WASHINGTON STEM 2020 POLICY PRIORITY: L.A.S.E.R.

Washington State LASER (Leadership Assistance for Science Education Reform)

- State science-education program supported by Washington STEM in partnership with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Educational Service Districts and school districts
- Established in 1999 as public/private partnership
- Has worked with >107,000 educators in >205 school districts.

The work of LASER overlaps and ties together many aspects of our state's STEM education systems. **Funding for LASER has remained stagnant for the last 9 years. We are advocating for a modest increase in funding to $700,000 to support and expand the implementation of our 2019- 2020 goals.**

2019- 2020 WASHINGTON STATE LASER GOALS + ORGANIZATION

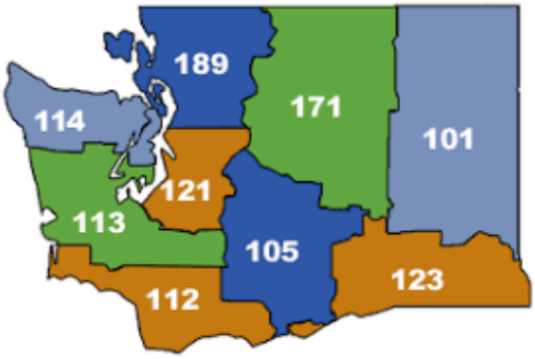
Landscape: Give STEM education leaders the tools they need to support all students in science classrooms across the state.
Leadership Capacity: Provide clear connections and access to resources for STEM education leaders so they can better support students.
Culture: Every student, rural, urban, and everywhere in between, will see STEM as a place for them.

Each of the nine ESD regions has a LASER Alliance, except ESD 121 (which has two alliances and serves about 40% of the state's students).

Leadership and responsibility is distributed between statewide LASER Co-Directors, with support from Washington STEM. On-the-ground work is carried out by regional LASER Alliance Directors.

- ***LASER Co-Directors:*** design, facilitate, and implement activities that lead to progress toward LASER goals.

10 LASER Alliances



- ***Regional Alliance Directors:*** implement, share, and refine best practices and tools that contribute to LASER goals.
- ***Washington STEM:*** provide capacity-building support and technical assistance to Co-Directors and Alliance Directors.
- ***LASER Advisory:*** represent a range of perspectives that challenge and support LASER, especially with respect to increasing equitable access to STEM-related careers. The Advisory (1) provides critical advice, and (2) supports/promotes LASER through their professional networks.

LASER IN ACTION:

Landscape

Improving science/STEM learning outcomes for all students—particularly students historically underserved and underrepresented in science/STEM—requires changing practices and policies that act as systemic, institutional, and organizational barriers.

LASER is actively curating an online platform known as the "LASER toolbox" that contains resources designed for Science/STEM Strategic Planning & Implementation. LASER will support a minimum of 20 schools/districts (two per Alliance region) in comprehensive, equity-driven, data-based Science/STEM Strategic Planning and Implementation.

Leadership Capacity

The ability to assist districts to make sense of the myriad opportunities in STEM education requires that science education leaders are well-versed and aware of the wide range of state STEM initiatives (e.g. ClimeTime, Computer Science, Career and Technical Education, *Career Connect Washington*, NEXUS) and key players across the state (e.g. OSPI, Science Fellows, regional STEM Networks, Community-Based Organizations, post-secondary institutions, employers).

LASER is assisting districts to identify and leverage efficiencies across initiatives in order to best serve students systematically underrepresented in STEM, aligned to the Washington School Improvement Framework and complementary strategic planning efforts.

Culture

Overcoming barriers to success for underrepresented and underserved students requires that leaders be culturally competent and proficient. LASER is developing cultural proficiency within its leadership network, and will also support the development of those competencies with other regional, district, and school leaders' --including but not limited to Regional Science Coordinators, professional development providers, educators, materials resource managers, and community partners.

Washington STEM's overarching goal is that by 2030, all students will be future-ready and that Washington STEM and statewide partners will triple the number of students of color, students from low-income and rural families, and young women who are on track to earn high-demand credentials and enter family-sustaining careers in the state. We are accomplishing this by taking a holistic approach that combines leveraging relationships and work of regional partners, measuring data on successful interventions and outcomes, as well as advocacy for strategic policy change.