



The Mid-Columbia STEM Nexus Initiative: Advancing local STEM education

Summer 2021

The STEM Nexus Initiative continues to respond to and provide solutions for the education needs of the Mid-Columbia region, predominantly in the Tri-Cities local community.

The Washington State STEM Education Foundation (The STEM Foundation) in collaboration with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), via the STEM Nexus Initiative, has distributed approximately 4,800 Microscopy STEM Kits to date. STEM Kits have been delivered to schools in the Mid-Columbia, Yakama Nation, Sequim, and to tribes along the Olympic Peninsula—located near PNNL’s Marine and Coastal Research Laboratory. The STEM Kits include a microscopy lesson plan aligned with math common core and next-generation science and engineering standards.



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

Partners from the STEM Nexus Initiative and the myTRI 2030 Education Council recently identified five community projects to advance equity in STEM education for local, underserved populations. The grant recipients include Columbia Basin College*, Washington State University Tri-Cities*, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory*, and three local K-12 school districts.



Brief descriptions of the recently funded K-12 community projects are provided below:

- **Kennewick School District** will build teacher capacity for instruction along with student opportunity for learning by leveraging an instructional framework and lesson plans for teacher implementation, as well as providing grade-level STEM Kits for more than 50 local classrooms.
- **Richland School District** will create sustainable projects and offer professional development for teachers that focus on and integrate topics such as regenerative agriculture, restorative habitats, and renewable energy (the three R’s) into content curriculum.
- **Pasco School District** will promote STEM careers and concepts at the elementary level by offering professional development for 3–5 grade teachers that incorporates the CoderZ platform (an interactive web-based platform where students can learn to code robots).

*For more information about the higher education projects please refer to the [STEM Spring 2021](#) update).