

Hello. I am Dr. Todd Sanders, a Career and Technical Education instructor at Portland Community College (PCC), and a member of the Governor's Interim Task Force on STEM Education. Thank you for this opportunity to speak. House Bill 2636 can be an instrumental component of our State's educational plan and I encourage members of the legislature to adopt it. Society is undergoing an incredible technological change and with it experiencing a growth in the demand for STEM professionals. At the same time, the U.S. is losing some of its most knowledgeable technical workers to retirement. As a result Oregon's industries are looking for STEM workers and will be searching for even more over the next decade.

Community Colleges will play a major roll in addressing our STEM education needs today and into the future. In Oregon over 60% of students who graduate from universities attend a community college first. Preparing STEM students for transfer is one way that community colleges will participate in the STEM education pipeline. Community Colleges also offer Career and Technical Education programs. Career and Technical Education programs are directly advised by industry councils and tend to respond more rapidly to emerging industry demands. This is a fact that I can personally attest to, and I can inform the committee that my colleagues are doing some amazing things- today. There is an excitement, an energy- right now- within the State's STEM-related Career and Technical Education programs. We are ready to tackle the challenges of STEM education and we have ideas.

Meeting the goals of an Oregon STEM education plan requires we increase the number of students transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education. Our State's dual credit program will play a big roll in this increase. Agreements between community colleges and high schools award students with college credit earned while in high school. Not only does this eliminate redundancy in a student's course work but with dual credit students also get both an economic incentive and motivational incentive as well. We know that students who participate in the dual credit program are far more likely to attend college than those who don't.

College completion is necessary for any STEM career and community colleges provide the greatest opportunities for educating many first-generation-in-college, low-income

and minority students. These underrepresented groups provide a vast untapped resource and only through their inclusion in the STEM pipeline will Oregon have a realistic chance at meeting its STEM goals.

Community colleges work. Our offering range from high school completion programs to career and technical education certificates, to university transfer degrees to welfare-to-work programs, to small business development centers and customized workforce training. With a network of connections and partnerships throughout our district PCC is helping to lead the way in STEM education. We have begun to seek collaboration to develop a STEM Hub in the Portland metropolitan area while also developing a brick and mortar STEM Center at our southeast Portland campus and, we are currently completing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Portland Metro STEM Partnership to create change in the community through a collective impact approach.

PCC is excited to continue to play a role in Oregon's STEM education and the STEM workforce. We are a large (the largest educational institution in Oregon), multifaceted, innovative college that is already committed to STEM. A recent article in our *Communities* magazine highlights our STEM work at the college, and in the next two weeks it will be mailed to 350,000 households in our 5-county area. We are leaving an advance copy of the article with you today.

PCC will be actively engaged in the conversation about STEM education as it moves forward in Oregon. Thank you.