



# The Mid-Columbia STEM Nexus Local STEM Education Initiatives

## Spring 2021

In July of 2020, The Washington State STEM Education Foundation received a \$1M philanthropic gift from Battelle to support STEM education efforts and accelerate impact within the Tri-Cities community in the eastern region of Washington State. The Washington State STEM Education Foundation partnered with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to form what is now coined as the STEM Nexus Initiative, a community-based approach to STEM education comprised of local partners invested in inspiring and engaging the next generation of scientists and engineers. Battelle is a global research and development organization that manages and operates eight national laboratories, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, for the U.S. Department of Energy.



Despite challenges that arose from a global pandemic, the STEM Nexus Initiative provided transformative education solutions and supported remote learning through the distribution of 4,200 Microscopy STEM Kits. These included an accompanying lesson plan aligned to math common core and next-generation science and engineering standards. Students and teachers from a local, tribal school, the Mid-Columbia region, and Sequim community—located near Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Marine and Coastal Research Laboratory—all received these hands-on, interactive Microscopy STEM Kits.



The STEM Nexus Initiative has recently partnered with the [myTRI 2030 Education Council](#) to identify and support local STEM Education initiatives in the Tri-Cities and surrounding areas—especially within underserved and rural communities.

In February of 2021, the STEM Nexus Initiative team convened a joint community workshop with the myTRI2030 Education Council to identify projects that directly address the Top 10 Education opportunity areas identified by the community as being significant to making progress within the Tri-Cities community and surrounding regions.

Two projects were chosen to receive approximately \$135,000 to advance equity in STEM education for local, underserved student populations. The recipients included Columbia Basin College, Washington State University Tri-Cities, and the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory. The two colleges will collaboratively launch STEM programming for students and teachers, including STEM summer camps and teacher professional development activities. LIGO will develop a docent program to enhance K-12 outreach efforts at their new education center.