



April 18, 2019

To: Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Education

From: Kyle Ritchey-Noll, Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition

Re: Support for Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF)

On behalf of the Oregon CTE-STEM Employer Coalition, representing more than 70 employers, business and labor organizations that work to advance CTE and STEM education opportunities for learners from their earliest years to careers, I'm writing in support of retaining the Engineering Technology Sustaining Fund (ETSF).

The ETSF originated as the Engineering and Technology Industry Council (ETIC) in 1997 with an initial goal to double the number of engineering degrees awarded in Oregon. That goal has been exceeded, along with an improvement in education quality, a strong focus on equity and inclusion, and increased leveraged funds from research and philanthropy.

The ETSF adopted by the Higher Education Coordination Commission maintains and extends this successful work by paying for students graduating with engineering and technology degrees, with additional funding when the graduates are employed in Oregon. These graduates are critical to meet our economy's need to fill more than 430,000 new high-wage, high-demand jobs between now and 2027.

As the Legislature considers historic investments in education, Oregon has an opportunity to build a comprehensive CTE-STEM investment strategy across the P20 continuum, including important investments at the post-secondary level that expand CTE-STEM degrees and credentials. We view the ETSF as a critical part of that strategy. The attached handout outlines our CTE-STEM investment priorities.

Thank you for your leadership on this important work. We urge you to continue to invest in the ETSF and look forward to working with you to achieve Oregon's education goals.



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 mobilizes employers around a shared goal 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.