



STEM Investment Council

May 18, 2020

Members:

- STEFAN BIRD
Chair
- BETH ALCOULOU MRE
- MARCELINO ALVAREZ
- HERB FRICKE
- RITA HANSEN
- MARV NELSON
- LISA POWELL
- NIKKI SALENGER
- PAUL STEWART

Ben Cannon
Executive Director
Higher Education Coordinating Commission
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310

Colt Gill
Director
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Executive Director Cannon and Director Gill,

The STEM Investment Council writes to share its recommendations regarding the Higher Education Coordinating Commission’s and Oregon Department of Education’s budgets for the 2021-2023 biennium. Under ORS 326.500, the STEM Investment Council is charged with making recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction and Executive Director of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission regarding investments in STEM Education.

As communities across Oregon grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis has only highlighted the critical need for community-based, collaborative organizations, like STEM Hubs, and the type of engaging, hands-on, project-based learning that is at the core of STEM education. With schools closed and districts, educators, parents, and students adapting to statewide distance learning, STEM Hubs are stepping up. Hubs are developing and sharing at-home STEM learning activities, organizing virtual field trips, internships, and learning opportunities with local employers, and providing online professional development for educators. They are working with their regional partners to increase access for families to high quality learning materials by making these materials available at food distribution sites. They are redeploying the 3D printers from their maker spaces to produce personal protective equipment. This type of community-based, nimble response is nothing new for STEM Hubs. It is what they do day in and day out, year-round.

Further, the expected lasting economic impact of COVID-19 means that now, more than ever, young Oregonians need STEM education. The skills and mindsets developed through STEM – problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, innovation, design thinking, etc. – are exactly those skills that will help our young people thrive in an uncertain economy, and restart Oregon’s economic engines.

Recognizing the need for strong investment in STEM education as outlined above, while acknowledging the state’s budget constraints due to COVID-19, the STEM Investment Council recommends modest increases in state support for STEM education. Specifically, the council recommends the following:

- **Fund the Regional STEM Hub Network, comprising 13 individual STEM Hubs, at \$7,000,000 (\$4,840,000 in 2019-21)**

This funding level would:

- a) Provide the backbone operational funding necessary for each Hub to operate on a true collective impact model, and
- b) Allow each Hub to sustain its core activities – the programs and initiatives that are well-established and proven, and for which the Hub is known.

Advisory Members:

- YOLANDA COLEMAN
- MELISSA DUBOIS
- PRESTON EAGLEHEART
- ANDY GRZESKOWIAK
- JESSICA HOWARD
- KATRINA HULL
- ANDREW LATTANNER
- NAGI NAGANATHAN
- SUSAN SHUGERMAN
- KYLE RITCHEY-NOLL
- CARA SNOW
- LELA THIEME
- TONG ZHANG

Technical Advisors:

- KAREN HUMELBAUGH
Director, Office of Workforce Investments
- KURT TACKMAN
Deputy Director, Office of Workforce Investments

Council Staff:

- JULIA STEINBERGER
Director
- SYDNEY KING
Board Administrator



STEM Investment Council

Members:

- STEFAN BIRD
- Chair*
- BETH ALCOULOU MRE
- MARCELINO ALVAREZ
- HERB FRICKE
- RITA HANSEN
- MARV NELSON
- LISA POWELL
- NIKKI SALENGER
- PAUL STEWART

Advisory Members:

- YOLANDA COLEMAN
- MELISSA DUBOIS
- PRESTON EAGLEHEART
- ANDY GRZESKOWIAK
- JESSICA HOWARD
- KATRINA HULL
- ANDREW LATTANNER
- NAGI NAGANATHAN
- SUSAN SHUGERMAN
- KYLE RITCHEY-NOLL
- CARA SNOW
- LELA THIEME
- TONG ZHANG

Technical Advisors:

- KAREN HUMELBAUGH
- Director, Office of Workforce Investments*
- KURT TACKMAN
- Deputy Director, Office of Workforce Investments*

Council Staff:

- JULIA STEINBERGER
- Director*
- SYDNEY KING
- Board Administrator*

- **Fund STEM Innovation Grants at \$5,500,000 (\$4,600,000 in 2019-21)**
This funding level would:
 - a) Allow Hubs to scale-up their programs and initiatives that have demonstrated impact, but are only being done on the margins due to resource constraints, and
 - b) Fund new and innovative projects and initiatives.
- **Fund the STEM Investment Council at \$500,000 (not funded in 2019-21)**
This funding level would:
 - a) Fund a 1.0 STEM Investment Council Director Position, and
 - b) Fund council activities, such as communications, meetings and convenings, data collection and analysis, etc.

In addition, the council recommends strong investment in Career and Technical education and other closely related efforts, including High School Success, secondary and postsecondary Career Pathways, math redesign, and the Engineering Technology & Industry Sustaining Pathways fund.

In closing, the council would like to remind you of the Equitable Vision for STEM Education in Oregon set forth by Oregon’s STEM Education Plan:

“Reimagine and transform how we educate learners in order to enhance their life prospects, empower their communities, and build an inclusive, sustainable, innovation-based economy. Oregonians of all races, economic status, and regions will develop the fundamental STEM-enabled skills and mindsets necessary to:

- *Improve the prosperity of all individuals and communities across the state*
- *Become creative life-long learners who can adapt to changing social and economic conditions*
- *Fully contribute to an increasingly complex and technologically rich global society*
- *Address high-demand, competitive workforce and industry needs”*

We believe that the investments recommended above are necessary to realizing this vision.

Sincerely,

Stefan Bird
Chair
STEM Investment Council