



Testimony in Favor of Strategic CTE-STEM Education Investment

Stefan Bird, President & CEO, Pacific Power: Chair, Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition

Good morning Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and members of the Ways & Means Education Subcommittee. I am Stefan Bird, president & CEO, of Pacific Power. I am here today in my role as chair of the Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition to urge your support for a comprehensive CTE and STEM education investment package.

First, some background. Our Coalition represents more than 70 employers, businesses, and labor organizations. We've been working since 2012 to advance CTE and STEM education for learners from their earliest years to careers. We partner with the STEM Investment Council, elected leaders, educators, and foundations. We advocate visionary investment in CTE and STEM education. That investment fuels Oregon's economic success and it prepares Oregon learners for meaningful careers and lives.

We share that view at my company, Pacific Power. Our employees need the skills derived from CTE and STEM education. Our service communities around Oregon need these same skills for economic prosperity. Our district offices in communities from Enterprise to Astoria, and from Portland to Southern Oregon are engaged directly in support of Oregon's regional STEM Hubs.

CTE and STEM Education Are Vital

The applied, hands-on learning found in CTE and STEM engages students, helps them graduate, and prepares them to pursue their dreams. In that regard, Oregon offers real opportunity. We expect to have more than 430,000 job openings in STEM-related fields between now and 2027. Yet, too many students are emerging from our education systems without the skills to fill these positions. Gaps in CTE-STEM participation and outcomes remain too wide for women, students of color, and low-income students.

Oregon has made great progress in CTE and STEM, but we need to do more. We have yet to accomplish our ambitious Oregon STEM Plan goals to double the science and math proficiency of Oregon learners, to double the number of CTE and STEM credentials and degrees, and to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all learners.

Our CTE-STEM Investment Priorities

In this legislative session, which is so focused on education, Oregon has an opportunity to take CTE and STEM education to the next level. Here are the four key budget investments that our members recommend. We're also providing a separate paper on these priorities.

1. **Strengthen state and regional CTE and STEM system leadership and networks.** Increase funding for the STEM Investment Council and the state STEM Hub Network, and retain the STEM Council Director position in the HECC.
2. **Redesign and Improve CTE and STEM learning across the education continuum** through innovation and revitalization grants, through improved math alignment and pathways, and through expanded computer science education.
3. **Expand Career Pathways to increase CTE and STEM degrees and credentials.** Expand the Secondary Career Pathway fund, create a Community College Pathway Fund, and continue the ETIC sustaining pathway fund at universities.
4. **Fully fund the High School Success Initiative** (Ballot Measure 98) to continue our focus on ensuring students graduate prepared for the next step.

We urge you to view these four items as part of a comprehensive investment strategy supporting attainment of Oregon's education goals. If funded together so they can work together, we believe they will improve student pathways and outcomes. They will help meet our economy's need to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs.

Thank you for your time today. We look forward to working with you to accomplish these important goals.

The Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition represents employers and partners who advocate stronger CTE and STEM education to benefit Oregon learners and the Oregon economy. It is staffed by the Oregon Business Council. To learn more, visit the **Coalition website: <http://orbusinesscouncil.org/our-work/cte-stem-coalition/>**. Or contact Kyle Ritchey-Noll, OBC Education Policy Director, at kritcheynoll@orbusinesscouncil.org.



GIVE STUDENTS GREATER PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS THROUGH CTE AND STEM INVESTMENTS

Priorities for 2019–21

OUR VISION

Equip students with the skills and mindsets to become creative, life-long learners who thrive in education, careers, and life.

THE OPPORTUNITY IN FRONT OF US: THE 2019–21 STATE BUDGET

Oregon has built a great foundation to achieve this vision. This biennium we have an opportunity to make CTE and STEM investments that accelerate our progress and ensure an even stronger impact on student outcomes and Oregon’s economy.

CTE-STEM INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

1 Strengthen State and Regional CTE-STEM System Leadership and Networks

- Increase funding to adequately support the leadership of the STEM Investment Council and STEM Director.
- Increase funding for the STEM Hub Network to continue building out the effectiveness of statewide regional STEM leadership and programs.

2 Redesign and Improve CTE and STEM Learning

- Continue to invest in STEM Innovation Grants to expand effective and innovative learning experiences.
- Continue to invest in CTE Revitalization Grants to expand program offerings.
- Improve P20 math learning, curriculum alignment, and pathways.
- Adopt policies and practices to expand computer science education.

3 Expand Career Pathways to Increase CTE and STEM Degrees and Credentials

- Increase the Secondary Career Pathway Fund that incentivizes student enrollment in CTE programs.
- Create a similar Community College Career Pathway Fund.
- Continue the ETIC Sustaining Pathway funding at universities to increase degree attainment in STEM fields.

4 Fully fund High School Success (Ballot Measure 98)

ABOUT THE OREGON CTE-STEM EMPLOYER COALITION

The Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition, an initiative of the Oregon Business Council, advocates for CTE and STEM education and engages employers in a shared vision of inspiring and preparing students to thrive in education, the workplace, and life.

Contact Kyle Ritchey-Noll, kritcheynoll@orbusinesscouncil.org, for more information.

Why CTE and STEM Budget Investments Are Vital

Essential Studies. CTE and STEM education are essential for all students.

- They teach important technical skills and knowledge.
- They nurture creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and habits of mind that make for success.
- They engage and motivate students.
- They help them envision a pathway in learning and life.
- Students who take these courses have higher graduation rates.

Closing the Talent Gap. Oregon has a huge economic stake in CTE and STEM education.

- It fuels a technology-based economy.
- The state is projected to have more than 430,000 job openings in STEM-related fields between 2017–2027.
- Too many students are emerging from our education system without the skills needed to fill those positions.
- Many of our high school graduates lack foundational skills in math and science.
- Fewer than 14 percent of our top math and science students are earning STEM degrees.
- Fewer than 7 percent of all Oregon graduates earn a STEM degree.
- Gaps in CTE-STEM participation and outcomes remain too wide for women, students of color, and low-income Oregonians.