



Intel STEM Center
18624 NW Walker Rd
Beaverton, OR 97124

Dr. Rudy Crew
Chief Education Officer
775 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

May 9, 2013

Dear Dr. Crew:

As the Director of the STEM Teachers Academy of the Portland Metro STEM Partnership, I am writing a letter of support for House Bill 3232 which directs the Oregon STEM Investment Board to make strategic investments in education and House Bill 3233 which sets up a Network of Quality Teaching and Learning.

As an educator for 33 years, with 26 of those years being in Oregon, I have had the unique opportunity to experience and see the whole continuum of education support at the classroom, school, district, university, and now, at the Partnership level. My role as the Director of the STEM Teachers Academy is to support the STEM professional development needs of educators within the four Partnership districts (Portland, Beaverton, Hillsboro and Forest Grove) and the Portland Metro area. This is a half-time position, and I work as an Elementary Science Curriculum Specialist with the Beaverton School District as my other half-time position.

The STEM Teachers Academy is an integral part of the network of the Portland Metro STEM Partnership that is already developed and could serve as a model for other networks or STEM hubs throughout the State if adequate funding was provided. Our mission is to provide high quality, research-based teacher professional development programming coursework that is reflective of the needs and priorities of networked schools and partnering school districts in STEM disciplines. With limited funding, the Teachers Academy consists of myself, as director, and part-time Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs).

A key part of the backbone of the STEM Teachers Academy is the networking that happens as part of the role of STEM Teacher on Special Assignment. There are two levels of TOSAs: District STEM Partnership (one per Partnership district at .5FTE) and the STEM Network School (one per transformational school at .5 FTE). Each of the TOSAs play a key part in the transformational work within their school, district and the Partnership. The STEM Partnership TOSAs are cost-shared positions between their respective districts and Portland State University (each pays half of the .5 FTE position, including benefits). This cost shared relationship has been a very successful model/component of our collaborative network.

Funding from the State level could support the much-needed Network School TOSAs that are presently being covered by the individual districts. In these very difficult financial times, this is

not sustainable, and does not promote the collective investment of all the stakeholders of the Partnership and transformational change.

The following Portland Metro STEM Partnership Theory of Change supports the development and implementation of standards-based instruction, high leverage practices and assessments to promote the learning for all students:

1. If we want students to be successful in STEM majors and careers, then students need to acquire the conceptual knowledge, higher order cognitive skills, and dispositions that are key outcomes associated with college and career readiness in STEM.
2. If we want students to be college and career ready in STEM, then classroom environments must be characterized by the instructional practices, pedagogical content knowledge (specialized knowledge of teaching specific content), and supportive teacher-student relationships.
3. The Portland Metro STEM Partnership's Teacher Academy supports teachers in creating effective classroom environments by providing high quality STEM learning opportunities that focus on the implementation of effective instructional practices, pedagogical content knowledge and teacher self-efficacy.

With the Network School and Partnership TOSAs, the Teachers Academy:

- Identifies the STEM content and the pedagogical practices and programming needs of partnership teachers
- Develops and implements research-based professional development
- Utilizes TOSAs from partnering districts to serve as liaisons to Networked Improvement Communities and the partnership
- Builds professional capacity in TOSAs to meet the responsibilities of their positions
- Works with the Office of Research and Assessment to identify and monitor professional development outcomes and their effects on student achievement

We have created a culture of collaborative responsibility for helping create whole school reform that includes all stakeholders with the Network School TOSAs as an integral part of the Theory of Change. Through the use of a Common Measurement System, The Portland Metro STEM Partnership is working to hold all stakeholders accountable for student, teacher, and Partnership outcomes.

Thank you for your time. Feel free to contact me for an further information about the Portland Metro STEM Partnership or the work of the STEM Teachers Academy.

Carol Biskupic Knight
Director of STEM Teacher Academy
Portland Metro STEM Partnership