

Executive Summary

West Sound STEM Network is a dynamic collaboration of educators, business leaders, and representatives from local government and the military, working to introduce and link students, teachers and the community to the vast array of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) resources in our region. As with other STEM Networks in Washington, the goal is to enhance student learning in these key academic areas. Our students' ability to understand and apply science, technology, engineering and math principles not only increases their understanding of the world, but also translates to innovation and advancement for local business and industry.

While teachers are the number one driver of student academic performance, teachers cannot do it alone. We must leverage all the assets of a community to support the effectiveness of teachers and the success of students. The STEM business community is a key partner in improving STEM education for our students.

Previous efforts to improve student learning outcomes in STEM have fallen short for many reasons, including a lack of agreed upon goals, the inability to overcome barriers, or because certain groups were not at the table. Bringing key stakeholders together into a STEM Network represents an opportunity to mitigate such risks

and reach a tipping point for system change.

The West Sound STEM Network collective vision is based upon the belief that the future success of our students, our community, and our economy is inescapably tied to STEM. In a world economy that is increasingly being driven by science and technology, we believe it's imperative that, at a minimum, we instill STEM Literacy in every student. Providing a strong STEM education is critical to produce informed citizens capable of making important and often complex decisions regarding everything from personal purchases to voting issues. To do this we'd like to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to experience rich, pedagogically sound STEM learning experiences. In addition, we recognize that there is a tremendous need to provide a STEM capable workforce to meet the increasing demands of our regional economy. These STEM related employment needs range from production level positions to those holding advanced degrees in STEM fields.

The West Sound STEM Network Business Plan will focus on three goal areas: Education, Business/Education Partnerships and Communications & Advocacy. Goals and objectives were developed collaboratively and result from input of many partners.

Goal 1: Education

Establish and support effective PreK-20 STEM based educational experiences that help students graduate STEM-literate and college/ career ready.

Education Objectives:

- A. Create a seamless pipeline that aligns the West Sound educational systems from PreK to higher education preparing STEM literate students for college & careers.
- B. More students will be ready for postsecondary STEM-related education and careers because of participation in career and technical education opportunities.
- C. Provide and/or develop effective materials, professional development, and assessments aligned to the CCSS and the NGSS.
- D. Help promote and ensure equitable access to quality STEM education programs for all students beginning in PreK.

Goal 2: Business/Education Partnerships

Develop strong partnerships between business and education communities to ensure equitable opportunities for students in the West Sound Region to become STEM literate and career/ college ready.

Business/Partnership Objectives:

- A. Continue to develop partnerships and initiatives between business and education communities to advance STEM literacy.
- B. Create an online resource that guides business and education to advance STEM Initiatives collaboratively.
- C. Collaborate with STEM Network partners to educate and advocate the wide variety and benefits of STEM careers to all educators, businesses, community members, and students.

Goal 3: Communications & Advocacy

Develop a communication capacity that advocates and efficiently conveys the need for STEM literacy, connecting business, education and the community around the West Sound STEM initiative.

Communications & Advocacy Objectives:

- A. Articulate to all stakeholders a clear and meaningful definition of STEM literacy and its importance in the 21st Century workplace and to all citizens.
- B. Develop a web clearinghouse that provides a reliable and dynamic web interface between education, business and community.
- C. Provide platforms to share information to broaden availability of STEM education opportunities for teachers, students and families throughout the West Sound.

Specific strategies are outlined to address each of these objectives, as are evaluation measures.

With the support and guidance of Washington STEM, along with collaboration with the other regional STEM networks across Washington, the West Sound STEM network has the foundation to embark on this work. We will create a more effective, efficient and equitable system supporting the need for career/college ready, STEM-literate citizens.