

February 22, 2013

Dear Legislator:

**We need your help!** There is a serious talent shortage with thousands of high-paying STEM jobs waiting to be filled right here in Utah with 600,000 K-12 students who could expeditiously be prepared to fill these jobs, if you embrace and even co-sponsor, the most innovative STEM education initiative in Utah history. Using widely-used best practices that have been successful around the world - a **"STEM Center"** and **"STEM Schools"** - Utah will be poised to compete for tomorrow's jobs in a fast-changing digital world.

**The business community respectfully requests \$20 million in ongoing funds** to align Utah's educational outcomes with workforce needs. This request is **endorsed by the Governor's Education Excellence Commission, the Utah Technology Council, Prosperity 2020, Chambers of Commerce and Industry groups.** We are also working closely with Utah State Office of Education and Utah System of Higher Education.

As business leaders, we can assure you that elevated performance in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) is critical to our children's future success in their professional careers. Frankly, a strong STEM background is increasingly becoming a requirement for many jobs.

Accompanying this email is a link to the December 2011 National Governor's Association STEM recommendations: <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1112STEMGUIDE.PDF>.

A **STEM Center** (p. 28) creates support systems for math and science teachers helping them achieve higher learning outcomes while **STEM Schools** (p. 30) focus on giving students access to strong preparation, rigorous courses, and opportunities to apply STEM in hands-on projects.

Outcomes that are key to our children's future success in education, career and life include:

- 90% College Math Ready (currently 66% system wide)
- 90% Entering Post-Secondary Education (currently 68% of graduates)
- 90% Graduating from High School (currently 78% of students)
- 90% at Grade Level in K-12 in STEM (currently mid-40% to mid-70%)

Two high profile gaps have been identified (one by Higher Education and one by the Utah State Office of Education) that we will immediately work to close using a STEM Center and STEM schools. They are:

1. To get 8<sup>th</sup> graders to perform at grade level in science and math.
2. To solve the existing problem of math remediation in college and the increased challenge caused by LDS missions at 18, by getting students to complete college math while in high school.

*Note: Under 25% of students remediated in math complete college. Over 75% of all other students complete college.*

**Actions: Please contact Representative Val Peterson or Senator Steve Urquhart to co-sponsor HB 139 for a STEM Center, and Senator Stuart Adams to co-sponsor a still-to-be-numbered bill regarding STEM Schools.**

Sincerely,

Utah STEM Steering Task Group