizen science projects, as well as for developers of software to support citizen science.

“There are two widespread, polar opposite misconceptions about the relationship between scientific and educational outcomes in citizen science,” said Dr. Daniel Edelson, executive director of BSCS. “Some people believe both scientific and educational outcomes occur automatically in a citizen science project, whereas others believe the two outcomes are incompatible. Based on the premise that neither idea is true, we gathered experts to develop a practical design framework grounded in real-world examples.”

The report is organized around a framework of 12 valued scientific and educational outcomes that were identified by participants in the workshop. The report presents specific design strategies to achieve these outcomes, together with examples of how they have been implemented in existing citizen science projects.

“Our report is intended to provide a practical framework for bridging the gap in fieldwork outcomes.” said Edelson. “We are hoping the broader citizen science community will pick up on this work and continue to add strategies and examples to guide future designers of citizen science projects.”

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“This report is an exciting next step for utilizing citizen science inside and outside the classroom,” said Jason Morris, senior program officer, Environmental Education at the Pisces Foundation. “The report shares real world examples that strongly suggest citizen science projects can incorporate high quality science while achieving the educational outcomes that equip our kids with the environmental know-how they need to create a sustainable world.”

The report is freely available here: <https://bscs.org/tech-report/2018-1>

For more information, please contact: Lauren Novo at [lnovo@bscs.org](mailto:lnovo@bscs.org).

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### **About BSCS Science Learning**

BSCS Science Learning is an independent nonprofit dedicated to transforming science education through research-driven innovation. Over the last 60 years, BSCS has brought the experience of inquiry learning to millions of students and teachers. Today, BSCS conducts research on how to improve science teaching and learning, develops research-based instructional materials, delivers professional learning programs for educators, and conducts leadership development programs for schools and districts. Learn more at [bscs.org](http://bscs.org).

BSCS is transforming the way organizations and community members engage in citizen science through an interactive platform called FieldScope. With FieldScope, organizers of field studies can leverage sophisticated graphing and mapping visualization tools and resources to enhance their existing and future citizen science projects. Participants of all ages and backgrounds can then conveniently upload measurements, observations, and media to a shared project database. Learn more at [fieldscope.org](http://fieldscope.org).

### **About The Pisces Foundation**

The Pisces Foundation believes if we act now and boldly, we can quickly accelerate to a world where people and nature thrive together. Pisces mainstreams powerful new solutions to support innovators who know what it takes and are doing what’s necessary to have clean and abundant water, a safe climate, and kids with the environmental know-how to create a sustainable world. To learn more about Pisces’ work and collaborations visit:

<http://piscesfoundation.org/>

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