

MEDIA RELEASE

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STEM Council drives more business-education partnerships

A request for proposals issued today for business-education collaborations seeks to inspire youth and spur economic development

CEDAR FALLS, Iowa – The Iowa Governor's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Advisory Council has designated a portion of the state legislative funding to support the establishment of six new Iowa STEM BEST (Businesses Engaging Students and Teachers) or STEM RLE (Redesigned Learning Environment) models, one in each of Iowa's six STEM regions.

Research indicates that partnerships between schools and the private sector boost learners' interest and performance, preparing them for post-secondary success and careers to follow. Therefore, one of the STEM Council's priorities for FY2016 is to commit \$150,000 of the state legislative appropriation to establish innovative and replicable STEM education models known as Iowa STEM BEST and STEM RLE. Last year, five STEM BEST awards were made that are currently in development while four STEM RLE models were launched in 2014, now serving as showcases for Iowa. Although distinct in their missions, both models share the goal of uniting the expertise of business and education to strengthen the continuum from classroom to careers.

"The alignment of what takes place in the classroom with what awaits today's students in their future careers is the motive for our STEM BEST and STEM RLE models," said Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, co-chair of the STEM Council. "Included among the many advantages to business-education partnerships are greater interest, career awareness and higher achievement of our students. The more we can do to support communities in this way, the better."

Beginning Monday, July 6, the STEM Council invites school-business partners across Iowa to submit their proposal to establish either a STEM BEST or STEM RLE at www.IowaSTEM.gov/Proposals/STEM-BEST-RLE. All Iowa private and public school districts and buildings serving students in any of grades K-12 are eligible to apply. All six funded applicants will be awarded \$25,000 to be matched with local cost-share and will be designated as innovative partners of the STEM Council. The application window will close on Tuesday, September 1, and recipients will be announced in early November.

To learn more about the current STEM BEST or STEM RLE models in Iowa, please visit www.IowaSTEM.gov/STEMBEST and www.IowaSTEM.gov/STEMRLE.

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About the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council

Established in July 2011 via Governor's Executive Order, the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council is a public-private partnership of educators, companies and Iowa students and families addressing policies and programs designed to improve Iowa's educational system focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The STEM Council works to engage and prepare students for a career-ready workforce path, regain our State's historic leadership position in education and provide a vital competitive economic advantage now, and for the future, to ensure that every Iowa student has access to world-class STEM education opportunities. The 47-member STEM Council is chaired by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and Vermeer Corp. CEO and Chair of the Board Mary Andringa. For more information, visit www.IowaSTEM.gov.