

I am writing today to respectfully urge support for the \$5.4M STEM investment in the Oregon Department of Education budget in SB 5513. I am the science specialist for Beaverton School District and have the pleasure to work with and be supported by my local STEM Hub, the Portland Metro STEM Partnership (PMSP), for over 10 years. In that time, I have also had the opportunity to work on joint projects and provide services for several other STEM hubs across the state. I have personally seen the impacts they have made to change the way we design, deliver, and provide expanded access to STEM education for historically underrepresented students. From providing STEM kits to underserved students during COVID, dramatically expanding STEM after school program access, designing innovative STEM-focused summer school experiences, and elevating the role of science in elementary education, our STEM hubs provide needed thought partnership, resources, and connections to out of school and industry partners that close expectation and opportunity gaps in STEM. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight one such impactful program, to share the kinds of impacts our hubs have had across the state, as well as the power of the partnerships STEM hubs can form. Years ago, PMSP partnered with Beaverton School District, Hillsboro School District, and Portland Public Schools to design a high-quality, culturally responsive high school science curriculum and sequence. This program, Patterns High School Science for All, is now being used in over 1/3 of science classrooms in the state. Through their support, as well as the most recent biennium's STEM Innovation grant, we have partnered to provide professional development on the NGSS and culturally responsive practices to hundreds of science educators across the state. We were also able to support all of those teachers with a high quality comprehensive distance learning curriculum and professional development when schools were closed. I truly cannot understate the impacts of this one project on students all across Oregon. I have heard from many teachers in small, under-resourced districts across the state who have let me know this is the first time they had access to a full curriculum, freeing them to focus on their students and providing hands-on labs and engineering projects. I also know the impacts in my own district, where we have increased enrollment in AP and IB science courses by 35% for all students, and 55% for our Hispanic students since we implemented the Patterns sequence. In Portland Public Schools, enrollment in those courses has increased by 55%. Enrollment in AP and IB courses is a strong predictor for both enrollment and successful graduation in STEM-focused higher education. These are the kinds of real impacts and changes that I know we could not achieve as individual districts, the STEM hubs bring us together and leverage their incredible impact in support of students and educators alike.

This funding means that our underserved students across the state will have more and improved STEM learning experiences, leading to better outcomes for students. They engage students and ignite their interests and passions and put them on a pathway to become leaders, innovators and problem solvers. More than 75% of the fastest growing occupations require STEM skills, and it is so important that our underserved students have access to those careers. In the past 10 years, the growth in STEM jobs has been 3 times as fast as non-STEM jobs. The skills and mindsets developed through STEM – problem solving, critical thinking, adaptability, design thinking, communication, and professional skills – are exactly those skills that will help our young people thrive in a changing economy and build Oregon's economic well-being. As a partner and supporter of STEM hubs who sees impacts on our students every day, I know this investment will change the lives of many students. Thank you for considering my feedback