



# 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 advanced agriculture, ground-breaking biotechnology, 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.

## CATALYZING FINANCIAL AID COMPLETION

A financial aid completion proviso, passed with bipartisan support, provided multiple West Sound STEM Network (WSSN) partners the support to engage in closing a disproportionate gap in students accessing financial aid by building upon existing systems in new and synergistic ways. They mobilized partner STEM networks across the state to develop connections with community leaders and further develop a college-going culture in communities furthest from educational opportunity.

As a result of on-the-ground support for students, families, and school districts, a Financial Aid Completion playbook was developed and distributed to leaders statewide. The West Sound STEM Network partnered with community partners, school districts, the WA College Access Network (WCAN) and WSAC to host Financial Aid Advising Day events to directly support rural districts. The lead partner district's FAFSA completion = **39.1%** as of 1/11/21, compared to a regional rate of 20.4% and statewide rate of 30%.

## COMPUTER SCIENCE IN WEST SOUND

West Sound STEM Network received a fourth year of competitive computer science grant funding, in the amount of \$169,800, 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, industry, higher education, 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 been historically underrepresented in computer science programs and careers.

## CAREER CONNECTED LEARNING

This year growth in the Career Connect Washington West Sound Region reached **6 intermediary grantees** and **12 Career Launch** Endorsed programs. Industries supported include Maritime, Construction, Healthcare, Biotechnology, and Manufacturing.

West Sound STEM Network, in partnership with companies MacDonald-Miller Facility Solutions, Johnson Controls, Inc., Siemens Industries, ATS Inc, Long Building Technologies, local high schools and higher

## 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.



education, co-created two registered apprenticeships, [the Associate Controls Specialist Registered Apprenticeship](#) and the [Controls Programmer Apprenticeship](#) for individuals interested in entering the Controls Technology industry. Through the highly effective structure of apprenticeship, combining academic study with on-the-job training, apprentices learn to manage automated systems in complex, high-tech facilities. Today's smart buildings industry faces a serious shortage of workers and needs hands-on professionals with knowledge in controls technology, computer programming and networking, electronics, energy management strategies and contracting.

### K-12 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

West Sound STEM Network deployed a comprehensive, collaborative and broad dive into STEM teacher professional development by partnering with higher education, industry, labor, Tribes, military, and non-profits to offer STEM training workshops for teachers. For example, nearly **sixty teachers** attended the Northwest Maritime Center (NWMC) and West Sound STEM Network STEM Café: Tides & Currents on and learned how tides and currents work, how we can predict them, why predictions aren't always accurate and why they are not the same everywhere on Earth.

Teachers discussed how tides influence the weather, climate and ecology of the Salish Sea and how that knowledge helps in everyday life: how we use tides and currents for recreational activities or in the shipping and seafood industries. They explored connections to Maritime careers, learned how to use online tools and resources to better understand tides and currents and how to effectively deploy this learning into the classroom..

### 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 West Sound STEM Network Executive Director, Dr. Karen Borders, at [borders@sksschools.org](mailto:borders@sksschools.org).**

**1,000,000 students across the state are supported through STEM Network activities and programs.**

