



# 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 **South Central STEM Network** have received cradle-to-career STEM education opportunities thanks to our partnership with the Washington State Legislature.

## PIVOT TO VIRTUAL CAREER EXPLORATION

During a time when K-12 students are utilizing a Learning Management System to access virtual learning opportunities, students in the most rural districts in the ESD 105 region will have the opportunity to participate in Career Exploration through *Virtual Job Shadow*, a program developed by our STEM network. Using a virtual platform, students complete an interest driven inventory, explore careers they are curious about, check video interviews with professionals to learn about the career, investigate labor market data, explore salary range, and locate institutions where required credentials are offered.

Beginning in early 2021, approximately **1,600 rural students** will have access to the high-quality Career Exploration platform.

## EXPANDING YOUTH APPRENTICESHIPS

What could be better for a 17-29 year old youth than to engage in a Career Launch opportunity that provides high school and or college credit, hands-on learning directly related to their chosen career path, and to engage in on-the-job training under the supervision of a caring adult mentor? Welcome to the world of youth apprenticeship! In 2019, regional partners in the South Central Washington STEM Network region began working with the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) to implement the Automation Technician apprenticeship program. Apprentices in this program learn all the skills necessary for a career in Industrial Maintenance. What started small, with only 3 apprentices in the fall of 2019 has grown to over **30 apprentices** in just over one year! Responding to the request of the business community in South Central Washington, and building on the success of the Automation Technician apprenticeship, AJAC in partnership with other regional stakeholders, will begin the implementation of the newly approved Machine Operator apprenticeship designed to meet the needs of the Food Processing industry. Local companies like Del Monte, Ostrom Mushroom Farms, Washington Beef, and the Washington State Tree Fruit Association have been instrumental in the development process.

## ACCESS TO EARLY MATH INNOVATIONS

The South Central STEM Network has built regional capacity to support children from low income families, families of color, and rural areas in their early math preparation through investments in two areas: professional

## 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.



development for instructional coaches, teachers, and teacher aids; and family engagement. The Early Math Innovations Project implemented a Studio Cycle strategy to train and support the coaches and teachers in Head Start and Migrant Head Start classrooms in the ESD 105 and ESD 171 regions. Math coaches and teachers are trained through a year-long effort to develop understanding of math concepts, community engagement, and building math confidence. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to host 3 in-person Family Nights from our pilot site at the Blossoms Early Learning Center. Approximately 50 family members attended each of the nights for a total of **150 families** served.

## 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, students of color, and students from remote and rural areas have significantly lower FAFSA completion rates. This is a glaring example of inequity and we are part of a statewide effort to close this gap. The South Central STEM Network partnered with the College Success Foundation (CSF), WA Gear Up, Washington Student Achievement Council and local colleges to co-host **8** regional financial aid awareness events in November and December. The events were provided in English and Spanish, and held at multiple accessible time slots to meet the needs of the region.

## THANK YOU

We thank the Washington State Legislature for their engagement with STEM education issues and the South Central 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 South Central STEM Network Co-Directors Mark Cheney at [mark.cheney@esd105.org](mailto:mark.cheney@esd105.org) or Hugo Moreno at [hugo.moreno@esd105.org](mailto:hugo.moreno@esd105.org).

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

