



CAREER
CONNECT
SOUTHWEST



STEM
Science · Technology · Engineering · Math

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 living wage jobs – from advanced agriculture, ground-breaking biotechnology, to 21st-century manufacturing. Over the past few years, students in the [Career Connect Southwest STEM Network](#) have received cradle-to-career STEM education opportunities thanks to our partnership with the Washington State Legislature.

CAREER PATHWAYS IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION

Our regional Career Pathway work groups bring together educators, industry, and higher education professionals to examine current course availability, curriculum, develop Career Explore and Prep programs that build toward Career Launch opportunities. This year, growth in the Career Connect SW Washington Region reached 3 intermediary grantees and 5 Career Launch Endorsed programs. Industries supported include Healthcare, Manufacturing and Construction, and Computer Science.

Flipped Internships – An internship is one of the best ways for young people to build social capital, deeply explore a possible career and build 21st century skills. In Southwest Washington, we've Flipped the traditional internship model to provide whole classrooms of students a direct learning partnership with a local employer. With Network support, educators meet with industry professionals to develop an authentic problem-based activity that reflects the real work of professionals in that field. The industry partner introduces students to the problem and then follows with a mid-project check-in, and final review of student's solution presentations. Groups of students are in the learner seat and get real-world experiences in collaboration, critical thinking and communicating their solutions to the employer and build powerful connections with professionals at the same time. Flipped internships allowed over 600 students in Southwest Washington to:

- Gain authentic problem-solving experience
- Build social capital with local industry partners
- Develop 21st century skills in presentation, communication, and teamwork
- Increase knowledge, skills and abilities in a STEM subject
- See the relevance of their classroom learning

Career Connect SW developed a Flipped Internship Guide and library of 15 industry PBLs, and are developing more and more with employers and teachers in our region!

Scaling nPower Girls across the region - Women remain underrepresented in STEM fields with only 28% of these stable, high-wage earning credentials going to women. Young women of color and in rural areas of Washington need mentors that look like them, live where they live and have thrived in STEM to tell their stories and share their passion. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, Career Connect SW partnered with South

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.



Central STEM to rollout nPower Girls for 8 rural districts in Klickitat and Skamania Counties. With support from Washington STEM and Washington LASER, our network has expanded nPower Girls to **all 30 school districts** in southwest Washington and will offer 6 virtual mentoring sessions this year with women working in our local communities, engaging middle school girls in solving some of the state's most challenging STEM issues.

EARLY LEARNING

STEM Swap has scaled our free early learning robotics program to include all six counties in Southwest Washington to bolster computer science literacy for our youngest learners and their families. To date, we have developed eight material kits and engaged with over 2,000 preschoolers and their caregivers! Career Connect SW launched the first Early STEM Roundtable in the state designed to draw together early childhood caregivers to design and scale strategies to meet our most underserved communities with high-quality STEM programs.

SOUTHWEST LASER ALLIANCE

In June, the Southwest LASER Alliance hosted LASER STEM Strategic Planning with the intent for district teams to consider how to start or relaunch STEM and Career Connected Learning across grades K through 12 with Coherence for the fall of 2021. Michael Fullan, author of "Coherence: The Right Drivers in Action for Schools, Districts and Systems" led the work of helping district and building teams understand how to advance STEM school improvement planning with a focus on equity, results, and collaboration. Of the local alliance teams that attended the Summit, more than half chose to focus their 2021 school year action plans to implement a policy of 150 minutes of science in K-5 next school year. For example, educators from Battle Ground SD have developed an integrated STEM + Literacy plan that build off of their existing curriculum and allows each student to engage in rigorous STEM learning as they build their literacy skills.

THANK YOU

We thank the Washington State Legislature for their engagement with STEM education issues and the Career Connect Southwest 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, are prepared to thrive in Washington's innovation economy. Our collaboration with the Legislature is essential as we work to strengthen our education systems so students in our region can thrive and contribute to the vitality of their communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Career Connect Southwest Director, Vickei Hrdina at vickei.hrdina@esd112.org.

