



# 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 **Career Connect Southwest** region have received cradle-to-career STEM education opportunities thanks to our partnership with the Washington State Legislature.

## CONNECTING STUDENTS & TEACHERS TO CAREER PATHWAYS & PROFESSIONALS DURING COVID-19

Much about school is different right now, but it's as important as ever for our students to prepare for work so they can find a meaningful and rewarding career after graduation.

Serving as both the STEM Network and Career Connected Learning Network, the region has received **\$200,000** in generous funding from Career Connect Washington to continue to facilitate programs to bring students and industry professionals together. ESD 112 also received **\$150,000** towards a dedicated Career Connected Learning coordinator who works with a network of nine ESD based coordinators, working in partnership with the program specialist at OSPI.

The virtual environment, while not ideal in every way, has allowed us to match students with professionals outside their home communities. For example, our team connected Wahkiakum High School students with professionals to explore careers in various engineering fields. In November, students from Wahkiakum met with a panel including a software engineer from Portland, an aerospace engineer from Bothell, an electrical engineer from Minneapolis, and a mechanical engineer from Camas. Additionally, our team will soon facilitate online resume writing workshop, virtual speed networking events, and even fully-online science and engineering fairs for middle and high school students.

In July 2020, **15** math and science educators from across the region completed an [externship program](#) visiting school facilities, active construction sites, and construction-related businesses in an effort to become better acquainted with the current and future needs of the industry.

## EARLY LEARNING

The STEM Initiatives Team at Career Connect Southwest has invested in several programs to meet families where they are and provide simple, fun ways to support our youngest learners in engaging in STEM. Since 2017, [Math Anywhere!](#) has been working to create place-based media and visiting with children and their grown-ups in different community spaces to share our ideas.

## 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.



In 2020, we pivoted our *Math@The Movies* to a home version that families could play with their favorite streaming service. Though the first day of school looked different, we provided **1,500 families** with Kindergarten Welcome Boxes containing **STEM at Home** and Math Anywhere activities.

**STEM Swap!** Is a free preschool robotics loan program for all providers in the ESD112 Childcare Aware consortium. We know that students benefit from early learning about pattern recognition, sequencing, decomposing problems, and creating solutions. In 2020, we built a network of over 20 at-home childcare providers and by the end of July 2021 we will reach close to **1,500 toddlers**.

### **nPOWER GORGE GIRLS MATCHED WOMEN IN STEM WITH RURAL STUDENTS**

nPower Gorge Girls, a collaboration between Career Connect Southwest and South Central STEM Network, seeks to highlight family-wage and in-demand career paths to students in the Gorge while also providing those students with strong women role models from their own communities. Starting in late 2020, middle school girls began working with dynamic local women in STEM on solutions for real-world science problems. The students each created a design for a solution, then selected prototyping materials from an online inventory. The materials they requested were delivered to their homes and they got to work building their model. Later, the girls shared their creations with their mentor and each other virtually, to offer and receive feedback and encouragement.

### **THANK YOU**

We thank the Washington State Legislature for their engagement with STEM education issues and Career Connect Southwest. 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, Vickie Hrdina, at [vickei.hrdina@esd112.org](mailto:vickei.hrdina@esd112.org).**

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

