



# REGIONAL IMPACT REPORT

Washington students need strong science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills to pursue Washington's highest demand career pathways that lead to family-wage jobs – from controls programming, to construction, to 21st-century manufacturing. Over the past few years, students in the **West Sound STEM Network** have received cradle-to-career STEM education opportunities thanks to our partnership with the Washington State Legislature.

## STEM CAFES

West Sound STEM Network implemented a comprehensive, collaborative, and broad dive into STEM teacher professional development by partnering with higher education, industry members, Tribes, military, and non-profits to deliver **58** STEM training workshops for teachers, with **39** of them as virtual in response to COVID guidelines. As a result, teachers expanded their STEM knowledge and leadership skills which directly increased access and opportunities for new skills for students.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE

West Sound STEM Network received a third year of computer science grant funding from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The opportunities provided by the OSPI Computer Science grant will continue to have high impact in our region. The grants support districts, schools, and nonprofits to train teachers and integrate computational skills into classrooms. West Sound STEM will continue to connect teachers directly with industry leaders who use computational thinking on a daily basis. In addition, the grants expand computer science access to groups of students who have historically been underrepresented in computer science programs and careers.

## COMMUNITY AWARENESS & ENGAGEMENT

West Sound STEM Network, in partnership with Tacoma STEAM Network and OSPI, co-developed and launched virtual Controls Technology Educator externships. The unique opportunity immersed over **100** teachers from across the region in the basic concepts of Control Systems Technology by using models such as games, industry tools, and simulations as analogs for how sensors trigger complex decisions and actions. During the time of the coronavirus pandemic, we continue to innovate using the cutting edge tools to create meaningful, memorable experiences for our communities.

## CREATING A POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT CULTURE: CATALYZING FINANCIAL AID COMPLETION

The immediate need for equitable access to earning a postsecondary credential, especially for populations furthest from opportunity, is highly dependent upon FAFSA/WASFA completion. Yet, students from poverty,

## STEM NETWORKS SPARK CHANGE

STEM Networks are deeply rooted in their communities and provide local expertise to ensure that local needs are met. Each area of our state is unique and STEM Networks know how to drive maximum impact in STEM for every student in their region.



students of color, and students from remote and rural areas have significantly lower FAFSA completion rates. This is a glaring example of inequity and multiple West Sound STEM Network partners are engaged in closing this gap. West Sound STEM Network, in partnership with Washington STEM, regional partners and state agencies, deployed a comprehensive and systemic analysis of FAFSA completion barriers and comprehensive supports—by partnering with leaders of historically marginalized populations and with the other nine STEM Networks. Together, they will convened a wide range of education, community, government, and other leaders to co-develop a model for change. The time is now—students cannot wait any longer.

### THANK YOU

We thank the Washington State Legislature for their engagement with STEM education issues and the West Sound STEM Network. Our collective and ongoing impact on Washington students means that every student, from our earliest learners to those on their way to a STEM career, will be prepared to thrive in Washington's innovation economy. Our collaboration with the Legislature is essential as we work to strengthen our education systems so that students in our region can thrive and contribute to the vitality of their communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Karen Borders at [borders@skschools.org](mailto:borders@skschools.org)

